

THESIS

THE SELF, SUBJECTIVITY, AND IMPETUS FOR LATINO MALE SELF-
TRANSFORMATION IN THE WRITINGS OF KIERKEGAARD

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Masters of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Fall 2010

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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The following thesis will explore the relationship between the conceptions of the self and subjectivity in writings of 19th century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard and the contemporary problem of Latino male self-transformation. Kierkegaard's conception of the self will take *Sickness Unto Death* (1849) as the focal point, while Kierkegaard's conception of subjectivity will be explored in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846). First, I will discuss three aspects of Kierkegaard's dialectical self: the irresolute self, the resolute self, and the religious dependent self. Second, after these aspects of the self are discussed, I turn my attention to Kierkegaard's conception of subjectivity. The discussion on subjectivity will explore four perspectives of subjectivity: objective and subjective thinking, subjectivity and indirect communication, subjectivity as inwardness, existence, and passion, and lastly subjectivity and truth. Third, I discuss David T. Abalos' theory of transformation in *The Latino Male: A Radical Redefinition* (2002). My discussion of Abalos' theory of transformation will focus on the *Three Acts of the Core Drama of Life* in its application to Latino male self-transformation. My aim is to take Kierkegaard's remarks on the self and subjectivity and apply them to Abalos' theory of Latino male self-transformation. I attempt to demonstrate that Kierkegaard's

remarks on these issues can inform and aid in the conversation of the contemporary problem of Latino male self-transformation. Thus, I argue that Kierkegaard's remarks on the self and subjectivity are not only invaluable to this contemporary problem, but can provide impetus for Latino male self-transformation.

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Fall 2010

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Thesis Introduction

What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? ... Our instructions come from "the porch of Solomon" ... Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus...!

Tertullian, ecclesiastical writer in the second and third centuries, didn't just make the remarks above in passing, but rather made it his life's passion to keep philosophy (Athens) away from the teachings and the doctrines of the early Christian Church (Jerusalem).¹ Philosophy, in Tertullian's mind, was not welcomed in the domain of the sacred Church because philosophy had nothing positive to offer. It could not elucidate, clarify, nor assist the teachings of the Christian Church in any useful way.

My concern here will not be the relationship between the Christian Church and philosophy, nor will it be the relationship between faith and reason. Instead, my focus will address the relationship between philosophy and the contemporary problem of Latino male self-transformation. In order to get at this relationship perhaps I could recast Tertullian's question and ask, "What indeed has Athens to do with *El Barrio*?" In other words, what does philosophy have to do with the problems and issues facing Latino males? Similar to Tertullian, some may be convinced that philosophy should remain within its own confines of reason and philosophical quandaries. In addition, some may be

¹Tertullian made this remarks in, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum* (Prescription against Heretics), T.D. Barnes, *Tertullian: a literary and historical study* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1971).

convinced that philosophy would simply be a “fish out of water” when it comes to dealing with real-life practical and contemporary concerns. I am persuaded that the latter sentiments are wrong. I’m convinced, and I hope to convince the readers as well, that philosophy is not only useful in elucidating and clarifying problems facing Latinos males, but philosophy can also make positive contributions to Latino/a studies.

The particular area of philosophy that I will draw from and will thus inform my discussion of Latino male self-transformation will be from the work and writing of 19th century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. The present thesis is an inquiry into the problem of Latino male self-transformation (the subject of chapter three) in and through a Kierkegaardian lens (the subject of chapters one and two). I will take Kierkegaard’s remarks on the self and subjectivity and bring them to bear on the problem of Latino male self-transformation. If I am correct, this thesis will demonstrate that aspects of Kierkegaard’s philosophy can indeed inform, assist, and provide impetus for Latino male self-transformation. Thus, Athens has a legitimate and invaluable concern with *El Barrio!*

Before I move forward in this task, I think it’s necessary to briefly address and alleviate some concerns regarding this work. First, some may question the legitimacy of philosophy “informing” and “assisting” in contemporary Latino issues. That is, some may object by saying, “shouldn’t such areas of study be left up to the Ethnic studies, Latino studies, and Sociology departments?” Well, that’s certainly true. I will not attempt to address Latino/a issues in and of themselves...that task can properly be left up to the experts in those fields of study. As a philosopher, my concern here is a philosophical approach to Latino male self-transformation, not a sociological approach.

Second, some may object to my choice of Kierkegaard as the particular philosopher that should address Latino issues in the first place. “Why Kierkegaard,” why not Latino philosophers like Francisco Romero or Risieri Fronsizi instead?² What could a White European existentialist philosopher have to say on the matters pertaining to Latino males? My response is two-fold.

First, although I don’t doubt that Latino philosophers are adept at dealing with Latino issues; however, from a practical point of view, the majority of my philosophical work and my philosophical exposure has been limited to White European philosophy. Thus, at this point in my philosophical career, I am far more equipped at dealing with Latino issues through a White European philosophical set of lens.

Second, there need not be any major concern at approaching Latino issues through a White European philosophical lens because such an approach has been going on for some time now in and through the work of Karl Marx. Marx’s philosophical insights are not rejected a priori merely because he is a White European philosopher; thus, Kierkegaard need not be dismissed out right simply because of his race and ethnicity either.

I will be presenting a philosophical perspective on the self-transformation of the Latino male in contemporary times. My examination of this topic will be done in and through the lens of 19th century Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard. In particular, I will explore Kierkegaard’s notions of the self and subjectivity and then discuss Latino male self-transformation in light of Kierkegaard’s insights on these topics.

²Gracia, Jorge J.E., and Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, eds. *Latin American Philosophy for the 21st Century* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2004) p. 89-122.

Thesis: The Self, Subjectivity, and Impetus for Latino Male Self-Transformation in the Writings of Kierkegaard.

In chapter One, I will discuss the notion of the self presented in Kierkegaard's *Sickness Unto Death* in order to shed light on the Latino male self and the difficulties of self-transformation (the topic of discussion for the last chapter). Kierkegaard's notion of the self, I will argue, provides a useful standpoint to approach the "problem" facing Latino males. Of course, Kierkegaard was obviously not interested in problems related to ethnicity and Latino/a identity in particular; however, he was interested in the lived experience and existence of the individual enveloped in his or her own unique historical situation. The type of authentic existence Kierkegaard argued for involves a unique dialectical conception of the self. I will attempt to demonstrate (in Chapter 3) that this conception can prove useful and fruitful for providing insight into the contemporary problem of Latino male self-transformation.

Chapter Two will explore Kierkegaard's notion of subjectivity in *The Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments*. I will discuss Kierkegaard's notion of subjectivity in order to elucidate a certain way of thinking about the problem of existence. For Kierkegaard, subjectivity amounts to a unique way of thinking and acting about our own existence. In particular, Kierkegaardian "subjectivity" conveys elements of inwardness, existence, and passion. The later elements, I will argue, can inform and direct Latino male self-transformation.

The final chapter will be devoted to discussing Latino male self-transformation. I will explore the problem of Latino male self-transformation by exploring David T.

Abalos' theory of transformation in and through a Kierkegaardian lens. I will argue that the task of self-transformation is a kin to Kierkegaard's ethical task to transform the self from a one-sided and partial self into a whole and complete self. I will discuss the need for Latino male transformation with the help of specific Kierkegaardian themes discussed in chapters one and two on the self and subjectivity. Finally, I will conclude that such Kierkegaardian themes can assist Latino males in the journey of self-transformation.

Chapter I – Kierkegaard’s Self: the Dialectical Self

Introduction

I am well aware of the difficulty in writing anything about Søren Kierkegaard. The difficulties are numerous: distinguishing the voice of Kierkegaard among his pseudonyms, penetrating the opaque anti-systematic philosophical writing style of Kierkegaard, and sifting through the various interpretations of Kierkegaard’s work.³ However, these difficulties don’t necessarily short circuit any attempts to spell out Kierkegaard’s notion of the self and thus need not detain us here.

I will deal primarily with aspects of Kierkegaard’s thought related to the self in, *Sickness Unto Death*.⁴ The aim of my discussion is to locate a notion of the self for

³ Certainly, the issue of pseudonymity raises a number of problems: discerning Kierkegaard’s voice behind the pseudonyms (if indeed there is a so-called “one true voice” behind the voices of the pseudonyms), the purpose of employing the pseudonyms, and how they (the pseudonyms) are to be approached. Although it is difficult to understand Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous authorship without first understanding his theory of indirect communication (I will discuss this later in the paper), it will suffice here to point out that the pseudonyms do not necessarily hold the same views and opinions as Kierkegaard and vice versa. However, one is able to compare the pseudonymous works with the works that Kierkegaard published under his own name in order to see agreement and disagreement. The pseudonym Johannes Climacus comes closest to Kierkegaard’s own view; however, it would be a mistake to say that Climacus’ and Kierkegaard’s voices are equivalent. Moreover, any reader of Kierkegaard must take into account Kierkegaard’s own request, in “*First and Last Declaration*,” that anyone who wishes to quote from his pseudonymous authorship that they attribute the words to the pseudonym not Kierkegaard. Nevertheless, amid the difficulties surrounding Kierkegaard’s pseudonymity, I’m persuaded that the purpose of the pseudonyms was to distance Kierkegaard from the reader. That is to say, he wanted to leave the reader alone with the text in order to struggle with the text and come to conclusions for him or herself. For more on Kierkegaard’s pseudonymity see Merold Westphal, *Becoming a Self: A Reading of Kierkegaard’s Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1996), chapter two. Also see C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard’s Fragments and Postscript* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1983) p.6-11.

⁴ *Sickness Unto Death* was written between March and May, 1848; however, Kierkegaard delayed its publication until July of 1849. Before publishing this work, Kierkegaard changed the author from S.

Kierkegaard in order to illuminate Latino male self-transformation (the topic of chapter three). As I proceed to achieve this aim, a mistaken (although very popular) reading of Kierkegaard will be exposed along the way. Kierkegaard, the father of Existentialism, is often thought to be thoroughly anti-metaphysical. However, it must be remembered that even if one is anti-systematic, for surely Kierkegaard is anti-systematic, it doesn't follow that one necessarily repudiates metaphysics. As we shall see, Kierkegaard's conception of the self is a rich hybrid notion encompassing both metaphysical and social/relational aspects. That is, while Kierkegaard assiduously puts forward a metaphysical notion of the self, he never loses sight of the individual's responsibility to "self-create," albeit self-creation takes place within certain ontological parameters.

This chapter will be organized around three focal points. First, I begin constructing the foundation of Kierkegaard's notion of the self by briefly discussing G.W.F. Hegel's understanding of the self.⁵ Second, I turn to Kierkegaard's conception of the self in *Sickness Unto Death*. Final, I discuss aspects of Kierkegaard's self that will be picked up in chapter three in my discussion of Latino male self-transformation.

Kierkegaard to Anti-Climacus, putting himself as the editor of the work. The pseudonym Anti-Climacus will be discussed shortly.

⁵ When talking about the concept of the self it is important to make subtle distinctions. The nature of the self is a metaphysical problem that should not be confused with the epistemological problem of having knowledge of the nature of the self. That is, if there is such a thing called the self, then how does one come to have knowledge of the self? Second, the concept of the self is not the same as the metaphysical mind and body problem. Although discussions on the nature of the self may overlap with certain discussions on the mind and body problem, they're distinct philosophical problems and should not be confused. The metaphysical self or ego concerns spelling out the nature the self as it relates to personal identity. Some have defined the self as just pan-psychical activity and some have understood the self as just physiological processes. Others have understood the self as a synthesis of both mind and body. On the other hand, the metaphysical mind and body problem seeks to understand the relationship between mind and body, and has generated both dualistic and monistic accounts of this relationship.

G. W. F. Hegel's conception of the Self

For my purposes, Hegel's understanding of the self will be primarily limited to *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel's philosophy is quite obscure and difficult, but a brief discussion of what the self amounts to for Hegel is necessary in order to gain an accurate picture of Kierkegaard's conception of the self.⁶ For Hegel, a notion of the self emerges in the context of his system. System, for Hegel, refers to his ambitious philosophical project of synthesizing all human knowledge and culture into a single rational system in order to reveal that the entirety of human knowledge and culture has progressed and has an underlying purpose.⁷ The task of Hegel's system, then, is two-fold: one, to help us see that the world is indeed rational and two, to help us achieve absolute knowledge. For Hegel, the world is rational in that it has a rational order and this rational order is something that humanity will find contentment in. However, the latter contentment only comes about if we look at the world correctly (Stern 2002). The task of helping humanity "see the world correctly", then, is a task left to philosophy. Philosophy (Hegel's notion of philosophy as science) has the noble task of helping humanity to see the world through

⁶For more on the relationship between Hegel and Kierkegaard see Merold Wesphal's essay, *Kierkegaard and Hegel* in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 101-124.

⁷Perhaps there were historical and political motivations for Hegel's system such as witnessing, on one hand, the highpoints of the French Revolution and certainly the low points of the Revolution in the bloody aftermath of the Terror. In addition, there was also the aftermath of Kant's Copernican Revolution that served as impetus for Post-Kantian Idealists and Romanticism. Many of Kant's successors felt the need to go further than Kant and "rectify" his work because they were convinced that it left us at a skeptical dead end or because it left the subject divided between a self compatible with the sciences and a self affirming ethics, for more on Post-Kantian Idealist systems see, Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Vol. VII, from the Post-Kantian Idealists to Marx, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche* (New York, New York: Double Day, 1963) p. 1-31. Copleston is persuaded that Hegel sought to seam together these major historical, political, and philosophical rifts and oppositions in his all encompassing system.

the correct set of lens.⁸ Looking at the world correctly amounts to “seeing” the whole truth; having absolute knowledge, not merely limited or partial knowledge. It is Hegel’s dialectical method then, that helps us see that thinking in terms of exclusively category A eventually leads to a contradiction with category B and conversely, category B leads to a contradiction with category A. This state of affairs eventually leads to the formation of a new category C in which this new category C paradoxically preserves both A and B but also does away with A and B (Forster 1993). Take for example, the seemingly incompatible and conflicting ideas of freedom and necessity. For Hegel, the problem arises when we reject dialectical thinking and tend to over-emphasize freedom at the expense of necessity or conversely necessity at the expense of freedom. Both one-sided moves are mistakes, which ultimately leads to despair. For this very reason, Hegel’s system is referred to as dialectical because absolute truth is obtained only when we overcome looking at the world through an “either/ or” lens and come to understand the world through a “both/and” lens.⁹ Only philosophy, Hegel believes, can elevate the mind to a level of dialectical thinking in order to overcome the rigidity of concepts of understanding (*Verstand*), and thus freeing us from apparent oppositions such as, the one and many, freedom and necessity, and the infinite and the finite. Hegel’s project of freeing us from these apparent illusions and puzzles begin with his works, *Hegel’s Logic*:

⁸When Hegel refers to philosophy as science, he doesn’t have in mind what we think of when we use the term, ‘science’ referring to the scientific method and empirical data. In the German tradition, “Wissenschaft” or “science” refers to philosophy as science because of its all-encompassing nature in that it seeks absolute truth from the various disciplines such as, ethics, history, politics, religion, mathematics, and the sciences.

⁹ For more on Hegel’s dialectical method see, Michael Forster in *Cambridge Companion to Hegel: Hegel’s dialectical method*. Although the term, ‘dialectical’ is frequently used to refer to Hegel’s philosophy, Hegel actually uses the term, ‘dialectic’ sparingly, and when he does use the term he refers to the three stages of the development of thought: 1) the abstract side (understanding), 2) the dialectical side (negative reason), and 3) speculative (positive reason).

*Part One of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, and Hegel's Philosophy of Nature: Part Two of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, and continues through the Phenomenology of Spirit.*¹⁰ But what role does the *Phenomenology of Spirit* play in Hegel's philosophical system?

Phenomenology of Spirit was released in 1806 amid much controversy and is considered Hegel's greatest work.¹¹ In order to expose where consciousness has gone wrong because it has rejecting dialectical thinking, the task of *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to trace the development of consciousness (individual and social) through its various ways of thinking about the world and itself. That is, consciousness will be examined (from the inside so to speak) in order to show how more limited forms of consciousness necessarily lead to more adequate forms of consciousness culminating in absolute knowledge. *Phenomenology* begins by spelling out the most primitive forms of consciousness, what Hegel calls, *certainty at the level of sense-experience, to perception* and on to *force and the understanding*, which leads to consciousness thinking about itself. The focus shifts from how consciousness conceives of things in the world to how it conceives of itself as subject. It is in Hegel's discussion on self-consciousness that his conception of the self emerges. For Hegel, self-consciousness cannot exist in complete isolation; it needs some "other" object than itself to set itself apart. That is, I cannot

¹⁰Hegel thinks that these conceptual puzzles can be resolved once we are in place to rethink our categories of universal, particular, and individual, which are translated in English as, "Concept" or "Notion," from the German, *Begriff*, Robert Stern, *Hegel and the Phenomenology of Spirit* (London: Routledge Talyor & Francis Group, 2002).

¹¹ For more on textual criticism and the events surrounding the release of *Phenomenology of Spirit* see Robert Pippin, 'You Can't Get From Here to There: Translation Problems in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, ed. Frederick C, Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 52-85.

become aware of myself nor have a proper conception of myself as subject qua subject without some entity external to myself.

If we call Notion what the object is *in itself*, but call the object what it is *qua* object or *for an other*, then it is clear that being-*in-itself* and being *-for-an-other* are one and the same. For the *in-itself* is consciousness; but equally it is that *for which* an other (the *in-itself*) is; and it is *for* consciousness that in-itself of the object, and the being of the object for an other, are one and the same; the 'I' is the *content* of the connection itself. Opposed to an other, the 'I' is its own self, and at the same time it overarches this other which, for the 'I', is equally only the 'I' itself (PS, 104).

For Hegel, the subject desires another object to preserve its own individuality, but this inevitability leads to the subject opposing and destroying the object because to desire something is to possess it and control it. Hegel writes, “thus self-consciousness, by its negative relation to the object, is unable to supersede it; it is really because of that relation that it produces the object again, and the desire as well” (PS 109). However, is any object external to the subject sufficient for self-consciousness? That is, will any object such as a book or a chair external to the subject satisfy the conditions for self-consciousness? Hegel answers the latter in the negative by arguing that another subject (not merely an object) is not only required for self-consciousness, but another self-conscious subject is necessary for self-consciousness; *self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness* (PS 110). However, a problem arises because wouldn't another self-conscious subject want to impose its will on me just as I would want to on it? For Hegel, this inevitably leads to a life and death struggle and will not be resolved until one concedes defeat and thereby becomes slave while the victor becomes master. Hegel seems to have something a bit more in mind than merely a life and death struggle because of desire when he remarks, “Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged” (PS 111). Perhaps what Hegel was getting at was that recognition leads to the “life and death struggle” not merely desire.

If two self-consciousnesses occupy center stage, then each consciousness “equally” needs and depends on the other’s “recognition” to establish his or her own consciousness. However, each self not only finds gratification in the recognition of the “other” consciousness, but desires to master, control, and rule over the “other” consciousness. This leads to a life and death struggle, which eventually produces an interdependent master- slave relationship. The master needs acknowledgment and recognition from the slave just as the slave needs acknowledgment and recognition from the master.¹² In sum, Hegel’s notion of the self is relational in that it requires consciousness of the “other” external to itself and involves struggle and conflict in order to maintain the self. Kierkegaard’s self, as we shall see, also involves “other” self-consciousness and “struggles and conflicts,” but with an anti-Hegelian twist.

Kierkegaard’s conception of the Self

Before going straight away to tackle Kierkegaard’s notion of the self, there are three historical-contextual matters that need to be explained in order to have a full appreciation of Kierkegaard’s remarks on the self. These contextual matters are as follows and will be taken up in the same order: 1) the absence of the self in the midst of 19th century Christian Denmark, and the disappearance of Christianity from Christendom, 2) Anti-Climacus casts himself as a physician treating a spiritual and social illness that has gripped his Denmark, and 3) the diagnosis and prescription for these ills are found within *Sickness Unto Death* (from this point forward I will refer to *Sickness Unto Death* as SUD).

¹²Karl Marx would later develop Hegel’s *Slave and Master* chapter in the *Phenomenology* into his own notion of alienated labor by arguing that man’s nature is the result of his labor.

First, for Kierkegaard via the pseudonym Anti-Climacus, there are two significant moments that 19th century Christian Denmark faced, one following from the other, that he seeks to set right.¹³ The individual (Kierkegaard sometimes calls particularity) had been suffocated by the absolutization of society (Hegelian Denmark). That is, the “I” had essentially been reduced to the “We,” whereby the “We” had usurped God’s place in her socio-historical apotheosis. Society’s self-deification had drained away the ethical-religious commitments of the individual and her task to stand alone before God. For Anti-Climacus, his “fellow-Christians” had mistakenly assumed that one’s existential task was automatically completed and brought to fruition merely because the individual had been “properly socialized.” In reality, they, the social “We” had deified itself by absolutizing society; thereby, confusing society with God (Westphal 1991).¹⁴

¹³Kierkegaard borrows the pseudonym, Johannes Climacus, from John Climacus the seven-century Christian monk at the monastery on Mount Sinai. John Climacus wrote, *Klimax tou Paradeisou* (Ladder to Paradise) and as a result of this book John was described as the Climacus, “*the climber of the ladder.*” Kierkegaard attaches the pseudonym Johannes Climacus to his works, *De omnibus dubitandum est*, *Philosophical Fragments*, and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and the pseudonym Anti-Climacus in his works, *Sickness Unto Death* and *Practice in Christianity*. The prefix “Anti” doesn’t refer to opposed or against, rather Kierkegaard attaches the prefix “Anti” to Climacus in order to bring out, against the Christians in Denmark of his day and perhaps even Kierkegaard himself, the idea that Climacus is above in rank or an “advanced” Christian. Hong writes, “The prefix “Anti” may be misleading; however, it does not mean “against.” It is an old form of “ante (before), as in “anticipate,” and “before” also denotes a relation of rank, as in “before me” in the First Commandment” (Hong 2000). That is, Anti-Climacus is committed to the Christian worldview in that he knows what it means to stand alone before God, while Johannes Climacus doesn’t regard himself as a Christian.

¹⁴I find interesting parallels between Kierkegaard’s social climate regarding the status of the individual and contemporary American society’s call for individual social identities, racial or ethnic, to be absorbed into the democratic “We.” Many today think that individual identity is unnecessary or perhaps even dangerous because all that is required is being “properly socialized” into the aggregate.

Moreover, Anti-Climacus' contemporary Christian society had fallen prey to a disease and "sickness" that had devoured the age.¹⁵ In general terms, the sickness can be described as the disappearance of Christianity from Christendom. Similar to Nietzsche's critique of society, as Westphal notes, Anti-Climacus sees the disease as a "herd"¹⁶ disease in that mass society is defiantly maintaining a Hegelian Christian metaphysic devoid of Christian practice, but all that remains is an empty husk (Westphal 1991).

Second, there is a sense in which Anti-Climacus sees himself as a physician diagnosing a serious illness whereby it is imperative that his audience take heed. Mass society, because it has continued to run from appropriating the Christian beliefs they continue to profess has become "spiritless." That is, they have become self-less without being conscious of such a malady; such a fear of conscious selfhood is what Anti-Climacus calls despair. Anti-Climacus goes through a step by step diagnosis of the sickness, what he calls despair in part I of the book and what he calls sin in part II, in order to bring about increased levels of self-awareness. Complicating the task for Anti-Climacus is that he "detects in contemporary life-styles, in the kinds of goals people set for themselves, in their ideals of fulfillment, a fundamental fear of conscious selfhood" (Hannay 1989). The forms of despair, which Anti-Climacus seeks to bring to the open,

¹⁵ For more on the historical situation of, *Sickness Unto Death*, see Alastair Hannay, *Kierkegaard: A Biography* (Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2001), p. 374-386.

¹⁶ Merold Westphal points to the uncanny parallel between Nietzsche and Kierkegaard in their critiques of society. For Nietzsche, the "death of God" and the aftermath produced the "herd" disease whereby mass society had long since disowned the Christian metaphysic; however, was unwilling to leave behind the Christian morality. On the other hand, for Kierkegaard, the "herd" disease was cashed out in terms mass society holding on to the theoretical Christian doctrines (albeit Hegelianizing those Christian doctrines), while leaving behind its Christian ethic. Health, Nietzsche thought, could be restored to society by completely breaking from Christianity, while for Kierkegaard, health could only be restored via a return to the true faith. For more on Kierkegaard's social critique see, Merold Westphal *Kierkegaard's Critique of Reason and Society* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press 1991), chapter four, Kierkegaard's Sociology.

are those that are particularly defiant against conscious selfhood. The solution to this despair and anxiety is found in the individual resolutely choosing to exist in faith before Anti-Climacus' vision of God.

Third, *SUD*, then, is a treatment of the problem of despair and the antidote to the problem. The first part of the book analyzes despair by discussing three forms of despair, which are described as 1) lack of consciousness of being a self, 2) despair of not willing to be a self, and 3) despair of willing to be a self. All forms of despair are the result of the individual failing to be an authentic self (the failure to be a human being in fullest possible sense, which for Anti-Climacus is a religious self). In part two of *SUD*, Anti-Climacus analyzes despair in and through Christian conceptual categories of God, sin, and faith.

We can proceed to discuss Kierkegaard's conception of the self as presented in *SUD*. The self is defined as a triadic being or three structure being. In other words, Kierkegaard understands the self¹⁷ as 1) a synthesis of opposing factors, 2) a relation that relates itself to itself, and 3) a relation grounded by the "other." Under the pseudonym Anti-Climacus, Kierkegaard writes these words on the self:

¹⁷ There is some dispute concerning the exact nature of Kierkegaard's style of philosophizing about human nature: was Kierkegaard engaging in philosophical psychology or philosophical anthropology or both? I think it is safe to say that Kierkegaard was philosophizing about the human condition and the nature of human existence; however, the method that he utilized most often was playing role of the clinical psychologist, diagnosing mental errors and then providing solutions to those errors. Nevertheless, when it comes to Kierkegaard's remarks on the nature of the self there is a variety of opinion among Kierkegaardian scholars about the type of philosophizing Kierkegaard set on display. For example, Louis Pojman in, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion*, calls Kierkegaard's analysis of "the self" and "human existence" a work of both phenomenology and religious anthropology. Gregor Malantschuk in, *Kierkegaard's Thought*, refers to Kierkegaard's authorship in so much as it was concerned with the human subject as, "anthropological contemplation." Merold Westphal regards Kierkegaard's remarks on the self in, *Kierkegaard's Psychology and Unconscious Despair*, as a type of, what we know today as, phenomenology.

The human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates to itself, or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between the two. Considered in this way, a human being is still not a self.

In a relation between two, the relation is the third as a negative unity, and the two relate to the relation, and in the relation to that relation; thus 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, then this relation is the positive third, and this is the self.

Such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must either have established itself or have been established by another.

If the relation that relates itself to itself has been established by another, then the relation is indeed that third, but this relation, the third, is yet again a relation and relates itself to that which established the entire relation (SUD 43).

After reading such a passage one may feel a certain sickness unto death, and it is no wonder that, as Alastair Hannay has noted, some have thought that Kierkegaard was deliberately parodying Hegel.¹⁸ Anti-Climacus begins by saying the human being is spirit; however, he quickly qualifies the definition of the self in Hegelian garb. He goes on to define the self as, "a relation that relates itself to itself...a human being is a synthesis....such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must either have established itself or have been established by another." What does all this amount to?

Anti-Climacus begins *SUD* by defining the self (*Selvet*) as spirit (*Aand*). "What is spirit?" he asks. Spirit, he goes on, is the self. But, Anti-Climacus further questions, "What is the self?" He goes on to cash out the self in terms of a three-part structure. Again, lest we forget, Anti-Climacus is not discussing the self merely as an exercise in

¹⁸ In his introductory remarks to *SUD*, Hannay notes that some commentators have read Kierkegaard's opening remarks in *SUD* as a deliberate parody of the, "impenetrability of Hegelian prose." Hannay suggests that this way of reading Kierkegaard is wrong-headed and that Kierkegaard's obscure opening remarks serves as a table of contents for the remainder of the book rather than a parody of Hegel. I don't see why it cannot be both a parody and also serve as a table of contents for the remainder of the book. I will discuss Hannay interpretation of Kierkegaard later in the paper.

speculative philosophy, but rather to present an account of the despair (in its various forms conscious and unconscious despair) that had gripped the present age. For Anti-Climacus, spirit (*Aand*), refers to the third element that unites both body and soul.¹⁹ Against Hegel, spirit, for Anti-Climacus doesn't refer to the third movement in the dialectic of soul-consciousness-spirit, but rather refers to a third element of the person in addition to the physical body and soul.²⁰ Immediately we should notice that Anti-Climacus' self is not merely Descartes' dualistic self of mind and body, but rather a composite of soul (*Sjæl*), translated as "psyche," and physical body, both united by spirit.²¹ Richard J. Colledge, regarding Kierkegaard's notion of 'spirit' writes:

In itself, it [spirit] is neither a source of good nor evil; in being the foundation of consciousness, it is rather the condition of possibility for both. Spirit is the gnawing voice within that breathes fire and intensity into human existence, driving it along the difficult road toward fulfillment of its potentiality. Thus, *spirit is of the essence of human being* (Colledge).

As we proceed, what exactly 'spirit' amounts to and the role that it plays in Kierkegaard notion of the self will become clear, but now to exposit in greater detail on each aspect of

¹⁹ For Kierkegaard, 'spirit' is used in different ways, but unfortunately he didn't always clarify the ways in which he used his terms. Richard J. Colledge in, *Kierkegaard's Subjective Ontology: A Metaphysics of the Existing Individual*, suggests that Kierkegaard's *Aand*, Hegel's *Geist* both refer to the essential element needed for human flourishing, but with Hegel 'spirit' is "at once human and divine," whereas with Kierkegaard, 'spirit' is, "an eminently human category...that appears to function as an innate human "faculty" that operates by unsettling the individual through awakening it to its eternal *telos*" p.10. *Westphal* points out that Kierkegaard used 'spirit' in much the same way that Hegel used the term.

²⁰ For Hegel, the Absolute or Spirit is engaged in the process of becoming what he truly is; thus, coming to full self-consciousness requires an object to be conscious of. Only in humanity has this otherness been overcome because man is the highest expression of Spirit. Human history is the history of spirit becoming aware of itself as Spirit.

²¹ Although it is clear that Anti-Climacus has features of a dualistic account of the human being as both body and mind, but he adds a third element, spirit; it is not clear if spirit is the creation of the individual properly synthesizing body and mind together or if spirit is an external entity assisting the individual in her task of holding both body and mind together. Louis Pojman in, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion*, concerning spirit remarks, "Man is a composite being, a synthesis of soul and body which are related or brought together as opposing forces, *producing an entity (synthesis of spirit) which is greater than the sum of its parts, a self or spirit*, italicize mine p.32.

this triadic being. I will refer to each aspect of the triadic being as follows: the irresolute self, the resolute self, and the spiritual dependent self.

The Irresolute Self

For Anti-Climacus, the first major component of the self is what I refer to as the irresolute self, which comes to the fore in the tension between the physical body and the soul. The irresolute self is defined as a *synthesis (Synthese) of contrasting factors*: infinite-finite, eternal-temporal, and freedom (later he calls possibility)-necessity.²² It is worth noting that Anti-Climacus assumes that one does not and cannot understand the self as just a physical entity nor as just pan psychological activity, but rather humanity is both body and mind, which taken together is regarded as the first component of the self.

The first aspect of the self, then, is the self as a *synthesis of mind and body*. However, Anti-Climacus goes on to point out that mind and body have their respective elements that need to be properly synthesized. Anti-Climacus remarks, “A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and

²² In, *The Definition of the Self and the Structure of Kierkegaard's Work*, John D. Glenn understands Kierkegaard's definition of the self in SUD as not only fundamental to exploring the entire SUD work but also key to understanding Kierkegaard's pseudonymous corpus. Glenn proceeds by discussing Kierkegaard tripartite definition of the self, and then explicates how this definition corresponds to the three parts of *Sickness Unto Death*. Furthermore, Glenn considers how this tripartite definition of the self relates to Kierkegaard's rich notion of “the stages of existence” throughout his pseudonymous works. For example, Glenn observes the first dimension of the self (*the self as polar opposites*) as corresponding to the aesthetic stage of existence described in volume one of *Either/Or*. The pseudonymous author of the former work, “A” paints a picture of an individual that is characterized by vacillating between the poles of infinitude/finitude, necessity/possibility, and eternity/temporality. For example, Glenn points to A's rendering of the esthetical individual who struggles to carve out authentic meaning and existence because of her own non-commitment and irresolution. The aesthetic individual, in an attempt to transform her life, is taken in moments, via the imagination, of postulating grandiose possibilities; yet, fails to actualize any of these possibilities and consequently remains bound to her necessity. Moreover, the esthetic individual fails to unify the eternal and temporal aspects of the self as synthesis by “keeping free from all temporal commitments” and is scattered about in the quest to give meaning to her own existence.

necessity, in short a synthesis” (SUD, 13). The body, for Anti-Climacus, is the factual pole of humanity which is exemplified by the particular elements of the finite, the temporal, and necessity. That is, these elements make up one’s facticity. On the other hand, the elements of the infinite, the eternal, and freedom correspond to the soul or psyche as the hyperbolic pole of the human being. This first relation (or mis-relation) of contrasting factors is diagnosed by Anti-Climacus in the context of deficiency and excess; therefore giving raise to despair. That is, the malady plaguing the self described in this subdivision is a result of an over emphasis (or under emphasis) of the particular elements of the synthesis. A more detailed account of what exactly these dialectical elements of the irresolute self refer to is in order.

The finite element refers to the person’s biological, physiological, economical, social, and political features and determinants such as, one’s behavior, height, income, social status etc. On the other hand, the infinite element refers to one’s momentary escape from the finite determinants and facticity in the sense that one can, via the imagination, transcend the narrow limits by imagining otherwise. The imagination plays a key role in the development of the authentic self, for Anti-Climacus. When imagination is used properly it can be the catalyst wherein authentic selfhood emerges or when used improperly can shipwreck one’s life on the rocks of despair,

It [imagination] is not a faculty like the other faculties- if one wish to speak this way, it is the faculty *instar omnium* [for all faculties]...what feelings, understanding and will a person has depends in the last resort upon what imagination he has- on how *the latter reflects upon himself*, that is, upon imagination...the imagination is the whole of reflection’s possibility; and the intensity of this medium is the possibility of the self’s intensity (SUD, 60-61).

The error, for Anti-Climacus, is to emphasize the infinite element over and against the finite and vice versa. That is, when the self’s infinitude is emphasized over and against

the self's finitude the result is infinitude's despair in that the self is lost in a state of "vaporous sentimentality in sheer proliferation of objective knowledge or in fantastic projects."²³ For example, the despair of the infinitude of the self one might think of a Walter Mitty figure imaging "fantastic projects" for the self while never taking the initiative to actualize any of these projects due to weakness of the will. A contemporary example helps illustrate this point further. Consider Maria, a Latina, while working in the service sector she empties trash bins, cleans bathrooms, and mops floors; yet, imaginatively conceives of a different socio-economic situation that places her working in upper management. That is, for a brief moment a different self emerges in Maria's imagination. But for whatever reason (personal fear, lack of education and resources), Maria never wills and acts on these "august" projects. There is sense in which reflecting upon and "imagining" different social situations is absurd for Maria because it is now the cause of her personal anguish. Maria's reflecting via the imagination on what could have been becomes the source of personal injury and despair, "the self then leads a fantastic existence in abstract infinitization or in abstract isolation, constantly lacking its self, from which it simply gets further and further away" (SUD, 62). On the other hand, finitude's despair results in the individual being locked into one's own facticity and narrow limitations.²⁴ One can think of an individual who is locked in their social constructs to the point that one lacks the courage to imagine a substantially different life outside of these

²³ Glenn, D. John Jr. "The Definition of the Self and the Structure of Kierkegaard's Work." In *Internation Kierkegaard Commentary: Sickness Unto Death*, by Robert L. Perkins, 5-23. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987.

²⁴ Glenn understands the finitude of the self to be not so much its bodily and physical character, but rather its involvement in actual situations, and in particular the situations in which one is "absorbed to restrictive social roles" (Glenn 1987).

narrow constructs. Again, consider Maria who never imaginatively conceives of a different socio-economic situation for herself and thus is locked into her current situation with no hope of escape. This also can be a source of despair for Maria because she has now confined herself into a prison of “narrowness...by being finitized, by instead of being a self, having become a cipher, one more person, one more repetition of this perpetual *Einerlei* [one-and-the-same]” (SUD, 63). Anti-Climacus would say that Maria’s, self-imposed despair of finitude leads to the loss of one’s self within the herd of “others.”

But while one kind of despair steers blindly in the infinite and loses itself, another kind of despair allows itself to be, so to speak, cheated of its self by ‘the others’. By seeing the multitude of people around it, by being busied with all sorts of worldly affairs, by being wise to the ways of the world, such a person forgets himself, in a divine sense forgets his own name, dares not to believe in himself, finds being himself too risky, finds it much easier and safer to be like the others, to become a copy, a number, along with the crowd (SUD, 63-64).

What is demanded is a right relation between these two poles whereby the self exists as a concretion of its own facticity and its own possibilities. For Anti-Climacus, the self as a synthesis of the infinitude and the finitude is the ability to transcend one’s finite situations by imagining new situations whereby one chooses to actualize these new situations, or as Hannay remarks, “For despair to disappear, imagination must be applied to something specific, or from the other side, everyday occupation must become the workplace of the imagination” (Hannay 1989).

The temporal-eternal contrast makes up the longest part of the section on, ‘*The forms of this sickness*’ and is the most vague of the synthesis relationships. For Anti-Climacus, there is something in the self that is eternal and “transcends” the temporal order of our existence. What is this eternal item that resides in the self? Anti-Climacus is not clear on the matter, but some speculate that by the ‘eternal factor’ Kierkegaard is

merely getting at “a fundamental goal of human endeavor,” and in particular, the “fundamental goal” to become a self (Hannay 1989). That is, because each person is located in the web of cause and effect (time) one must lift themselves out of this system of cause and effect and use his or her freedom to actualize the possibilities presented to one’s self. However, all this requires that one be motivated to transcend one’s facticity in the first place. This motivation, for Hannay, is what Kierkegaard probably means by the eternal factor. John Glenn suggests that this synthesis refers to the conflict of the self to maintain unity through time while struggling with the tendency for the self’s existence to be dispersed and scattered through different moments, in which case, the self undertakes the duty of struggling to give itself a unified (eternal) meaning that transcends momentary (the temporal) dispersion of time (Glenn 1987). I would suggest that the temporal-eternal synthesis is akin to Kant’s problem of infusing our existence with meaning. That is, on one hand we are rooted in the temporal order of the natural world and the deterministic laws of science, yet on the other hand we can have fundamental meaning by governing ourselves by moral law as practical reason. That is, our existence is marked by a struggle to be not only citizens of the natural world of cause and effect, but citizens of the moral domain, a la Kant, and the ethico-religious domain, a la Kierkegaard. For Kierkegaard, there is an aspect of human beings that cannot be captured by the deterministic laws of physics, and to think of ourselves as merely automatons along with planes, trains, and automobiles is a categorical mistake. It must be remembered that Kierkegaard, as I shall discuss shortly, was no enemy of the sciences, even though he remained skeptical of the sciences’ task to capture human existence by explicating human existence as merely natural phenomena.

The possibility-necessity synthesis refers to the self's struggle with her current situation. Of course, Anti-Climacus would insist that our current situation be viewed from a religious perspective, and in particular, a Christian perspective via categories of sin, redemption, and salvation. For Anti-Climacus, we find ourselves in despair and in order to overcome our despair we are need of divine assistance. However, as with the infinite-finite aspects of the self, I see no reason why one cannot discuss the possibility-necessity tension from a socio-political situation and not merely a spiritual situation. In this respect, the necessity aspect of the self doesn't refer to logical nor causal necessity, for Kierkegaard, it refers to the self's limitations. That is, the self is limited by the actual situations, including but not limited to social and political limitations, in which the self finds itself.

A contemporary example might be an individual who finds him or herself in a situation where they lack power due to their socio-economical status. In the former sense of limitation, there is a certain degree of necessity that the self experiences; one is limited by their socio-economical status and thus is obligated to fulfill certain social roles. On the other hand, the possibility of the self refers to both active and passive possibilities (Glenn 1987). Active possibility designates what the individual can do given her actual situation, while passive possibility indicates what can be done to the individual in her situation. Both forms of possibility are initiated by the imagination by which the individual assesses her current situation and then considers what viable possibilities one may pursue. Again, the point is that one begins in her actual situation, and then moves to change the actual by reflecting upon the various possibilities. Consider the individual who is disempowered by their socio-economic status but in and through active possibility

decides to take certain actions in order to change their situation. Moreover, the individual's situation can also be changed by passive possibility in that certain things can be done to the individual by outside forces thereby moving the individual to act upon these situations. John Glenn notes that, Kierkegaard illuminates the possibility aspect of the self by speaking about attitudes of fear, hope, and anxiety in relation to the self and possibility. In sum, this first dimension of the self reveals an irresolute self, a self that is buffeted between the infinite and the finitude, the eternity and temporality, and the possibility and necessity of its own nature.

The Resolute Self

The second dimension of the self is the resolute self which is defined as *a relation that relates itself to itself*. Again, this dimension of the self, Anti-Climacus illuminates in and through a certain component of despair, the relation itself is the synthesis discussed above, and usually appears in some form of imbalance. What's more is that this dimension of the self is progressively conscious of its being an imbalance; thus, the self is its consciousness of itself. That is, the resolute self takes a certain posture towards itself. However, what is self-consciousness for Anti-Climacus? John Glenn understands Anti-Climacus' notion of the self as self-relating as primarily the reflective activities of the self in its volitional aspect as opposed to just the cognitive and introspective aspects of the self. That is, the self as self-relating refers primary to the will of the individual, which Anti-Climacus casts as various weaknesses of the will. Glenn turns his attention to the second major section in SUD entitled, *Despair as Defined by Consciousness*, to gain an understanding of the self defined as self-relating as an aspect of volition. In this section, there are two forms of despair that hinder the individual from becoming a self. First,

“despair in weakness” the self refuses to be a self because of some factor (in the past, present, or mere possibility) which it finds unacceptable. Second, “despair to will to be one’s self in defiance” the self refuses to be a self because it fails to acknowledge any authority over itself. Glenn points out that both forms of despair, for Anti-Climacus, is to expose the insufficiency of the unaided self-relation in the attempt to be a self without divine assistance. Glenn interprets a similar scenario in Volume Two of the pseudonymous work, *Either/Or* in which Judge William (the Kantian ethicist and author of this second volume) reveals that ultimately the ethical stage of existence is incomplete and therefore demands a “higher” stage of existence.²⁵ Although the aesthetic stage primarily consists in one attempting to satisfy and cultivate one’s desires and impulses, which eventually ends in despair; it is absorbed into the ethical stage of existence. However, in the end, the ethical stage of existence also proves to be insufficient for authentic selfhood. The heart of the ethical stage of existence is the ethicist’s project of becoming a self through resolution, which presupposes a view of the self that is essentially self-sufficient. Such a view of the self ignores the dependency of humanity to become an authentic self upon the one who established the self-relation in the first place; the one who established the self-relation, for Anti-Climacus, is God. This dimension of the self will be discussed shortly.

Similarly, Alastair Hannay understands the *self as self-relating* as consciousness of the self’s synthesis typically in a state of imbalance; thus, it refers to the self being conscious of its own imbalance. For Hannay, Kierkegaard’s notion of self-consciousness

²⁵ A concrete picture of the individual resolutely choosing through self-choice and taking responsibility for the development of the self as synthesis is visible in the second part of *Either/ Or*.

doesn't refer merely to introspection as much as it refers to a moral category. That is, the self is conscious of itself in a state of despair because it (the self) has failed to fulfill the ideal. Again, the central theme here is a form of despair whereby the individual either chooses to live in the despairs of finitude or necessity or lives a double life in which the ideal is preserved but at a level where there seems no question of its being related to real life (Hannay 1989). The previous understandings of Kierkegaard's notion of the self defined as self-relating certainly picks out a feature of the self that I think Kierkegaard intends, namely that it is aware of itself as a synthesis of contrasting factors. However, these accounts of self-consciousness strictly define it (the self) as a movement away from the self to a transcendent power.

To my mind, self-consciousness, for Kierkegaard, is not merely an "awareness" of the individual's inability to hold these contrasting factors together (and thereby prompting one to seek divine help), but is also the emergence of resolution in addition to the body-soul synthesis. That is, the self is conscious of itself as a unity (of contrasting factors) but also conscious of itself under a moral obligation in a process of development. That is, the self is conscious of the moral task to integrate itself; thus, striving to become resolute. The self as an imbalance of contrasting factors (which no doubt corresponds to the aesthetic form of life in Kierkegaard's literary corpus) is only a possible self in that it vacillates between the factual and hyperbolic poles, but the self as self-relating (which corresponds to the ethical form of life) is the aspect of the self where it (the self) becomes an actual self in that there is an "awaking" of herself to choose the self she will be. That is to say, for Kierkegaard, the aspect of the self as self-relating is more than just an introspective awareness of the deficiencies of the self; it is the facet of the self where one

becomes aware of her moral obligation to become an authentic self. One takes seriously, for the first time in her life, the moral task of the development of the self. This aspect of the self is cashed out in Kierkegaard's writings at the ethical stage of existence; it is the place where we capture a glimpse of the individual who becomes aware of her ethical and universal obligation to choose one's self absolutely. This self-conscious aspect of the self is certainly linked to introspection, but not as an end in and of itself, but rather is the power and will of the individual to shape her life through choice. Furthermore, for Kierkegaard, the self as self-relating is where the individual becomes aware of the significance of one's life in that she is the sum of her resolute decisions in actualizing the various possibilities she presents to herself.

The Spiritual-Dependent Self

The third and final dimension of the self is the spiritual dependent self which is defined as, *a self as an "Other"-relation*. This dimension of the self, for some, is paramount to understanding Kierkegaard's notion of the self.²⁶ A look at the key passage in SUD, reads, *such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must have established itself or have been established by another*. What are we to make of such remarks? Is Kierkegaard insisting that full authentic selfhood can only emerge in relation to God? In what follows, I will argue that such a reading of Kierkegaard is too narrow and is in danger of missing essential elements in Kierkegaard's notion of the self, in particular, (it misses) elements that can be applicable to Latino male self-transformation. In arguing the

²⁶C. Stephan Evans suggests in, *Who is the Other in Sickness Unto Death*, that an understanding the self, which is self-relating in turn 'relates to another, the one who established the relation' is essential in order to understand Kierkegaard's notion of the self.

latter, it will become evident that Kierkegaard's notion of the self is not "radically individualistic," but instead is relational in that it incorporates an "other" into the emergence of full-selfhood. Although this "other" has traditionally been regarded by many Kierkegaardian scholars as strictly God, I will show that this need not be the case. However, even if the "other" is God, I will argue that there is utility in exploring the ideas of dependency and vulnerability embedded in Kierkegaard's "other" defined as God for theists and non-theists alike. It is the latter notions of dependence and vulnerability that will be picked up in chapter three regarding my discussion on Latino male self-transformation.

First, notice that Kierkegaard incorporates a very Hegelian theme into his account of the self, namely the relationship by which the self becomes itself in relation to the "other." Against the idea that Kierkegaard's notion of the self is radically individualistic and extremely self-centered, he does indeed bring an outside factor into the equation. For those who chide Kierkegaard for extreme individualism, Evans suggests that the human self defined in SUD as "a relation that relates itself to itself and in relating itself to itself relates to another" rules out any account of the self as strictly autonomous and self-contained (C. S. Evans 1997). In this sense, the ontological structure of the self is certainly not individualistic but instead relational: X is a self just in case there is some Y external to X and X is in relation to Y. It is important to note that for Kierkegaard the "other" has to be another individual. In other words, what Kierkegaard is doing with this Hegelian move (with an anti-Hegelian twist) is basically this: self-consciousness cannot be separated from the other-consciousness, in which the "other" is defined an individual.

That is to say, my self-awareness presupposes my awareness of the *other* as self-awareness of another individual.

At this point one might object by noting that Kierkegaard's Hegelian move regarding the self and the "other" is a façade because Hegel's "other" was "other" community consciousness whereas Kierkegaard's "other" is merely God. Well, even if it is the case that Kierkegaard's "other" is strictly God, which I will argue momentarily, need not be the case, why would God not count as a legitimate "other"?

Second, suppose that this "other" to which "the self that relates to itself" is indeed God, what does this exactly entail? Consider the selected proof texts from part one of SUD below:

Such a relation, which relates to itself, a self, must either have established itself or been established by something else (SUD 43).

If the relation which relates to itself has been established by something else, then of course the relation is the third term, but then this relation, the third term, is a relation which relates in turn to that which has established the whole relation (SUD 43).

For this latter formula is the expression of the relation's (the self's) total dependence, the expression of the fact that the self cannot by itself arrive at or remain in equilibrium and rest, but only, in relating to itself, by relating to that which has established the whole relation (SUD 44).

This then is the formula which describes the state of the self when despair is completely eradicated: in relating to itself and in wanting to be itself, the self is grounded transparently in the power that established it (SUD 44).

As the texts above suggest, a third factor is essential for the full or complete development of the "healthy" self except that this third factor resides outside the self. However, many Kierkegaardian scholars regard this third factor as none other than God. For example, Westphal regards the "other" as God in Kierkegaard's polemical scheme against Hegel. Westphal notes, Kierkegaard is not merely repeating Hegel's notion of the self in terms of "other" consciousness, but rather is giving Hegel's relational self a unique un-Hegelian

twist.²⁷ In order to see this Hegelian subversion, think of the Cartesian self that leaves us with epistemic gap between the private and public domains. Against this Cartesian self, the Hegelian self is essentially produced by the public domain (the other). However, the Hegelian self reduces subjectivity to social activity; consequently, subjectivity and inwardness of faith disappear. Kierkegaard's task then is to carve out a space for the self that avoids Cartesian solipsism and Hegel's self that becomes indistinguishable from the universal and public community. The issue then becomes whether Kierkegaard can provide a private space for the self that stands apart from both Cartesian privacy and Hegel's public domain. For Westphal, Kierkegaard does indeed achieve this place where the self can act in and through identifying the "other" whom the self relates to as God.²⁸ For Kierkegaard, the health of the self then depends on relating properly to God who is

²⁷Merold Westphal in, *Kierkegaard's Psychology and Unconscious Despair*, sheds light on Kierkegaard's notion of the self by examining what Kierkegaard means by psychology. Kierkegaard's notion of the self, as it appears in SUD, is part of his, what we might call, clinical psychology. Kierkegaard believes that he is diagnosing an illness (i.e. despair) inflicting humanity and then providing a remedy for the illness. That is, he sees humanity as patients in need of cure of a disease thwarting the person from being an authentic self. However, as we shall see, the remedy resides within the will of every person. Westphal observes that, Kierkegaard's psychology contains both Aristotelian and Cartesian elements. It is Aristotelian in that health or the lack of health is not something that is left to mere feeling, fortune, and fate, but rather is something that we do; remedy involves action, will, and responsibility. It is Cartesian with respect to the inwardness of the self. In SUD, because the self is defined as "a relation that relates itself to itself," Westphal points out that the self is relational. As we have already encountered, this relation is the result of synthesizing two opposing factors. Yet, Westphal notes that this is not enough for selfhood. It is only when this relation relates itself to itself that the self as spirit (genuine selfhood) comes to fruition. What Kierkegaard obviously has in mind with self-relation is self-consciousness and seems very similar to the inwardness of Descartes' *cogito*. However, as Westphal points out, it is not just Cartesian inwardness, it is the self's relation to itself which is its freedom.

²⁸Westphal understands Kierkegaard's grounding the self in God as polemical move against Hegel grounding the self in the social order. Kierkegaard understands Hegel's social order of the self's ground. In this scenario one's fellow humans become the principal other to whom one relates, and a right relation to this other that has established the self constitutes the self's health. Consequently, Westphal notes the individual seeks to be like others, to become a copy, a number, a mass man, and forgets himself. Instead of the individual person being lumped together with aggregate and thereby losing their self, the individual self can be preserved only by his/her self-awareness of existing before God.

the self's ground (Westphal 1987). By making the "other" God, as Westphal notes, Kierkegaard is able to polemically challenge the idea that the absolute is synonymous with the prevailing ideas of society. In this way, Kierkegaard includes himself in the company of social critics such as Socrates who stood against the established "truths" and the superficiality of their day.

However, one might inquire as to why the self has to be defined as a God-relation in the first place. For Kierkegaard, does the "other" that stands in relation to the self have to be God? That is, although the "other" for Kierkegaard has typically been defined, and with good reason, as God, Evans cautions against hasty conclusions that narrowly understand this third element as exclusively God.²⁹ God is not the only "other" by which human selves can relate in order to become authentic selves. I'm persuaded that there is good internal evidence to support the latter point. Part one of SUD supports the interpretation that the "other" Kierkegaard has in mind is someone or something other than God. Anti-Climacus, for example, suggests there are levels or gradations of consciousness and self-awareness in relation to another. With Evans I concur that for Kierkegaard, although the highest level of self-awareness and thus authentic selfhood is one's relation to God, this doesn't exclude a level of authentic selfhood in relation to other people. If this is correct then the relational structure of the ontological self is actualized in and through relating not only to God, but other people too. Anti-Climacus writes:

The progression in consciousness we have been concerned with up to now occurs within the category of the human self, or of the self that has man as its standard of measurement. But this self

²⁹ Pojman in, *The Logic of Subjectivity: Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion*, understands this "other" Kierkegaard refers to as exclusively God, p. 13-16.

takes on a new quality and specification in being the self that is directly before God. This self is no longer the merely human self but what, hoping not to be misinterpreted; I would call the theological self, the self directly before God. And what an infinite reality this self acquires by being conscious of being before God, by being a human self that has God as its standard! A herdsman who (if this is possible) is a self directly before cattle a very low self; similarly a master who is a self directly before slaves, indeed really he is not a self-for in both cases there is no standard of measurement. The child, who up to then has had only its parents' standard, becomes a self through acquiring, as an adult, the State as its standard. But what an infinite accent is laid upon the self when it acquires God as its standard! (SUD, 111).

For Anti-Climacus, depending on the “other” that one relates to, determines the degree of self that one comes away with. If the “other” which one relates to is an animal or inanimate objects, then one’s sense of self or self-awareness is at a low degree of selfhood. Moreover, the self-identity that one comes away with in relation to the “other”- (defined exclusively as another individual) is then worked out via the self’s ethical task of becoming. That is to say, the life projects that one assigns to his or herself (or to use Kierkegaard’s language, the self’s task of becoming) become healthy and authentic or unhealthy and unauthentic depending on the “other individual” that one stands in relation to. A contemporary example shows what Anti-Climacus has in mind here. Consider the Latino male who emulates (stands in relation to) other Latino males. Depending upon how much of a “self” the other is, is how much of a “self” one comes away with. If the “other” whom the Latino male emulates is an unhealthy self (a minimal self), then we can also expect the Latino male will also be an unhealthy self (minimal self). The latter points would be missed if Kierkegaard’s “other” is defined as exclusively God. We need not and cannot identify Kierkegaard’s “other” as exclusively God for danger of missing essential dimensions in Kierkegaard notion of the self.

Finally, by cashing out this “other” as God, Kierkegaard reveals aspects of human vulnerability, dependency, and limitedness by exposing the inability of humanity to restore herself to proper health by her own means. For Kierkegaard, God functions as the

Creator who has established the self (ontologically the self is created as a relation being), but then allows the self to be co-creators, if you will, in the ethical task to choose the self we will become. Intricately bound up with the idea of the “other” as God is the idea that humanity, in order to have healing from the disease of despair, must come to terms with the diagnoses and ultimately become vulnerable and dependent by receiving the antidote of faith. This is made explicit by Anti-Climacus as he discusses two conscious forms of despair: 1) “Not to will to be oneself, to will to do away with oneself” and 2) “in despair to will to be oneself” (SUD, 72-80).

Consider the first form of despair; despair due to weakness of the will. Subjects in the latter form of despair are not willing to take upon themselves the project of becoming a self because they don’t will to be their self. For example, there are people who have an unhealthy view of themselves and refuse to be the person that they are. In extreme cases, some may feel so overwhelmed with the task to be themselves, they may want to get rid of themselves altogether, echoing sentiments such as, “if I were only X, then I would amount to something great.” Consider the Latino male who becomes disillusioned with his life and life-projects only because he is not of a certain race, ethnicity, or well-positioned in a certain socio-economic class. Kierkegaard would refer to the latter as a case of despair due to weakness of the will.

The second form of conscious despair, for Anti-Climacus, is the despair to will to be one’s self in defiance. Again, concrete forms of this particular despair are not hard to imagine. Consider the Latino male who constructs a fragmented self which is not only dangerous to himself but to others around him. He rejects any notion of being dependent and vulnerable upon an “other” except himself; he refuses in defiance to be a “healthy

and complete self”; he says, “You’re not the boss of me!” Or, “I can’t trust anybody except myself!” These anecdotes reveal forms of despair that result from the rejection of dependency and vulnerability upon the “other.” Thus, the Latino male in this form of despair fails to be an authentic self because in defiance he refuses to make himself dependent and vulnerable to “others” around himself.

In sum, by casting the “other” as God, Anti-Climacus is able to critique Hegel’s notion of the self and bring out aspects of human vulnerability and humility in relation to constructing healthy and complete selves.

Conclusion

My conclusion is that Kierkegaard’s self represents a hybrid notion between the metaphysical and relational achievement self. The ontological self, for Kierkegaard, is a synthesis of opposing factors that must be tempered just right in order to avoid imbalance. However, these opposing factors make up the parameters wherein the individual is called to engage in the highest human project: to become a self. This project of authentic selfhood is dynamic and relational; it requires the individual to create and construct themselves. Although it is a struggle, holding the contrasting factors together requires self-awareness. However, self-awareness requires the consciousness of another individual, but this “other” individual doesn’t necessarily have to be God. In agreement with Evans, I interpret Kierkegaard as insisting on various gradations and levels of selfhood, which for Kierkegaard the highest level of selfhood is a God-relation; nevertheless, a God-relation isn’t required for a minimal level of selfhood.

Furthermore, I'm convinced that Kierkegaard's attempt to define the self, as both a metaphysical and achievement project is crucial today in a time where individual and personal identity has been called into question in very significant manner.³⁰ Although I don't deny the importance of the self being defined in and through achievement and relation, I also maintain the importance of an ontological self as ground for the relational achievement self.

There are a number of insights in Kierkegaard's hybrid notion of the self that can inform contemporary Latino male self-transformation. First, constructing one's self can be understood as a moral project in which the individual takes as his or her vocation to become an authentic self.³¹ In terms of contemporary Latino/a issues such as Latino male self-transformation, self-transformation may be approached with a moral obligation. Second, this moral project and vocation to become a self is not (and cannot) be achieved in isolation, but rather depends upon "standing" in relation to healthy "others." In other words, self-transformation requires the help of the others; it is a task for the individual and the community. Third, the moral project to become a self is not devoid of any metaphysics; instead it presupposes certain metaphysical assumptions and parameters. That is, Kierkegaard's hybrid metaphysical account of the self avoids anti-essentialist critiques because even though the task of the individual to "self-create" resides within metaphysical perimeters, self-creation within these metaphysical perimeters (the self as

³⁰Identity has been come under attack in a number of venues such as philosophical attacks on the notion of the self and identity, as well political attacks which denies that any notion of ethnic identity is useful and productive to a healthy democracy.

³¹Of course for Kierkegaard constructing the self would certainly go beyond moral obligation and would quickly become a religious duty.

triadic being) doesn't necessarily absolve the individual from the task to self-create.

Fourth, Kierkegaard's self (the vocation to become a self) is a task that begins in one's current situation whether that is one's socio-economic and political situation or one's spiritual situation or both.

Finally, there is utility in Kierkegaard's notion of the self in relation to God in that it brings to light the crucial matter of a standard and criteria by which one uses to gain a self. This will have vital consequences in discussing Latino males and "healthy" role models by which to acquire healthy and complete selves. Moreover, Kierkegaard's remarks on "religious self" is also helpful in "whole self" formation by bringing to the discussion vulnerability, dependency, and humility by relating to a higher power, even if this power isn't a Transcendent God.

Chapter II- Kierkegaard's Subjectivity

Introduction to Subjectivity

Kierkegaard attends to subjectivity throughout his entire pseudonymous authorship, but never more rigorously than under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus, in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments*.³² The *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, written in 1846, is the sequel to the *Philosophical Fragments* written two years earlier; however, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (hereafter CUP) is five times longer than the *Fragments* which Climacus calls a, “pamphlet”. These two works are associated not only by their subject matter and authorship, but also by their humorous titles. *Philosophiske Smuler: eller en Smule Philosophi* translated as, *Just a crumb of philosophy* or *philosophical crumbs* which is misleadingly translated in English as, *Philosophical Fragments* (Hannay 2001). To present any literary work, especially a philosophical work, as merely a crumb or a morsel of philosophy would have been humorous to some and to others would have been outright scandalous because in that day philosophy was considered an all-encompassing tight knit scientific system. Equally comical was the reference “unscientific” in the title of the *Postscript*. Hegel’s philosophy,

³² Right at the start subjectivity must be distinguished from subjectivism. That is, Kierkegaard’s subjectivity does not denote personal relativism such that the individual maneuvers through life by personal whim, nor does it refer to a type of ethical subjectivism whereby one creates her own ethics according to her own preferences. As I proceed it will become clear why Kierkegaard’s subjectivity cannot amount to personal/subjective relativism.

dominating the philosophical landscape in Kierkegaard's day, was described as a system; therefore, it elevated speculative philosophy to the prestigious platform and respectful standing as that of science (C. S. Evans 1983). Clearly, as both titles indicate, Climacus has set his target on the speculative right-wing Hegelian system that had gripped Denmark in Kierkegaard's day.³³

³³Climacus had especially set out to combat Hans Lassen Martensen (1808-1884) theologian, professor at the University of Copenhagen, who later became Bishop of Zealand. Martensen's most important contribution to speculative theology was, *Christian Dogmatics*. Moreover, Climacus sought to attack Hegel's philosophical system. It was Hegel's notoriously opaque and difficult philosophical assessment of religion in general and Christianity in particular that didn't sit very well with Climacus. For Hegel, propositional truth can't simply be presented in an either true or false manner. Truth is more complex Hegel believed, because propositional truths express both truth and falsehood. Suppose that one utters a proposition; it is inevitable that this proposition is only partially true and expresses a one-sided truth. What is needed for the whole truth is the proposition's opposite, and out of the clash of these opposing views a more adequate statement of the truth will emerge. Again, this dialectical process is repeated; as a result, this "seemly" more adequate statement of the truth inevitably finds itself partial and one-sided. The opposite view is again summoned to produce a more adequate statement of the truth and so forth. The point here is that going through this dialectical process, a more adequate statement of truth both cancels and affirms the opposing statements. For Hegel, absolute truth emerges via the process of philosophical thinking through his whole system.

The whole is only complete when two propositions are made together, and when the first is asserted and maintained, it must be countered by clinging to the other with invincible stubbornness. Since both are equally right, they are both equally wrong, and the mistake consists in taking such abstract forms as 'the same' and 'not the same', 'identity' and 'non-identity', to be something true, fixed, and actual, and in resting on them. Neither the one nor the other has truth; the truth is just their movement in which simple sameness is an abstraction and hence absolute difference... (PS p.472-473).

Consequently, for Hegel, Christianity was but a partial truth and needed to be superseded in the process of the entire speculative system. According to this scheme, Christianity is one stage in the total process that constitutes the truth; the speculative must seek a more adequate expression of the truth. In the end, Climacus interpreted Hegel as demoting faith as simply a given, and something that we needed to get beyond. Merold Westphal comments on Hegel's treatment of Christian faith as something incomplete and perhaps "child-like," which necessitated moving past the Christian faith altogether.

All the focus of chapter 7 of the *Phenomenology* is on getting from the "imperfect," "incomplete," and "defective" form (*Vorstellungen*), to the truly spiritual and perfected form (*Begriffe*)...faith is treated as effortless and virtually inevitable; the serious task is getting beyond it to knowledge (Westphal 1996).

As we shall see, what Kierkegaard does with subjectivity is widely read as merely a project of radical individual subjectivity such that the highest call for the individual is to retreat and turn his back on society while contemplating his or her personal piety alone with God. However, I will argue that this reading is wrong. I will argue that subjectivity for Kierkegaard is not an end in and of itself, but rather a radical attempt, as a social critic, to call attention to a society that has deified itself at the expense of the individual. In other words, subjectivity is a tool in the hands of the Danish gadfly trying to dislodge and expose a religiously veiled social ideology.

Kierkegaard's Conception of Subjectivity

Climacus seeks to correct the spiritual and religious Danish culture by correcting a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to exist as a human being. Such a task, Climacus thinks, requires an analysis of subjectivity. Thus, the context of discussing subjectivity is tied to context of correcting one's thinking about existence.³⁴ In this way,

³⁴ CUP, then, is written to sort out the issue of what it means to be a Christian in the face of Danish Hegelian Christians in the 1840's. That is, Climacus is asking, "How does one become a Christian?" Whatever the answer to this question turns out to be for Climacus, one thing is assured; Christianity will not be examined in the traditional objective manner. Climacus writes, "In order, however, to avoid confusion, it should immediately be borne in mind that the issue is not about the truth of Christianity but about the individual's relation to Christianity, consequently not about the indifferent individual's systematic eagerness to arrange the truths of Christianity in paragraphs but rather about the concern of the infinitely interested individual with regard to his own relation to such a doctrine...the objective issue, then would be about the truth of Christianity. The subjective issue is about the individual's relationship to Christianity" (*Post.* VII 6-8). The problem that Climacus diagnoses is that the Denmark Hegelians, and many orthodox guardians of Christianity, have transformed Christianity into a scholarly and intellectual exercise. The error lies in thinking that becoming a Christian is a result of completing a learned process because the achievement of such a process (both as philosophical speculation and historical inquiry) is never complete. Becoming a Christian involves faith, and faith involves a decision; however, attempting to relate to Christianity in an objective manner negates making a decision since making an objective decision requires postponing decision until the final result are in. Moreover, it is equally wrong-headed, Climacus is convinced, to think that one is automatically a Christian simply because one is born into a certain family, clan, social class, and/or geographical location. The error in this particular thinking is that one is by default a Christian simply by birth so there is no urgency and no sense in contemplating what it means to be a Christian; it is time to "move on" in order to discuss weighty speculative philosophical notions.

Climacus wants to change his contemporaries' thinking about the way they think about ethics and religion via a change in their thinking regarding existence itself. The point of departure for discussing existence, for Climacus, is a discussion of subjectivity. The four main aspects of subjectivity that I will explicate are: I) objective and subjective thinking, II) subjectivity and indirect communication, III) subjectivity as inwardness, existence, and passion, and IV) subjectivity and truth. Upon discussing these aspects of subjectivity, I will conclude by highlighting some important themes that will be taken up and used in my discussion on Latino male self-transformation in the next chapter.

I) Objective and Subjective Thinking

The type of thinking that Climacus thinks is essential to authentic human existence is subjective thinking in contrast to objective thinking. For Kierkegaard, human thought can take different postures or standpoints on different matters. For example, we can reflect differently by offering a variety of views on a plethora of issues.

Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship does just this; it presents diverse views concerning matters of existence, inwardness, guilt, sin, reason, faith, passion, aesthetics, ethics, and the religious. Although there are many cognitive standpoints that one may take, for Kierkegaard, there are two essential employments of human thought concerning the many standpoints that we do take: objective thought and subjective thought. We can reflect on many issues either in an objective or subjective manner. Kierkegaard writes in *Postscript* concerning this distinction:

Whereas objective thinking is indifferent to the thinking subject and his existence, the subjective thinker as existing is essentially interested in his own thinking, is existing in it. Therefore, his

thinking has another kind of reflection, specially, that of inwardness, of possession, whereby it belongs to the subject and to no one else (*Post.* VII 55).

One could see this distinction Kierkegaard is making by considering the type of thinking utilized when the Latino male is “thinking” about logical and scientific problems versus the type of thinking employed when he thinks about his own existence and more specifically what it means to be a whole and authentic Latino male.

It is important to note that Kierkegaard is not just making a distinction between abstract thought and concrete thought. It is not that theoretical or objective thinking attempts to understand the world abstractly whereas subjective thinking attempts to understand the world in concrete terms. Both theoretical or objective and subjective thinking make abstractions. Theoretical thinking understands the world abstractly by using objective terms, and subjective thought understands the world abstractly in relation to his or her own existence (C. S. Evans 1982). The issue that Kierkegaard, via Climacus in CUP, is illuminating is that the mind can take a certain posture towards objects. That is, we can take an objective standpoint towards objects that are legitimate such as the empirical sciences and logic. However, we are not only epistemologically compelled but morally obligated to approach ethics and religion via subjective reflection. Edward J. Hughes makes these remarks regarding Kierkegaard’s objective/ subjective distinction.

Objectivity does not stand alone apart from subjectivity or refer to something existing in itself. Objectivity in this scheme is primarily the choice of a subject to orient oneself both toward the world and toward oneself in a particular manner. Objectivity is a freely chosen stance, an activity that moves away from concern with the subject and moves toward the object as its locus. The subject in order to be faithful to an objective stance must withdraw or abstract away from his or her existence in order to reflect the object of thought (Hughes 1995).

For Kierkegaard, there are certain problems that can only be approached in a subjective manner, that is, in relation to one’s own existence. It is the latter approach that must not

be surrendered to the empirical sciences because “when man is studied by means of this objective reflection, he is treated in terms of the same laws, traits, and determining conditions that prevail in the rest of nature.”³⁵ It is not that Kierkegaard despises objectivity and the sciences, but rather objectivity is limited because it moves away from the personal and ethical dimensions of human existence.

Instead of having the task of understanding the concrete abstractly, as abstract thinking has, the subjective thinker has the opposite task of understanding the abstract concretely. Abstract thinking turns from concrete human beings to human-kind in general; the subjective thinker understands the abstract concept to be the concrete human being, to be this individual existing human being (Post VII 305).

Kierkegaard believes that there are certain problems (existential problems) facing each individual that can only be solved when the person deliberately orients the mind in relation to his or her own existence, and he worries that immersion in objectivity can be an instrument used for the subject to escape the obligation of ethical and religious matters pertaining to his own existence.

No, praised be scholarship, praised be everyone who chases the cattle away from its sanctuary. The ethical is and remains the highest task assigned to every human being. It may also be required of a devotee of scholarship that he understand ethically before he dedicates himself to his intellectual discipline, that he continue to understand himself ethically in all his labor...(Post VII 125).

For Kierkegaard, although objective reflection can give us at best only approximate knowledge, his primary concern is what the objective standpoint requires of the individual.³⁶ Climacus describes the knowing subject in an objective mode of inquiry

³⁵ James Collins, *The Mind of Kierkegaard* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983) p.46.

³⁶ Climacus argues that the greatest certainty that objective knowledge (sense certainty, historical knowledge, and speculative knowledge) can give us is only an approximation; thus requiring at some point on the part of the individual a *leap* (PF 83-84; CUP 21-38; 44, 218, 314, 316). For more on Kierkegaard's

as disinterested and neutral, but in doing so the subject becomes indifferent to her own existence and devoid of inwardness and passion.³⁷ It is precisely the latter state of affairs that must be avoided when approaching the ethic-religious domain (21). In sum, Kierkegaard writes that objectivity and the sciences have their proper domain, but there are limits to this domain, and issues of ethics and religion (existential matters) fall outside this domain, and are instead properly discussed in the domain of subjectivity.³⁸

II) Subjectivity and Indirect Communication

In CUP, Climacus deals with indirect communication in a chapter entitled, *Something about Lessing*.³⁹ In that chapter Climacus develops four theses related to Lessing; however, I will only be exploring the first thesis because it concerns subjectivity and indirect communication.

The first thesis attributed to Lessing, *The subjective existing thinker is aware of the dialectic of communication*, introduces the distinction between direct and indirect

Humean skepticism see Richard H. Popkin, "Hume and Kierkegaard" *The Journal of Religion*, Vol.31, No. 4. (Oct., 1951): 274-281.

³⁷Although Climacus believes that objectivity requires detachment and disinterestedness on the part of the subject, he also believes that this "neutrality" is rarely achieved (CUP 43).

³⁸For a discussion on Kierkegaard's objective/ subjective distinction see Sylvia Walsh, *Subjectivity versus Objectivity: Kierkegaard's Postscript and Feminist Epistemology*, International Kierkegaard Commentary *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to "Philosophical Fragments* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997, 11-22. Walsh argues that although Climacus accepts traditional androcentric epistemological orientation, Climacus subjectivity can still play an emancipatory role in feminist studies.

³⁹Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) was a famous dramatist, critic, and central figure in the German Enlightenment. Kierkegaard praises Lessing in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* for what he says about historical and eternal truth in his essay, *On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power*. In this essay, Lessing makes the distinction between necessary truths that cannot be otherwise and contingent or historical truths that can be otherwise. In CUP, Lessing is admired primarily for his emphasis on the importance of striving infinitely after the unfinished task of finding truth.

communication, which correlates to objective and subjective thinking (VII 55).⁴⁰ For Climacus, direct communication goes hand-in-hand with objective thinking. As we have seen, objective thought is different from subjective thought and the former is communicated differently than the latter. Objective thinking is indifferent to the thinking subject and his or her own existence whereas the subjective thinker is, “essentially interested in his own thinking, is existing in it...his thinking has another kind of reflection, specifically, that of inwardness, of possession, whereby it belongs to the subject and no one else” (73). What Climacus has in mind here is that objective thought is concerned with existence only in so far as it is concerned with human existence as part of its natural existence. That is, human beings are a part of nature and just as other creatures of the natural order we are endowed with actualities and possibilities. Objective thought operates in this domain via thought directed toward objects and thus can be communicated directly as a “result”. However, we can also, different from other creatures of the natural world, not only think about our actualities and possibilities, but we can step back and reflect upon our possibilities and think about what possibilities we *ought* to actualize and appropriate to our lives. For Climacus, that latter type of thinking is subjective thinking in that we are thinking about what possibilities we *ought* to actualize, and especially those possibilities that have a direct bearing on our own existence.

For Climacus, subjective thinking can only be communicated indirectly. Climacus writes these words regarding indirect communication and double-reflection.

⁴⁰Climacus makes it clear that the thesis he (Climacus) attributes to Lessing is not necessarily what the historical Lessing actually intended, but instead his (Climacus’) appropriation of Lessing’s remarks, “I now intend to present something that I shall, what the deuce, ascribe to Lessing, without being certain that he would acknowledge it” (72).

Objective thinking is completely indifferent to subjectivity and thereby to inwardness and appropriation; its communication is therefore direct. It is obvious that it does not therefore have to be easy. But it is direct; it does not have the illusiveness and the art of double-reflection....it can be understood directly; it can be reeled off (Post VII 58).

What Climacus has in mind with double reflection is simply that subjective communication is not so much concerned with “understanding” an item intellectually outside one’s self, but rather is related to self understanding. Objective thinking is communicated directly by passing information from one person to the next person. The recipient of such knowledge only needs to grasp the information communicated for it (the communication act) to be successful; this is the first and only reflection and thus there is no need for a second reflection. The subjective thinker, however, not only grasps the intellectual content (the first reflection), but must also consider how to apply and appropriate the content to her own existence (the second reflection). Double reflection, then, puts the individual in the awkward place of confronting the self and problems related to the self, which may be a lonely and clandestine place. Merold Westphal writes these insightful remarks regarding the challenge and loneliness of reflection.

In immediacy we live our lives thoughtlessly, allowing instinct or habit, inclination or drive, to dictate our actions....in reflection, by contrast, we become thoughtful. We disengage from our instincts, habits, inclinations, and drives so as to step back from life and take a look at it. It is appropriate that the term “reflection” should make us think of seeing ourselves in a mirror or in a calm lake, for in reflection we do indeed manage to look at ourselves (Westphal 1996).

The second reflection, for Climacus, is a matter of personal inwardness whereby the subjective thinker is left alone with the content communicated and now must wrestle with how to personally apply the matter to her own life and her own existence. The second reflection, in this sense becomes more than just introspection but rather is a type of thinking that demands certain actions of the individual. Consider the Latino male who has just finished attending a series of lectures on self-transformation and machismo. At the

conclusion of the series of lectures, one might say that his notebook is full in sense that notes were taken and concepts were employed by abstracting from the universal to the particular. On this surface level, Climacus would no doubt say that communication took place (a notebook full of notes bears this out), and one might even be tempted to say that communication was “publically” successful. However, Climacus would also insist that communication is unfinished and left incomplete until one has properly appropriated (second reflection) the content of the lecture to his own existence. The latter type of reflection requires on the part of the listener the task of appropriating the lecture content to his own personal existence; this task now takes on the form of an ethical duty which could never be “taught” directly by a third-party.

Nevertheless, objectors may simply point out that Climacus’ notion of subjective reflection is nothing more than introspective thinking that precedes action, but if this criticism is right then how would this differ in any significant sense from objective thinking? One way to get Climacus off the hook is to interpret his distinction, as Evans observes, as a distinction between a type of thinking “subjective thinking” or “existential thinking” that is primarily concerned with action and a type of thinking “objective thought” that is not. In this way, “thought and action are separate because action is never equivalent to merely having thought something; they are linked because genuine action is the realization of what has been thought” (C. S. Evans 1983).

Climacus is attempting to bring attention to a type of thinking, he calls existential thinking, that precedes action and even prompts passionate action toward existential problems. However, this still leaves the problem of how subjectivity is to be communicated unresolved. Communicating subjectivity from one person to the next takes

place via maieutic art and the method of dialectic.⁴¹ Just as Socrates communicated to his audience indirectly, as a “midwife,” through dialectic in order to get beneath the veneer of deception and illusion; his ultimate goal was to get the individual to arrive at the truth for himself. The task, then, of communicating subjectivity in an “artful” way requires that the communicator distance himself from the recipient in order for the recipient to grasp the truth by himself.⁴² The communicator can present the existential possibilities to the recipient, but in the end it is the responsibility of the recipient to act in freedom and appropriate the truth to their own lives.

Moreover, the communicator engages in a method of dialectic in order to communicate indirectly. The notion of dialectic, for Kierkegaard, is not synonymous with Hegel in that for the latter, dialectic is conceived as the ongoing and opposing movements in the world-historical process, but rather, for Kierkegaard the opposition takes the form of taking a critical and questioning posture in order to see all possible angles in a situation from which the subject is then asked to choose.

The task of communicating subjectivity proves to be more difficult than one might think because “the recipient is in the grip of various illusions,” and “a person may will, consciously or unconsciously, to remain in the illusion” (C. S. Evans 1983). Thus,

⁴¹Maieutic comes from the Greek word maieuesthai, to midwife or act as a midwife; and the word maieutikos meaning, of midwifery. To communicate maieutically means to communicate in such a way that one acts as a “midwife” not giving birth, but rather helping the individual to give birth. The communicator doesn’t present doctrines, but instead helps the hearer to recognize the possibilities; putting the hearer in a situation, usually a difficult and uncomfortable situation, wherein the hearer must draw appropriate conclusions for himself.

⁴²For more on distancing the author and the reader see Merold Westphal’s remarks on Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous authorship and the “death of the author” motif in Roland Barthes, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida in chapter two of *Becoming a Self*.

the tools employed for such a project of “indirect communication of subjectivity” to an audience steeped in illusion, as Climacus believed, fall to irony and humor.⁴³ Although explicating the tools of irony and humor are beyond the scope of my current task, one may certainly be justified in claiming that Kierkegaard’s entire pseudonymous authorship can be seen as an attempt to indirectly communicate artfully and ironically to his audience by presenting various views, positions, and most importantly existential possibilities whereby the reader is left alone, so to speak, with the possibilities in order to assume responsibility for actualizing (or not) these possibilities.⁴⁴

III) Subjectivity as Inwardness, Existence, and Passion

Subjectivity does not denote a single unitary meaning, but rather refers to a constellation of interrelated concepts that are not identical, but yet have an overlapping set of meanings.⁴⁵ Subjectivity for Kierkegaard encompasses a certain set of concepts:

⁴³ Irony, for Kierkegaard, had several meanings. One, irony functioned as an existential transitional standpoint between the aesthetic and the ethical domain. Second, irony was a tool used in his encounter with others. Humor also had several meaning for Kierkegaard. Like irony, humor was an existential transitional standpoint the individual could assume in her movement from the ethical to the religious existence sphere. Humor was also a tool employed in order to communicate with others.

⁴⁴ In some cases, Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous authorship is doubly removed from the audience in that not only is the act of writing under a pseudonym an employment of indirect communication, but the pseudonyms themselves engage in widening space between the author and the reader by employing other forms of indirect communication. This is evident with the writings of Johannes Climacus. Climacus engages in a type of experimental psychology, “I who am neither a religious speaker nor a religious person, but just a humorous, imaginatively constructing psychologist” (VII, 419). The Swenson translation reads, “a humoristic experimenting psychologist” (p. 431). For Kierkegaard, the psychological experimenting is not what modern psychology means by the term, but rather is simply hypothetical thinking. That is, he engages in what we tend to call, thought experiments. He imaginatively constructs various existential possibilities, while he himself doesn’t commit to any one possibility, but instead leaves that to the reader to decide.

⁴⁵ I have borrowed the reference to Kierkegaardian subjectivity as a constellation of meaning from Edward J. Hughes in “How Subjectivity is Truth in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript.” Hughes remarks that the terms: spirit, inwardness, subjectivity, passion, interest, and Christianity, “form a constellation of meaning for which Kierkegaard reveals both the dynamic of the soul and the subjective side of the essence of Christianity” p. 198. Furthermore, regarding the concept of subjectivity, one may see

inwardness, existence, and passion. In what follows, I will discuss each of these concepts, but first it is necessary to be reminded of how Kierkegaard/Climacus uses these concepts interchangeably.

But primarily I sought through my own reflection to pick up a clue to the ultimate misunderstanding. I need not report my many mistakes, but it finally became clear to me that the deviation of speculative thought and, based thereupon, its presumed right to reduce faith to factor might not be something accidental, might be located far deeper in the orientation of the whole age—most likely in this, that because of much knowledge people have entirely forgotten what it means to *exist* and what *inwardness* is (Post 1. 241-2).

Yes, as said previously, I have nothing to do with the contents of the book. My thesis was that subjectivity, inwardness, is truth (Post 1.300).

The subjective thinker as existing is essentially interested in his own thinking, is existing in it. Therefore, his thinking has another kind of reflection, specifically, that of inwardness, of possession, whereby it belongs to the subject and to no one else (Post 1.73).

Even in connection with relative pathos, the dialectical is like oil on the fire and extends the range of inwardness and intensively inflames the passion...the pathos-filled in our philosophical nineteenth century has fallen into discredit and the dialectical has become passionless...because passion is the very tension in the contradiction, and when this is taken away the passion is a pleasantry, a witty remark. An existence-issue, however, is pathos-filled and dialectical. The one set forth here requires existence-inwardness in order to grasp the pathos, passion of thought to grasp the dialectical difficultly, and concentrated passion because one is suppose to exist in it (Post 1.385-6).

Then it certainly would be dubious to enter the truth of Christianity in this manner. Christianity is spirit; spirit is inwardness; inwardness is subjectivity; subjectivity is essentially passion, and at its maximum an infinite, personally interested passion for one's eternal happiness (Post 1.32-33).

this particular concept in terms of Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblances" as opposed to nice tidy and underlying essences of concepts. Wittgenstein remarks,

Consider for example the proceedings that we all call, "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?— Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'"— but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all.— For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that...and the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail. I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way (PI 66-67).

I refer to this passage again later in the paper in chapter three with reference to Kierkegaard's stages of existence theory and Wittgenstein's notion of "forms of life."

a) Inwardness

Inwardness and subjectivity are closely related but inwardness seems to pick out a narrower domain of subjectivity whereby the individual puts him or herself in a position to be left alone, apart from social status, in order to contemplate concerns of an ethical and religious nature.⁴⁶ This private contemplation is not for its own sake, but to move the individual to take action concerning becoming a self and to face the problem of one's own existence. Again, this facet of inwardness can be made transparent by discussing the Latino male who has developed an "unhealthy" estimation of himself and others in the

⁴⁶The meaning of inwardness (*Inderlighed*), for Kierkegaard, at times seems to be synonymous with subjectivity in that he uses the terms interchangeably. Stephen Evans takes "subjectivity" and "inwardness" to be synonymous but quickly notes that, "It is of course a daunting task to say what "inwardness" is for Kierkegaard" (*Kierkegaard's "Fragments" and "Postscript" The Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus*, Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press International, Inc, 1983, pp.39-41). Nevertheless, Evans suggests that inwardness refers to, "the central enduring concerns that give shape and substance to the personality, concerns that have both a dispositional character and an episodic character." Evans goes on to point out that these concerns are not merely "naturally present" in the individual, but rather they are "formed" by the individual and aided or hindered by the individual. These concerns are of the nature of moral and religious character, and are essential to the task of becoming a true self. In this sense, inwardness is defined in a broad manner dealing with moral and religious concerns and their direct bearing on the subject in the task of becoming a true self. However, Robert C. Roberts puts a little space between subjectivity and inwardness. For Roberts, subjectivity (*Subjektivitet*) "suggests a contrast with interests, attitudes, and compulsions (that is, the character-formation) associated with the activities of speculative philosophy and professional historical scholarship" (*Existence, emotion, and virtue: Classical Themes in Kierkegaard, The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 177-206). That is, subjectivity is used by Kierkegaard, broadly speaking, to contrast the character formation of the individual committed to the enterprise of "objectivity" as opposed to character formation and dispositions of the individual committed to subjectivity. Inwardness, for Roberts, differs from subjectivity in that it "implies a different contrast- with "externalities" such as social position, reputation, the "results" of one's actions, and publicly observed natural phenomena." Inwardness according Roberts as a contrast to "externalities" gets at one's personal and private self apart from social and public trappings. Inwardness, in this sense, seems to be much narrower than subjectivity in that in a state of inwardness one is left alone to contemplate, as Kierkegaard would have it, the individual is stripped of the comforts of the "externalities" and left to contemplate their own existence. Julia Watkin spells out subjectivity in terms of living in a "sphere of personal commitment to an ethical-religious way of life, to the living of that life," while inwardness is defined in much narrower constrains of religiosity, (*Historical Dictionary of Kierkegaard's Philosophy*). Inwardness, for Watkin, refers to "spiritual potentiality of the human soul experienced from the inside." Watkin goes on to suggest that inwardness for Kierkegaard was "a hidden personal religiosity" in contrast to manifest religiosity of the monks and nuns in a community. Again, inwardness here is being cashed out in contrast to, as Roberts puts it "externalities" but the significance here is that Watkin understands inwardness in a religious context, namely the individual manifests a "hidden religiosity" in actions (the way one lives) not in wearing certain ecclesiastical clothing and religious garb.

context of the social and public trappings with which associates. However, in contrast to the former “externalities” the Latino male, in a moment of contemplative inwardness, re-examines his values, projects, and most importantly his own lived experience.

b) Existence

Also closely related to subjectivity is existence. Kierkegaard assumes different modes of being, and is interested in a special type of existence that goes beyond the individual described and defined merely as a biological, psychological, and social animal.⁴⁷ For Kierkegaard, the individual who truly “exists” is the individual who is personally committed to becoming a self, in despair realizes his or her freedom, and recognizes their responsibility for their actions. This type of existence is cashed out in the existence-spheres (the aesthetic, ethical, and religious stages of existence).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Climacus speaks of *existence* and *existing* in relation to the subjective thinker, we need to be aware that the Danish words for existence and existing: *være til*, *Tilværelse*, and *eksistere* have no counterparts in English; thus, all are translated as some form of “exist” in English. The noun *Tilværelse* (existence) refers generically to the sphere of human activity. In this sense, it parallels the term actuality. However, the Danish verb *eksistere* signifies a qualitative life beyond the life of immediacy; it underscores an aspect of a person’s ethical-religious striving and individual development (Watkin 2001). This sense of “to exist” is to be contrasted with the Danish verb *være til* which refers to a person’s concrete physical existence in the world.

⁴⁸ I won’t belabor the issue by rehashing these domains of existence since that has already been covered. I will simply point that the spheres of existence set on display qualitatively different levels of existence. While the aesthetic stage of existence can be described as a humdrum and dull form of existence it is still a form of existence. However, the major flaw with the aesthetic domain is that it lacks authentic existence. The type of existence or level of existence in the aesthetic domain is characterized by a lack of responsibility to take one’s given nature (one’s specific hereditary and environment) and to shape and mold their own development by exercising free will. The latter state of affair is no different than the dull form of existence Kierkegaard describes as similar to the drunken pleasant passed-out in the back of a cart driven to and fro wherever the horse pleases (VII 267). Authentic existence begins in the ethical sphere of existence where the subject becomes self-conscious. Remaining in this type of existence the subject is in the process of becoming an authentic self because the subject is “doing the choosing.” That is, the subject is now self-directing her own life by resolutely making choices in passion. Passion will be discussed shortly.

The type of existence that appears at the ethical domain is in reference to ethical striving. That is, for Climacus, authentic existence, which begins in the ethical domain, denotes a particular type of struggle or striving in the individual.

But what is existence? It is that child who is begotten by the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, and is therefore continually striving (Post 1. 92 VII 71).

That the existing subjective thinker is continually striving does not mean, however, that in a finite sense he has a goal toward which he is striving, where he would be finished when he reached it. No, he is striving infinitely, is continually in the process of becoming (Post 1.91 VII 72).

Recall that for Kierkegaard, the self is a synthesis of contrasting factors (infinite and finite, temporal and eternal, and freedom and necessity).⁴⁹ Authentic existence exemplified in an ethical struggle, then, is a struggle and a permanent tension to bring together the temporal and the eternal. What does Climacus mean by the eternal? For Climacus, like Socrates, there is an infinite and eternal truth, and the subjective thinker has an essential relation to it; however this relationship is restricted by virtue of finitude cashed out in the temporality of human existence (Westphal 1996). The eternal, for Climacus, denotes what is perfect, complete, and unchanging as opposed to something that is imperfect, in process, and changing.⁵⁰ The eternal in relation to the ethical, for Climacus, is not merely contemplating universal possibilities for their own sake, but rather contemplating universal possibilities as possibilities for action. That is, in the practical life some of these universal possibilities are moral possibilities, which can be

⁴⁹ Against the idea that Kierkegaard was a Sartrean existentialist in that for humans, existence precedes essence; thus, we choose who we are in the sense of having no nature prior to choosing, Kierkegaard maintains that human nature is a synthesis of contrasting factors. Thus, for Kierkegaard, the self has an ontological given that then becomes the task of every person to shape and mold into an authentic self. The choosing and creating of one's self will be done within the metaphysical parameters of synthesizing these contrasting factors.

⁵⁰ C. Stephen Evans in, *Kierkegaard's Fragments and Postscript*, discusses four significant uses of "the eternal" for Climacus: abstract logical possibilities, moral obligations, God, and man's future life (59-64).

grasped not only as eternally binding on the individual, but also as universal and timeless duties transcending personal whim and cultural norms. Thus, one side of the struggle that emerges is that the eternal for the authentic existing being is the life-time struggle and striving to realize moral ideals, duties, and norms (C. S. Evans 1983).

In a final note regarding the eternal, I must mention that for Climacus it is in the ethical domain that one encounters God. That is, for Climacus not only do all logical possibilities, but also moral possibilities, have their ground in God. Thus, when the authentic subject strives to *become* in the ethical domain, she is not only conscious of the moral law, to use Kant's term, but she becomes conscious of God by realizing her moral duties in action. Of course Climacus would not say that the subject has knowledge of God, but to be sure the subject encounters God or has existential awareness of God in her ethical striving.

In contrast to the eternal and infinite stands the temporal and finitude, in which Climacus simply refers to as the temporal character of human existence. In other words, actualizing ethical duties (or any actions for that matter) must be done in time, and since the subject fails to realize his or her ideals fully, completely, and perfectly; she must realize these ideals in temporal striving. For example, it is one thing to realize that the subject *ought* to do X, but it is another thing for the subject to actually do X continually. Moreover, it is still another matter to do X (actualize X) within the constraints of one's own spatial-temporal existence not to mention one's own hereditary, social, and environmental limitations. To invoke deep reflection upon the subject's daily confrontation and struggle with the finite and temporal, Climacus asks, "What it means to

die?”⁵¹ Again, Climacus is not just mulling over dark existential themes for their own sake, but rather to awaken the authentic subject to the temporal and finite factors in human existence. That is, by being aware of our own impending death Climacus wants the subject to genuinely grapple with our own imperfect, temporal, and fragmented achievements. However, the question remains, “How does the existing subject continually synthesize the eternal and temporal into her own existence?” For Climacus, the answer is found in passion.

c) **Passion**

Climacus writes, “Only momentarily can a particular individual, existing, be in a unity of the infinite and the finite that transcends existing. This instant is the moment of passion” (Post 1.197 VII 164). Before discussing how passion unifies the self as an integrated self, we need to see what is meant by passion. The passions, for Climacus, are not just an uncalculated burst of emotions where emotions quickly overtake the subject and just as quickly disappear. Instead, for Climacus, passion must be “acquired” and “developed” in which the subject takes responsibility for his or her passion. In this sense, Kierkegaardian passions are certainly emotions, yet a certain type of emotions; more akin to what we call values (C. S. Evans 1983). Watkin notes that passion (*Lidenskab*) is etymologically connected to the word for “suffer” (*Lide*) which is expressed in two ways: longing for something and that of suffering because of it. Thus, for Kierkegaard, passion can be negative or positive. Passions in the negative sense picks out “self-interested desires” and “unbridled emotions” such that appear at aesthetic sphere of existence while passions in the positive sense, refers to emotions/ values developed in the ethical-

⁵¹ VII 137-147

religious domain (Watkin 2001). Passions and/or values must be honed and developed in order to give shape and direction to the subject. For example, consider the subject who realizes their finite and temporal limitations (perhaps coming from a lower social-economic class and/or having certain physical limitations), yet imagines and presents to himself the non-actual (the possible- perhaps possibilities of a different life). All that has gone on in the subject at this point is reflection and thought. What is now needed is for the subject to bring to close the reflective process of the imagination (representing to himself various possibilities) and take a certain course of action; however, this can only happen when the subject decides to act. What moves the subject from reflective thought to taking a certain action? For Climacus, it is passion that moves the subject to true action. Nevertheless, in the case above, “What is the particular passion ‘called forth’ and ‘cultivated’ that moves the subject to take action?” and “What is the object of this particular passion?” Following the case above, one could say that the particular passion called upon by the subject in order to move the subject to take a certain course of action is indignation and the object of this particular passion is social injustice. Again, both the passion of, say, indignation and the object of passion, let’s say, social injustice have their proper place in the ethical sphere of existence. That is, the universal ethical values of righteous anger and justice, Climacus would call “the eternal” is cashed out and has its touchstone with the subject’s finite and temporal existence in and through the subject’s action. There is a sense in which the eternal and the temporal are momentarily pulled together by the subject (in her action of decrying social injustice) which gives unity to the subject. In this way, passions provide unity and integration to the subject; furthermore, passions and values enter human existence in and through the individual’s inwardness

and subjectivity. That is, subjectivity is the human aspect that appropriately deals with passions and value. However, in saying that passions and values are actualized in subjectivity, it doesn't follow that they are simply subjective in the sense that they're applicable to the particular subject only. Perhaps it is the case, as Evans suggests, that "values in themselves eternally valid might make contact with human life through the emotions" (70). Now I will turn my attention to the final aspect of subjectivity; subjectivity and truth.

IV) Subjectivity and Truth

Subjectivity and truth is a notoriously controversial Kierkegaardian theme. It seems almost insulting and highly offensive to suggest to rational thinking people, especially philosophers, that truth and subjectivity are somehow linked. Climacus remarks:

Objectivity the emphasis is on **what** is said; subjectivity the emphasis is on **how** it is said (Post 1. 202, VII 169).

Objectivity, the question is only about categories of thought; subjectivity, about inwardness. At its maximum this "how" is the passion of the infinite, and the passion of the infinite is the very truth. But the passion of the infinite is precisely subjectivity, and thus subjectivity is truth (Post 1.203, VII 170).

Are we led to believe that Climacus is by some means presenting an epistemological relativism or skeptical relativism by saying that subjectivity is truth? Although such interpretations of Kierkegaard are popular, such a reading of Kierkegaard is unwarranted because there is good evidence showing that this is certainly not what Climacus (and Kierkegaard) is doing here.⁵² As we have already discussed, Climacus distinguishes

⁵²Evans believes that such a misunderstanding in Kierkegaard is because Kierkegaard is mixing the philosophy of truth and the theology of salvation. That is, Kierkegaard begins by asking traditional

between objective thought and subjective thought. In making this distinction, he already presupposes that there are legitimate objects of objective knowledge such as, mathematics, logic, and science, but former domain of knowledge is inadequate in guiding us in ethical-religious concerns. Moreover, by making a further distinction regarding objective knowledge, that is, between divine knowledge and human knowledge, Climacus is not denying the existence of “the system” or a “world-historical” perspective. He is simply reminding us that this “divine objectivity” is not available to the human mind (86, 141, 158, 190). Similar to Kant, Climacus is denying that we can transcend our human situation in existence and view the world from a “God’s eye view point.” Climacus writes:

If, in the two definitions given, being [*Væren*] is understood as empirical being, then truth itself is transformed into a *desideratum* [something wanted] and everything is place in the process of becoming [*Vorden*], because the empirical object is not finished, and the existing knowing subject is itself in the process of becoming. Thus truth is an approximating whose beginning cannot be established absolutely, because there is no conclusion that has retroactive power (Post 1.189; VII 157).

Absolute knowledge is reserved alone for God and no human person because not only is the object of knowledge in process, but the subject of knowledge also is in process. In this sense, we are two times removed from possessing divine knowledge. In spite of our “limited” human situation, for Climacus, there is nevertheless, a crucially important dimension of human activity that eludes objectivity and therefore must be tapped into via another means. This means is subjectivity.

epistemological questions regarding the nature of truth, but then ends his discussion by asking questions about how a person can be “in the truth.” For Evans, the latter questions are a kin to the Christian concept of salvation. I not convinced of this. Certainly Kierkegaard is asking traditional epistemological questions regarding the nature of truth. However, he is not answering these questions in a strictly soteriological fashion, he is shifting the locus of truth from propositions to being, from propositional truth to true being.

Before discussing the details of Climacus' theory of truth, it is necessary to get a brief glimpse of the big picture. Climacus is asking, "What is the relationship between the subject and truth?" Or put another way, "What is it like for the subject to be (exist) in the truth?" Usually, when discussing the nature of truth, contemporary philosophers examine the conditions that need to obtain in order for a proposition to be true or false. That is to say, the truth is discussed in relation to propositions instead of in relation to one's being.

Climacus doesn't present a systematic theory of truth per se, but nevertheless, is committed to an underlying subjective theory of truth regarding ethical-religious matters⁵³. That is to say, Climacus has an epistemology:

- 1) There is divine objective truth (eternal truth).
- 2) There is human objective truth (formal and tautological).
- 3) Humans can't have divine objective truth because we are in process of becoming (we are finite and limited).
- 4) There are objects of knowledge that requires detachment (accidental objects: mathematics and logic).
- 5) There are objects of knowledge that require passion and a high level of interestedness (non-accidental objects: self-understanding, ethics, and religion).
- 6) Humans can have objective truth of accidental objects (mathematics and logic).

⁵³ Louis Pojman in, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion*, finds three theories of truth in Kierkegaard's writings: Reduplication Model of Subjectivity, Metaphysical Model of Subjectivity, and Necessary-Condition Model of Subjectivity (127-143).

- 7) Humans can't have objective truth of non-accidental objects (self-understanding, ethics, and religion).
- 8) Humans can have subjective truth of non-accidental objects (self-understanding, ethics, and religion).

Now that some of the main features of Climacus' theory of truth have been laid out, one may object that such a theory is all good and well as far as it attempts to safeguard a dimension of human activity from objectivity, but then, does this not open the flood gates to lunacy and madness, especially pertaining to religious claims? Perhaps it does. But Climacus, seemingly anticipating such a natural objection, speaks to this very concern in a satire about madness. Climacus asks us to consider a lunatic who has escaped from the sanitarium and in order to conceal his insanity from the viewing public (for fear that he will be noticed and thus recommitted) he puts a little ball in the tail of his coat. When he walks the ball will strike his back side and in turn he will utter an objective truth (the earth is round). Thus, the man walks around saying, "Boom, the earth is round...Boom, the earth is round" in order to show the viewing public his sanity by the objective truth of what he says (Post 1.194-5, VII 162). For Climacus, the man's madness shows itself not in his failure to be acquainted with objective truths, but "in his inappropriateness of his objective posture to his real-life situation" (Westphal 1987). The point Climacus is drawing our attention to is that those who attempt to extend objectivity beyond its proper bounds by enveloping the whole person for fear of the dangers of subjectivity (the most extreme form of subjectivity, for Climacus, is a Don Quixote type of madness) are displaying another form of madness by cutting away the vital inwardness of humanity and truncating the self. Is this not a type of madness too, Climacus wants us

to ask. That is, yes indeed, the **what** is important from an objective perspective, but is it not diminished if it is devoid of the **how**, the inwardness that makes the speaker human?

To be sure, Climacus is not saying that what one believes is not really that important so long as one merely believes with sincerity and passion.⁵⁴ Instead, Climacus is calling attention to a problem (the absence of subjectivity and inwardness applied to ethical-religious issues), which is, in his estimation, a more serious problem than getting what one believes right or wrong.

So what ought to be the highest concern for humanity, dispassionate and detached objectivity or something else? Climacus answers this with another famous or infamous Kierkegaardian passage:

An objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness, is the truth, the highest truth there is for the existing person (Post 1.203, VII 170).

Again, Climacus never tires of reminding us that human objectivity is uncertain (it is a matter of approximation and is never finished and complete); it is therefore limited. It is as if, Climacus thinks, we are repeatedly caught in a trap by thinking (and acting) that we can possess complete objective certainty (knowledge not available to us) meanwhile we ignore the most important items that we can possess (self-knowledge, ethics, and religion). Nevertheless, for Climacus, the highest good that ought to occupy every fiber of our being (our total existence) is the ethical-religious domain.

The quintessential champion of subjective appropriation in the jaws of objective uncertainty, for Climacus, is none other than Socrates (1.204-1.213). Climacus thinks

⁵⁴This type of reasoning is exemplified in subjective and cultural relativism. Ultimate truth is devoid of human possession; thus, truth is simply a matter of personal taste and subjective feeling.

that subjective truth is analogous to Socrates' wisdom in that 1) there is an element of risk in faith, and 2) subjective truth is what ought to occupy our lives. That is to say, Socrates stakes his entire life upon (he lives and ultimately dies for) the question, "Is there an immortality?(1.201)" Climacus understands this as a case of "passionate appropriation of objective uncertainty" in that what was objectively uncertain was that man is immortal; yet, this was the very truth that drove Socrates. The truth, "the immortality of humanity" was for Climacus a truth about the eternal, yet was essential to the meaning of the existing person within the constraints of temporality. The paradox, for Climacus, was that Socrates existed in the spatial-temporal world and yet was attempting at the same time with passion to apprehend eternity from a temporal standpoint. Again, Climacus casts the life of Socrates as a life lived in the strenuous project of attempting to wrestle with what it means to exist in the truth as opposed to merely "knowing" the truth.

Conclusion

Although Kierkegaard's conception of subjectivity is broad and diverse, as demonstrated above, nevertheless there are aspects of his conception of subjectivity that are important to any individual (contemplating his or her own existence) and, as I'm convinced, important in particular to the problems regarding Latino male self-transformation. Thus, elements of Kierkegaard's subjectivity demand serious consideration. I will conclude this chapter by briefly highlighting some areas of Kierkegaard's conception of subjectivity that will be discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to the problem of Latino male self-transformation.

- 1) Regarding *subjective thinking*, Kierkegaard provides not only a useful standpoint whereby one may posture or orient one's thinking in order to face certain existential problems, but Kierkegaard is able to bring to light how a) certain problems can only be appropriately dealt with via a certain way of thinking, namely subjective thinking, and how b) the objective mode of thinking and reflecting upon certain existential problems doesn't absolve the individual from the existential-ethical task at hand.
- 2) Kierkegaard's insight on *subjectivity and indirect communication*, open up certain categories of thinking about certain issues. In particular, it opens up the discussion regarding the individual examining different life-possibilities and then struggling to decide what life-possibilities should be actualized. Thus, Kierkegaard's remarks on subjectivity inevitably bring into focus life-possibilities and moral obligations.
- 3) From the perspective of *Subjectivity as inwardness, existence, and passion*, Kierkegaard is able to bring to the discussion many invaluable insights such as: a) *inwardness* which speaks to the issue of the subject intentionally putting his or herself in a vulnerable position "standing apart from one's social status and social trappings" in order to face the problem of one's own existence, b) *existence* which refers to a type of existence, as opposed to mere biological existence, that requires a struggle with what one *ought* to do within the constraints of one's own spatial-temporal existence, c) *passion* which refers to movement from possibility to actuality by which the eternal and the temporal come together. The latter is cashed out in terms of bringing the subject's life-

projects from the starting point in imagination to the point of actuality, and most importantly for Kierkegaard such a task in turn provides the subject with integration and unity.

- 4) Via *Subjectivity and Truth* Kierkegaard is able to bring to the fore the notion of existing in the truth as opposed to “knowing” the truth regarding existential-ethical issues. This distinction is crucial for Kierkegaard in that one can “know” the truth but yet fail to exist in the truth. Moreover, Kierkegaard will again insist that 1) certain issues can only be faced in a subjective manner, and 2) existing in the truth is more important in some cases than knowing the truth.

Now that I have explicated Kierkegaard’s conceptions of the self and subjectivity, I will turn to the topic of Latino male self-transformation.

Chapter III – Kierkegaard and Latino Male Self-Transformation

Introduction

Now that aspects of Kierkegaard's philosophy has been discussed, in particular the notions of self and subjectivity, the difficult task lies ahead in reconciling these notions with the contemporary issue of Latino male self-transformation. That is, what does Kierkegaard's version of religious identity have to do with ethnic identity in general and Latino/a identity in particular? I'm persuaded that there are indeed aspects of Kierkegaard's thought that can be brought to bear on identity issues and especially Latino male self-transformation.

In this chapter, I will discuss Latino male self-transformation as this is presented by David T. Abalos in *The Latino Male: A Radical Redefinition*.⁵⁵ I will examine the relationship of this conception of self-transformation with Kierkegaard's notion of the

⁵⁵ For my discussion of Latino-male transformation, I will primarily focus on the work of David T. Abalos, especially as it is put forward in *The Latino Male: A Radical Redefinition* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002). However, I will draw from other works by Abalos in order present his theory. These other works include: *Latinos in the United States: the Sacred and the Political* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007) and *La Comunidad Latina in the United States: Personal and Political Strategies for Transforming Culture* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1998). Abalos notes that he is heavily indebted to Manfred Halpern's work and research on the subject of transformation. See Manfred Halpern, *Transforming the Personal, Political, Historical and Sacred in Theory and Practice* (London: University of Scranton Press, 2009). I do refer to Halpern work at times in order to clarify the overall schematic of self-transformation, but my focus will be on Abalos' work because Abalos is speaking specifically to the Latino situation.

self and subjectivity. This chapter will be presented in three movements. First, I will briefly explicate Abalos' theory of transformation. This task will unfold by 1) addressing the core drama of life which itself gives way to three central movements: emanation, incoherence, and transformation, and 2) explicating four of the nine archetypal relationships. Second, I will bring to view the agreement between Abalos' theory and Kierkegaard. Lastly, I discuss contributions that Kierkegaard can indeed make to the modern Latino male self-transformation problem. I will argue that Kierkegaard's remarks on the self and subjectivity can provide impetus for the task of Latino male self-transformation.

Abalos' Theory of Self-Transformation

In *The Latino Male: A Radical Redefinition*, David T. Abalos presents his theory of Latino male self-transformation.⁵⁶ Abalos' explicates his theory of transformation in terms of a "fundamental structure" of human existence which is "given to us in the core drama of life," a drama with three central acts which engenders three ways of life (Abalos 2002). In other words, the core drama of life unfolds in three central movements: emanation, incoherence, and finally transformation, and each movement is characterized by its own way of life. The problem arises when Latino males "arrest themselves in a fragment of this journey" and thus circumvent genuine transformation (49). According to

⁵⁶ Social labels and ethnic names such as Latino/a, Hispanic, and Chicano/a are extremely important because such names and labels typically appear in the context of political agendas. For example, ethnic names play a crucial role in terms of both disempowerment and empowerment. I discuss ethnic names and labels in my discussion of Abalos' theory of transformation in the section entitled *the way of life of incoherence*.

Abalos, before reaching the third act (the act of transformation) Latino males “stunt their manhood in a fragment of the core drama” and the result is a partial and fragmented self (51). Complicating the matter, for Abalos, there are certain forces (political, economical, cultural, ecclesiastical etc.) that prevent and hinder progressive movement into the third way of life, the life of transformation. In what follows, I will discuss in more detail the various “acts” and “ways of life” that compose Abalos’ theory.

I. The Life of Emanation

The way of emanation is the first act in which the Latino male finds himself; this act is characterized by two scenes. Scene one is described as *the archetypal drama of patriarchy*, which simple means a drama of ‘systematic domination of women by men’ whereby this drama gets played out in the lives of many Latino males. Abalos provides a list of concrete examples ranging from *women seen primarily as producers of children* and *women’s main task in life is to be housewives* to *women are never allowed to be economically autonomous*. For Abalos, these inherited “stories of patriarchy” are told and retold and are continuously reinforced and defended by the various “lords of emanation,” guardians of the inherited tradition (54). Again, the “lords of emanation” are those various forces such as: political, economical, cultural, and ecclesiastical forces that defend the status quo and hinder authentic transformation. For example, many Latino males because they don’t question this inherited tradition become arrested in the way of life of emanation; as a result, their self is wounded, fragmented, and above all they lack a complete self. Consequently, there is no development of new consciousness only the retelling of old stories that continually reinforce the status quo.

For those Latino males that dare to imagine a different way of life enter into scene II of Act I. According to Abalos, when new ideas and intuitions are entertained regarding an alternative way of life, the Latino male is ready to leave Act I altogether. What Abalos seems to have in mind here is that when the Latino male imaginatively conceives or puts forward alternative stories that are “fundamentally new and more loving” the possibilities open up for the Latino male to move into the next way of life.⁵⁷ At this point there is no direct action per se, only the mental activity of taking these “new doubts and intuitions seriously” (54). What exactly “taking seriously” these new doubts and intuitions means for Abalos is not spelled out, but one could juxtapose two cases of reflection to see what Abalos has in mind here. Consider the Latino male who is steeped in the traditional stories of patriarchy and female domination; however, when he is challenged by alternative stories of love and care, he merely dismisses these stories as weak and feminine. On the other hand, consider the Latino male who is also captured in the same traditional way of life rooted in patriarchy. When confronted with alternative stories and ways of life, instead of merely dismissing them as weak, he reflects upon these alternative ways of life. Furthermore, when these consciously conceived alternative ways of life are met with opposition by the defenders of the status quo or as Abalos calls them, “lords of emanation,” he keeps reflecting upon these stories; he keeps putting forward to himself these alternative stories of love and care. In the latter scenario, we can say that he takes the new ideas and intuitions “seriously,” although at this point no direct

⁵⁷ Abalos quickly points out that new ideas and intuitions put forward by Latino males need to be tested and retested in order to, “discern whether or not they are fundamentally new and better or if they are destructive,” (54).

action has taken place whereas in the former case the new ideas and intuitions are not taken seriously at all.

II. The Life of Incoherence

Predicated upon taking these new ideas and intuitions seriously, Act II scene one, *the way of life of incoherence* emerges. It is in this scene where direct action materializes in the forms of open rebellion. For Abalos, the rebellion is a break from “parents and other authority figures” especially defenders of the traditional destructive way of life (45). However, rebellion at this point is difficult for many Latino males because, just like the lords of emanation in Act I, Act II also has its forces that seek to deny authentic Latino male self-transformation.

The lords of incoherence are particularly difficult to resist because these forces are tied to power. For example, many of these “lords,” according to Abalos, are played out in the midst of the story of capitalism; thus, resisting the lords of incoherence requires breaking away from deeply entrenched power structures that have served to maintain the status quo. Abalos remarks, “The lord of incoherence inspires them [Latino males] to practice their masculinity in the pursuit of power and self-interest” (55). The way of life of incoherence has the power to turn Latino males “against each other in a perpetual competition that sours relationships into contests of mutual suspicion and fear” and consequentially, a partial and lesser self emerges. In particular, the hatred that is set on display in this way of life is not only directed at others but is also directed at the self engendered by the belief that somehow Latino males are inferior to other males until “they become manly, as defined by white, European-American men.”

One of the most powerful tools for maintaining and extending power is through the use of names and labels such as social names like Hispanic, Latino, and Chicano. I'm not aware of the complexity behind using social labels such as Latino, Hispanic, and Chicano. The difficulties are numerous ranging from philosophical, social, and historical to the political domain. For example, these problems range from legitimate philosophical concerns such as the notion of identity to more general problems of names and naming (i.e. what do these names and labels such as 'Latino' and 'Hispanic' refer to?). The social concerns are equally problematic especially regarding race and ethnicity. Historical concerns regarding these labels also appear in terms of locating where and when these names and labels first appeared, whereas the political domain opens up the difficulties regarding these names and labels used as tools to oppress and maintain certain power structures, and whether these names and labels are indeed self-imposed or imposed from the outside. In the latter case, a people group may be disempowered simply because they are being named by the "other." That is, when the ruling elite apply ethnic names to those that they rule over, then naming is a powerful tool to maintain power over people and eventually dehumanized people. Equally true, when disempowered people name themselves this can serve as a tool of empowerment and transformation.

For Abalos, the *archetypal drama of capitalism*, manifests itself in the various sub-stories: *We wear masks, all of our relationships are in danger of being corrupted by the competition for power, we belong to impersonal systems that turn us into fragments, and nobody knows the individual in his or her wholeness* just to name a few. Latino men are aware of the destruction that this way of life is causing to them and their community, but

rather than making a break from this way of life, often Latino men misdirect their anger at each other and become arrested in the life of incoherence.

Abalos goes on to point out that a subtle temptation exists to think that the enemy here is Anglos. However, this is wrong-headed because the problem isn't with the color of people's skin. Latino males can echo stories as anecdotal evidence of the fact the Latino male domination can and indeed does occur by Latino males as well. So, the problem doesn't necessarily reside with the color of people's skin, but rather the problem resides within the capitalist system itself. Abalos concurs on this point regarding the Anglo power holders as he notes, "They are not the enemy; they are also victims of a story that destroys their humanity when people become obsessed with greed and power" (56-57).⁵⁸ What is needed, according to Abalos, is a radical break from the system that dehumanizes and leaves Latino males fragmented in its wake; what is needed is a refocusing of the anger at the root of the problem.

Scene II of Act II places the Latino male at a crossroads of decision: "either they empty themselves of the stories and partial ways of life that have possessed them or they turn to violence in order to hang on to the old stories, thereby hurting themselves and others" (57). The former claim is interesting in that Abalos suggests that "turning to violence" is a means of holding on to the old stories. What Abalos has in mind here is

⁵⁸ Paulo Freire sums this point up as he remarks in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both. This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressor or themselves" (15-16).

that many Latino males have become so wounded and excluded from realms of power that they eventually seek out other fragmented forms of power and act out repressed anger. In other words, many Latino males transition from becoming victims to becoming victimizers. This is evident with Latino gang affiliations wherein Latino males join gangs and the like in order to assert themselves within a system where they virtually lack any true power. Abalos adds that many Latino males are caught between “two crumbling ways of life: in the life of emanation they are trying to uphold the legitimation of masculine power, and in the world of capitalism they are failing to succeed” (58). The result of these failed realities for Latino males is acting out violence against themselves and the greater Latino community. Sadly, the violence is often directed at Latinas, especially when Latinas challenge the deeply engrained stories of machismo.⁵⁹

The other option available to Latino males is “empty themselves of the old stories and partial ways of life” and embrace a new healthy consciousness. Again, Abalos doesn’t exactly explain how one goes about “emptying themselves” of these old destructive stories, but he does provide his personal account of how this process could

⁵⁹ Obviously I am not asserting that violence against women is a Latino or Chicano problem. Rather, the problem is a male problem, but from the standpoint of a Latino male it is a Latino male problem. For more on violence against women as a male problem see, Jackson Katz, *The Macho Paradox: Why some Men hurt Women and What all Men can do to help*, (2006, 2-34). David Abalos makes these remarks regarding *machismo* as a male problem: I want to stress that whatever I say about the Latino Male is not particular to him; except for concrete cultural specifics, the stories and the ways of life discussed in relation to Latino men apply to all men from all other ethnic and racial backgrounds. Each culture has particular concrete differences as to how stories remain the same for all cultures. All human beings struggle with the same archetypal dramas. Patriarchy is patriarchy whether we find it in Mexico, Hong Kong, England, Saudi Arabia, France, Spain, Peru, Nigeria, or in the Latino barrios of the United States. Wherever patriarchy is found men systematically dominate women (Abalos 2002).

begin. For Abalos, the “emptying” process begins in and through personal questioning, critically evaluating the stories of patriarchy, and seeking help inside and outside the Latino community.

III. The Life of Transformation

The final stage or act of the Core Drama of Life is Act III, *the way of transformation*. Immediately Abalos closes off the option that transformation and a healthy self can emerge in and through religious institutions. There are at least two reasons why Abalos thinks this is the case: 1) religious institutions are themselves a part of the overarching problem of patriarchy rooted in capitalism, and 2) religious institutions perpetuate the story of patriarchy in especially destructive and effective ways. What is needed is a transformation a part from patriarchy religious institutions; genuine transformation is transformation “that touches personal, political, historical, and sacred faces of life” (61). Abalos remarks

To journey through the story of transformation as the core drama of life is the vocation to which all humans are called. A decisive break-through has been accomplished when Latino males realize that their greatest freedoms are to (1) become conscious of the archetypal ways of life, stories, and relationships they are living, (2) prepare themselves to choose some and reject others, and (3) participate in creating more loving and just archetypal stories and relationships in the service of transformation (Abalos 2002).

It is worth noting that for any transformation to take place direct action will have to be engaged in. In other words, transformation cannot just be a mental and imaginative exercise. Abalos remarks above make this very explicit, “participate in creating more loving and just archetypal stories and relationships.” For Abalos, once old stories and archetypes are uprooted and destroyed, the Latino male needs to take direct action in order to replace these archetypes with new ones. Furthermore, creating new archetypes and stories is not exclusively a personal and private task, but rather is a task that is

dependent upon the other, that is, relationships in the greater community. Abalos discusses nine archetypal relationships enacted in all ways of life. To this issue I now turn.

In order to create new archetypal stories, new stories that will be essentially social and political, one must understand the basic relationship structures found in all social ways of life. Abalos discusses nine basic relationship structures: emanation, subjection, buffering, isolation, direct bargaining, autonomy, incoherence, deformation, and transformation. Again, treatment of all nine relationship structures is beyond the scope of the present work, and the archetypal relationships that I will briefly examine will not be exhaustive. However, I will offer an explanation of four of the nine relationship structures because I believe that they are of central importance to my remarks on Kierkegaard and Abalos.⁶⁰ Before discussing four of the nine relationship structures, it is necessary to point out that for Abalos, these relationship structures can be infused in all the ways of life formerly discussed: emanation, incoherence, and transformation. That is, the nine relationship structures or patterns can be dispersed throughout the various acts and scenes assumed by all people. Manfred Halpern's remarks on the nine archetypal relationships are insightful here,

There exist only nine archetypal relationships shaping our capacity (or power) and our performance with any others we encounter in our life- *any* others, not only other human

⁶⁰ An in depth account of all nine archetypal relationship structure is available in the following works: David T. Abalos, *Latinos in the United States: The Sacred and the Political* 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p.33-46; Manfred Halpern, *Transforming the Personal, Political, Historical, and Sacred in Theory and Practice* (Chicago, IL: University of Scranton Press, 2009), p. 235-267.

beings...our analysis of the potentials and limits of each archetypal relationship can explain a lot about life, but no such relationship can be experienced except within archetypal stories and, most decisively, within ways of life (Halpern 2009).

Abalos takes Halpern's insight and research on the nine archetypal relationships and specifically apply these nine relationship patterns to the lives of Latino males. In what follows, I will discuss the archetypal relationships of emanation, subjection, buffering, and isolation in this order.

The Relationship of Emanation

The relationship of emanation is characterized by treating another person as an extension of oneself (65). In other words, relationships patterned after emanation are relationships in which "the self lives to the maximum extent possible as an extension of, or at least in unquestioning conformity with, the other."⁶¹ That is, the self accepts the denial of freedom and autonomy to explore and express his or her own capacity (his or her own power) in order to rest secure in the mysterious and overwhelming power of the source of this emanation. For example, sons and daughters emanate or duplicate the Father, Mother, Uncle, Aunts, and other authority figures. Emanation relationships are unavoidable and certainly necessary; however, they can also go wrong depending upon in which stage or way of life they are employed. For example, in the life of emanation the Latina may emanate or pattern the mother who is subservient to an abusive husband and never questions her loyalty to a patriarchal way of life and the "payoff," so to speak, is a type of security (which is really no security at all). Or consider the Latino male who also emanates or patterns an abusive father or an abusive authority figure in which patriarchy and machismo is an extension handed down generation after generation. Again, the

⁶¹ Halpern, *Transforming the Personal, Political, Historical, and Sacred in Theory and Practice*, 242.

reward in the latter example is the security that the Latino male obtains by not having his power and authority questioned with his limited context. Emanation relationships do not necessarily need to be misdirected. For example, consider emanation relationships extended in the life of transformation. Latino males and Latinas who are whole selves may be ideal role models for young Latinos looking for authority figures to imitate. Next, Abalos turns his attention to the relationship pattern of subjection.

The Relationship of Subjection

Subjection is the next most effective relationship for providing unequal control. Relationships of subjection are characterized by conscious conflict on both a micro and macro level.⁶² That is, unlike the relationships of emanation where conflict between Latino males and the other is unconscious repressed, in relationships of subjection this conflict is conscious. For example, in subjection the Latino male is consciously aware that he subjects Latinas and others to his patriarchal power, and the “other” is also aware of their own subjection. This power is no longer “mysterious,” as we have seen in emanation but rather is “naked,” adds Abalos (66). The relationship of subjection has many variants such as Latino males exercising power over Latinas in the form of denying her freedom to control family finances, pursue her education, having social relationships outside the home etc. Furthermore, the subjection doesn’t merely move in the direction

⁶² Halpern provides some examples of relationships of subjection in the service of incoherence on both a macro and micro level: the empire founded upon conquest, the parent focusing on disciplining the child so that it will always obey and copy the parent’s model until the child has internalized subjection in the form of self-control, the employer treating his employees as if they were machines (and they yield because they need the job and lack other resources), the government enforcing civil rights legislation, since otherwise the naked power of citizens inspired by deformation might triumph (Halpern 2009).

from the Latino male to the Latina, but also moves in the direction from the social power holders toward Latino males. In this sense, Latino males are aware that they possess very little social and political power and thus, “lost their right to step forward and initiate change” (66). The message is clear. Latina women are aware that they have very little power and accept this as they believe this to be the normal result of the supremacy of male power. *Vis-à-vis* Latino males are aware that they too have very little social and political power compared to Anglo power holders, and they also believe this to be normal result of the supremacy of the White males. Abalos next discusses relationships in which conflict is filtered through intermediaries.

The Relationship of Buffering

The relationship of buffering is the relationship pattern that exemplifies “conflict and change” managed by intermediaries (67). These buffers can take various forms such as mediators, arbitrators, political or economic power brokers, concepts, theories, standardized procedures, habits, conventions, routines, and rituals (Halpern 2009). In other words, buffering relationships are cashed out in accordance to rules and standards which in turn have consequences for each party involved in the relationship. The parties of the relationship need not be directly aware of the rules and standards, and indeed the rules and standards may be unconsciously adhered to and obeyed. Furthermore, these rules and standards tend to favor those who maintain the power in the relationship such as we see when “bureaucrats treat the less powerful impersonally according to the rubric under which their problem is ruled to fit- or not even fit at all under any present rubric,” according to Halpern (245). Abalos applies this relationship structure to Latinos in terms of Latinos consciously and unconsciously creating both conflict and change through the

intervention of intermediaries. That is, Latinos by having *padrinos*, *comadres*, and others engage as mediators not only circumvent the sphere where one takes responsibility for his or her own action but worse, these buffering relationships dispersed in the way of life of incoherence further engenders a partial and wounded self.

The Relationship of Isolation

In the relationship of isolation parties agree (sometimes implicitly or explicitly) to isolate themselves in order to avoid change. Again, the isolation can occur on a micro or macro plane in terms of personal isolation such as individual persons isolating themselves or being isolated by others or in macro terms of nation-states isolating themselves or being isolated by other nation-states. In the relationship of isolation, Halpern remarks, “the poles [the various parties involved] agree to collaborate- but solely in avoiding all conflict intended to lead to any change in the relationship between the self and the other”.⁶³ In other words, a key characteristic to the relationship of isolation is the mutual agreement of both parties involved to put themselves in a position of isolation in the first place. Isolation cashed out in these terms then, only works when both parties agree to the terms of isolation. For example, if we consider a case of isolation in the service of emanation, we can think of a Latina who is caught within the destructive story of patriarchy and who is isolated at various levels. She may be isolated from “male conversation” at dinner time or isolated in the home in order to fulfill “womanly domestic duties” or perhaps isolated from economic autonomy. Such cases of isolation only work

⁶³ Manfred Halpern, *Transforming the Personal, the Political, Historical and Sacred in Theory and Practice*: (2009), p.242.

because both parties “tacitly” agree to them for the sake of maintaining the status quo or having a semblance of peace and compatibility.

In sum, I have discussed the main contours of Abalos’ theory of transformation. There are three ways of life each with their own unique acts/scenes: the life of emanation, incoherence, and transformation. Specifically, Latino males arrest themselves at certain points prior to transformation and as a result are deeply wounded, fragmented, and are void of a complete self. This journey to transformation (or the lack there of) is exemplified in the real world through the nine relationship patterns/ structures: emanation, subjection, buffering, isolation, direct bargaining, autonomy, incoherence, deformation, and transformation.

Now that I have spelled out David Abalos’ theory of transformation, I now want to turn my attention to the relationship between Kierkegaard and Abalos. I am persuaded that there exists an uncanny similarity between Kierkegaard and Abalos and furthermore a certain “indebtedness” to Kierkegaard on behalf of Abalos. However, with all this said, I certainly recognize the non-similarities and disagreements between and Kierkegaard and Abalos. In my remarks on the agreement between Kierkegaard and Abalos, I bring attention to the main points of concurrence and similarity, and I have been cautious to let each of the authors words stand on their own without me attempting to force agreement where is none.

Agreement between Kierkegaard and Abalos

The points of contact and agreement between Kierkegaard and Abalos are numerous, but for my purpose I focus on and discuss three such points of concurrence: 1)

situating the self within the metaphysical framework of stages or spheres of existence, 2) the self understood as a composite being, and 3) the ethical obligation to construct a healthy and complete self.

I. Metaphysical framework of Stages or Spheres of Existence

Both Kierkegaard and Abalos assume a notion of stages or spheres of existence in which to situate, analyze, and discuss the human condition. In other words, there is agreement between their metaphysical schemes in which our lives unfold and play out. For Kierkegaard, the theory of stages or spheres of existence emerges through his entire pseudonymous writings which not only force the individual to confront their life and existence as a journey with many options to choose from, but also demands of the individual to take upon the task of becoming one's true self.

Kierkegaard in no way wanted to cast type the numerous "ways" that humans exist: lifestyles, occupations, ceremonies, rituals, habits, customs etc., but he did think that there were three basic categories in which all these ways of life could be placed. These categories are the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious.

There are three existence-spheres: the esthetic, the ethical, the religious. The metaphysical is abstraction, and there is no human being who exists metaphysically. The metaphysical, the ontological, is [*er*], but it does not exist [*er ikke til*], for when it exists it does so in the esthetic, in the ethical, in the religious, and when it is, it is the abstraction from or a *prius* [something prior] to the esthetic, the ethical, the religious (SLW 476).

Abalos also situates humanity in the context of stages or spheres of existence which has as its highest goal transformation. Abalos makes these remarks regarding his theory of transformation:

This theory is not an abstraction. It is an invitation to understand and participate in a sacred story at the heart of human existence. My exploration with readers of how we can

rediscover the deeper reality of the Latino male is based on the discovery that there is a fundamental structure to life that is given to us by the core drama of life, a drama with three acts. Many Latino men either arrest themselves in a fragment of this journey, the partial ways of life of emanation, incoherence, and deformation, or they move toward its fulfillment by journeying through all three acts of the drama until they reach transformation (D. T. Abalos 2002).

There are a host of inevitable questions that come to the surface when discussing any kind of stage theory. For example, are “spheres of existence” or “ways of life” type theories merely conceptual tools or are these theories making stronger claims such as claims regarding the nature of the world and the nature of the human condition? Any cursory reading of their theories will demonstrate that for both Kierkegaard and Abalos, the notions of stages of existence or ways of life are far more than simply conceptual schemes (although they are at least this) that help outsiders such as a social scientist make sense of the data or phenomena. Kierkegaard regards stages of existence as modes of being-in-the-world, a perception that provides meaning and coherence to one’s beliefs, practices, and customs (Westphal). The latter is evident when Kierkegaard via the pseudonym Victor Eremita in *Either/Or*, describes the condition of the aesthete or the mode of being-in-the-world for the aesthete. The aesthete is enveloped within a certain mode of existing that operates according to pre-ethical norms. That is, the aesthetic life-sphere, according to “A’s” papers, is really a multiplicity of ways of existing: everything from *the dispirited soul too bored to move* to *the aesthete lost in apathy* (remaining indifferent to any choice at all). Below is a brief sampling of such dispositions grounded in the aesthetic life-sphere.

I don’t feel like doing anything. I don’t feel like riding- the motion is too powerful; I don’t feel like walking- it is too tiring; I don’t feel like lying down, for either I would have to stay down, and I don’t feel like doing that, or I would have to get up again, and I don’t feel like doing that, either. *Summa Summarum*: I don’t feel like doing anything. (I.4)

What is going to happen? What will the future bring? I do not know, I have no presentiment. When a spider flings itself from a fixed point down into its consequences, it continually sees before it an empty space in which it can find no foothold, however much it stretches. So it is with me; before me is continually an empty space, and I am propelled by a consequence that lies behind me. This life is turned around and dreadful, not to be endured. (I.8)

My life achievement amounts to nothing at all, a mood, a single color. My achievement resembles the painting by that artist who was supposed to paint the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea and to that end painted the entire wall red and explained that the Israelites had walked across and that the Egyptians were drowned. (I.12)

How empty and meaningless life is,- we bury a man; we accompany him to the grave, throw three spadefuls of earth on him; we ride out in a carriage, ride home in a carriage; we find consolation in the thought that we have a long life ahead of us. But how long is seven times ten years? Why not settle it all at once, why not stay out there and go along down into the grave and draw lots to see to whom will befall the misfortune of being the last of the living who throws the last three spadefuls of earth on the last of the dead? (I.14)

Notice that images of the aesthete are not merely a fanciful description of the aesthete, but rather images of an individual at the aesthetic sphere of existence. Again, this is meant to show that for Kierkegaard, the spheres of existence are more than merely a conceptual tool but rather a matrix of various ways of life that the individual must contend with.

Similar to Kierkegaard, Abalos also remarks that his stage theory is far more than just another conceptual tool that provides us with predictive power allowing us to increase our knowledge of Latino males. In fact, Abalos sees such approaches as problematic for dealing with the real lived experiences of Latino males.

Modern social science had reduced its pursuit of the understanding of the Latino male to statistics, variables, and the use of questionnaires. Many social scientists want to quantify the facts about Latino men in an attempt to create a mathematical certainty they hope will capture the meaning of Latino culture and people. None of their methodologies or instruments have proven capable of revealing what is really happening on the deeper levels in the lives of Latino men. (D. T. Abalos 2002).

Abalos further adds that his theory doesn't merely describe the outward manifestation of Latino men but instead it helps Latino men free themselves from "powerful stories such

as patriarchal machismo” and demonstrates how they can “participate in the process of transformation” (D. T. Abalos 2002).

Before moving on, I can’t resist turning to Ludwig Wittgenstein’s remarks on his notion of “forms of life” in order to clarify both Kierkegaard’s and Abalos’ stage theories. In *The Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein seeks to clear up a misunderstanding regarding language and in particular the assumption that there is an underlying essence of our language. Wittgenstein introduces his concept of *language-games* in order to drive this point home. For Wittgenstein, the concept ‘language-*game*’ is meant to bring to the fore the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (*PI* 23). That is, what enables language to function and therefore must be accepted as a "given" is precisely forms of life.⁶⁴ Of course spelling out what exactly Wittgenstein had in mind with the notion of “form of life” is no easy task. However, if I take Wittgenstein to mean by “form of life” a shared common matrix of humanity which grounds and makes sense of our sociological, historical, linguistic, physiological, and behavioral determinants, then we see something similar with both Kierkegaard and Abalos’ “ways of life” theories. In my estimation, Abalos and Kierkegaard stage theories are akin to Wittgenstein’s notion form of life (even though Kierkegaard wrote prior to Wittgenstein) in that they attempt to not only locate a ground for the plethora of our

⁶⁴ Wittgenstein used the concept, ‘form of life’ sparingly; he used it five times in the *Investigations*. This intriguing and rich concept has produced many interpretative uncertainties and most notable contradictory readings. For example, “forms of life” can be understood as changing and contingent, dependent on culture, context, politics, and history. The former reading has had great appeal to those who take “forms of life” as a relativistic notion for Wittgenstein. On the other hand, the reading that I favor understands the concept “form of life” in more of a universalistic coloring as common to humankind, "the common behavior of mankind" which is "the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language" (*PI* 206).

human activities but also seek to locate our human activities within a context or frame of reference.

Another similarity for both Kierkegaard and Abalos is that their theories are non-necessary on several different levels. One, for both Kierkegaard and Abalos, their entire metaphysical framework (stages of existence and ways of life) are not a necessary cosmic and progressive outgrowth from immaturity to maturity or from local consciousness to absolute consciousness, like we find in Hegel. Rather, both metaphysical schemes are simply assumed from the outset as the starting point or the ground for the human condition. In other words, both Kierkegaard and Abalos begin their own *Genesis* account as, “In the beginning...there were stages of existence or ways of life!” However, within these metaphysical frameworks, the individual has the choice to actualize certain ways of life as opposed to other ways of life.

Secondly, both theories are teleological in the sense that both theories are goal or “end” oriented in which the ultimate end goal for both theories is authentic selfhood. Of course obtaining this goal is not a “given” or an automatic certainty. Rather, both theories confront the individual with various ways of life and then demand of the individual to choose or actualize (through choice) these life possibilities. Again, because there is no metaphysical necessity on either scheme, the individual cannot expect to move from the aesthetic to the religious sphere of existence *a la* Kierkegaard nor the way of life of emanation to the way of life of transformation *a la* Abalos simply by be-ing. Instead, both theories place high importance on the individual’s choice to actualize or not the various life-possibilities that confront the individual.

II. The Self understood as a Composite Being

In the previous chapters, I have already demonstrating that for Kierkegaard the self is an amalgam of three components: a synthesis of opposing factors, a relation that relates itself to itself, a relation grounded by the “other.”⁶⁵ My main focus here is to briefly call attention to Abalos’ conception of the self and draw out the similarities (if indeed there are any) to Kierkegaard’s conception of the self. As will be demonstrated shortly, both Kierkegaard and Abalos’ conception of the self will not be completely isomorphic in fact some features will be in direct opposition to one another. However, my central point is that both Kierkegaard and Abalos see the individual as a composite being even though both disagree on what exactly these the components are.

Abalos’ conception of the self is found in his remarks on *the four faces of humanity*. These four faces are what Abalos refers to as the personal, the political, the historical, and the sacred.

Each Latino man and Latina woman has a personal, a political, a historical, and a sacred face. But only in the service of transformation can they fully experience and express the four faces of their being. The process of transformation takes place first of all in the individual’s depths, in her or his personal face...At every moment of our lives we are somewhere in the core drama of life, in one of its acts and scenes, in one of the stories, in one of the nine relationships, in one of the four ways of life, practicing *the four faces of our being* [italicize mine] (D. T. Abalos 2002).

In addition to our biological existence, for Abalos, there are four aspects of our being.

The personal face of our being refers to the aspect of our being “that is responding to the inspiration to free itself to participate creatively with the deepest source of our being”

⁶⁵ Kierkegaard’s conception of the self is discussed in chapter one of this work under the heading, *Kierkegaard’s conception of the self*.

(Halpern 2009). It is evident that for Abalos, this aspect of the self is not a substantial self or ego nor is it mere subjectivity but rather it is the aspect of our humanity that comes to know itself. In other words, similar to Socrates' vocational imperative to, "know thyself," the personal face of our being refers to our human vocation and responsibility to seek the truth in our current situation. This involves questioning and testing (at a personal level) the various ways of life that we have inherited (consciously or not) and the directive to free ourselves from the ways of life that have proved to be destructive to ourselves and others. Thus, the aspect of the self called "the personal face of our being" is not so much a metaphysical postulate of a substantial ego as it is the aspect of the self that recognizes the need for liberation and vocation of self-transformation.⁶⁶ Before moving on, I mention in passing that one of the components of Kierkegaard self, as discussed earlier that dovetails appropriately with Abalos' conception of the personal face of the self is the role that the imagination plays for Kierkegaard in bringing the individual to authentic selfhood. For Kierkegaard, the embryo stage of authentic selfhood starts with the individual "imaginatively" conceiving of different possibilities and life-spheres and then deciding which possibility to actualize.

The second aspect of Abalos' conception of the self is the political face of our being. This aspect of the self refers to "what we can and need to do together-together within ourselves, together with others, together in history, and together with the

⁶⁶ In similar manner, Kierkegaard understands the self, in particular his aspect of the self as "that which relates itself to itself," in terms of a self-conscious awareness of a Socratic vocation to know thyself. For Kierkegaard this aspect of the self takes on moral and religious coloring. Again, for more on this see Kierkegaard's conception of the self in chapter one.

sacred.”⁶⁷ What is it that we *can* and *need* to do at the diverse levels of “togetherness”? For Abalos, the *can* and *need* in the way of life of transformation is cashed out in these terms: there remains the *need* for the Latino male to free himself from the dangerous archetypal stories of patriarchy so that the Latino male *can* become a whole and complete self. In practical terms, this *need* at the level of transformation is simply the need for “understanding our shared life and the need to experience justice, friendship, love, joy, and beauty.”⁶⁸ Very quickly, for Abalos, the personal face of our being (reflecting on our own personal situation) gives rise to the political face of our being (seeking the help of others in the task of transformation). In other words, it is one thing to recognize the need for self-transformation, but it is another matter altogether to strategize about how this can be done within one’s current historical situation.

The process of transformation takes place first of all in our individual depths, our personal face. Only a person can choose to be political. Our personal face is necessary as we choose to be political to bring about a new turning point in the creation of a new history...to resist the racism that erases the humanity of our personal face requires us to struggle against structural deformation in the society that continues to cripple us and others. We need to enact the political face of our being by asking always what we can and need to do together with our neighbors in order to liberate ourselves from the dramas practiced by our culture and the wider society that wound us (Abalos T 2007).

The Latino male recognizes that this vocation is certainly more than a single solitary effect of the individual, but rather an essentially political move by which the Latino male comes to understand that he is going to need the help of others working together.

The third aspect of the self for Abalos is the historical face or aspect of our being. For Abalos, the historical face of our being refers to “our experience over time, not only

⁶⁷ Manfred Halpern, *Transforming the Personal, the Political, Historical and Sacred in Theory and Practice*: (2009), p.81.

⁶⁸ David T. Abalos, *The Latino Male: A Radical Redefinition*: (2002), p. 64.

our past, but also our present and future.”⁶⁹ The historical face of the Latino male is cashed out in terms of understanding what stories possessed us in the past or continue to possess us, what stories are we continuing to preserve (in spite of being wounded by them), and certainly what new stories do we still need to create in the future. In other words, for Abalos, the Latino male critically reflects upon his historical past, but also makes “history by enacting the historical face of his being- creating a new turning point by struggling with both the immediate concrete tyranny and its underlying forming source.”⁷⁰ Putting it all together, we can see what Abalos has in mind here. The Latino male must first put forward to himself his current situation (the personal face) and the need for transformation. Next, he makes his personal anguish political by reaching outside of himself to seek help from the community working together. Furthermore, these archetypal stories are critically evaluated among the community and determined which stories are dangerous and counter-productive. The latter activity is historical because the journey of transformation begins in the Latino male’s current historical situation of bondage and from there inroads to liberation and transformation can begin to take shape.

At this point, it may be tempting to rebuke Kierkegaard for his individualism by pointing out that Kierkegaard virtually ignored the historical and political face of our being, to use Abalos’ language, in order to exclusively promote the personal face of our being. Although I am aware of such a popular reading of Kierkegaard does exist, however I’m persuaded that this isn’t quite right. As I have discussion in chapter one,

⁶⁹David T. Abalos. *Latinos in the United States: the Sacred and the Political* (Notre Dame, Indiana: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p.48.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

Kierkegaard's emphasis on the self and subjectivity over and against the community was not his personal agenda writ large but rather a means to an end- calling out the individual from within the dead right-wing Hegelian orthodoxy. Furthermore, I maintain that Kierkegaard's emphasis on the self and subjectivity is political and historical in the sense that the individual is asked to imaginatively conceive of alternative life-sphere possibilities. This act can be, and often is very political in that the individual is daring to put forward counter-cultural thoughts, ideas, and life-spheres that strike against the established tradition and the status quo. Moreover, Kierkegaard never sought to remove the task to become a self from of the historical arena. That is, Kierkegaard never advised the individual to turn his back on the now and historical and retreat into his personal, private religious salvation. In fact, Kierkegaard not only begins his own philosophical quandaries from within his current political, historical, and theological situation but denies that we can begin from anywhere else. In CUP, Kierkegaard never gets tired of reminding his audience that a god's-eye view point was not available to humanity but rather we begin with our own existence.

The fourth aspect of the self for Abalos is the sacred face of aspect of our being. This aspect of the self is the most vague of the faces of our being, in Abalos' writings. At times Abalos uses the terms "the sacred" and "the sacred face of our being" interchangeably as if they were the same thing. Thus, sometimes is difficult to discern exactly what he means. However, it seems fair to say that what Abalos is getting at is 1) there exists an underlying spiritual force, and 2) we have all have a connection and relationship to this sacred force whether we acknowledge it or not. For Abalos, the

“sacred” refers to a pantheistic spirituality that is the underlying force which grounds everything.

The sacred permeates our lives and as one of the four faces of our being is always an aspect of our response to the world around us. We enact all of the stories of our lives, our relationships, and the four faces of our being...but because we are not conscious of the sacred in our lives it can possess us, especially through the stories that we practice... (Abalos T 2007).

Of course Abalos is certainly not conceiving of the sacred in terms of a Western theological personal God, but rather a spiritual compassionate force. On the other hand, when Abalos refers to the “sacred face of our being” he is not only referring to our shared human capacity for spirituality, but also to unique interconnectedness that we have the sacred. Abalos writes these words in reference to a Muslim mystical tradition that names every person as another face of the deepest sacred, “This is an ontological statement, an affirmation of our own sacredness since we participate in a relationship of bi-unity with the deepest sacred source in order to finish creation” (Abalos T 2007). I turn now to discuss the final connection between Kierkegaard and Abalos.

III. The Ethical Obligation to Construct a Healthy Self

The ethical obligation feature in both Kierkegaard’s and Abalos’ theories have already been alluded to but I want to examine this connection in greater detail. The ethical obligation feature is a central component shared by both Kierkegaard and Abalos. What I mean by ethical obligation is simply that both Kierkegaard and Abalos impress upon their readers a sense of what *ought* to be done. In other words, both Kierkegaard and Abalos cast their “stage theories” in terms of an ethical obligation for the individual- it is one’s *duty* to become a complete and authentic self. Kierkegaard comments on this ethical obligation in numerous passages.

Every human being must be assumed to possess essentially what belongs essentially to being a human being. The subjective thinker's task is to transform himself into an instrument that clearly and definitely expresses in existence the essentially human (CUP VII; 309).

Ethics focuses upon the individual, and the ethically understood it is every individual's task to become a whole human being, just as it is the presupposition of ethics that everyone is born in that state of being able to become that...and if ever so many cowardly and mediocre and bedazzled individuals join forces and abandon themselves in order to become something *en masse* with the help of the generation (CUP VII; 300).

Likewise, for Abalos, a sense of ethical obligation and duty permeates his theory of transformation. Abalos is not simply presenting a social scientific descriptive account of certain behavioral patterns found within the Latino community. Rather, if I could mix my metaphors here, Abalos (similar to Anti-Climacus in SUD) is diagnosing a severe problem in the Latino community and he is prescribing a remedy to the problem.

To journey through the story of transformation as the core drama of life is the vocation to which all humans are called. A decisive break through has been accomplished when Latino males realize that their greatest freedoms are to (1) become conscious of the archetypal way of life, stories, and relationships they are living, (2) prepare themselves to choose some and reject others, and (3) participate in creating more loving and just archetypal stories and relationships in the service of transformation (D. T. Abalos 2002).

Moreover Abalos goes on to say, "the way of life of transformation provides the only context within which Latino males can express the wholeness of the personal, political, historical, and sacred faces of our being" (61). In other words, the remedy to the problems that Latino males face is found exclusively in the way of transformation.

Kierkegaard's Contribution to Latino Male Self-transformation

In this final section of the thesis, I want to bring out some of the features in both Kierkegaard's conceptions of the self and subjectivity that I believe can provide insight and make a genuine contribution to Latino male self-transformation. In order to help with the flow of this chapter and avoid confusion, I will discuss Kierkegaard's contributions

under two broad headings: Kierkegaard's self and Latino male self-transformation and Kierkegaard's subjectivity and Latino male self-transformation.

I. Kierkegaard's Self and Latino male self-transformation

Before I demonstrate how Kierkegaard's remarks on the self can be applied to the problem of Latino male self-transformation, I will briefly recap some of his remarks on the self. Kierkegaard's self is a three-part being, I have labeled the irresolute, the resolute, and the spiritual-dependent self. The irresolute self is the aspect of the self whereby one is indecisively torn between one's facticity and one's possible future. This aspect of Kierkegaard's self sets on display the individual's facticity and the individual's self presentation of, via the imagination, different possible states of affairs. The resolute self is the aspect of the self whereby the individual chooses resolutely to be the self that the individual wants to be. This aspect of Kierkegaard's self not only demonstrates self reflectivity and self-introspection, but also an estimation of the self in and through moral categories. Lastly, Kierkegaard's third aspect of the self, the spiritual-dependent self, reveals a relational aspect necessary for the development of a whole and healthy self. This relational aspect of the self dependent on the "other" is vital for the task of constructing a self that is an authentic and whole self as opposed to a fragmented and partial self. The latter task, for Kierkegaard, involves vulnerability and dependence upon someone outside and beyond the solitary individual.⁷¹

Kierkegaard's remarks on the self are invaluable to Latino male self-transformation in these four ways (1) the Latino male must begin with his current

⁷¹ Kierkegaard's conception of the self is discussed in Chapter 1 of the thesis, p. 13-39.

situation, that is, with his facticity, (2) the Latino male must imaginatively conceive of a different and better state of affairs, (3) the Latino male, for the first time, becomes aware of his own estimation of himself in and through moral categories, and (4) the project to become a whole self is not a solitary project, but requires the Latino male to seek help from the “other.”

Latino male self-transformation must begin in our current historical situation. In other words, Latinos must begin with our facticity- the arena in which we are born. Some Latinos have certain abilities and talents where as other Latinos do not, some Latinos are well-to-do while most are not, some Latinos have resources (economic, social, political etc.) available to them whereas most Latinos do not. The Latino male’s facticity, I confess, is not pretty and anything to be admired in many cases. Latinos still account for the most high school drop-outs compared to Anglos and African-Americans.⁷² The numbers get worst with higher education and in particular with Latino representation in academic philosophy (both student and faculty representation).⁷³ With all this said, it may be tempting for some Latinos to make excuses for why they do not and will not participate in self-transformation, but Kierkegaard’s advice is, “No more excuses!” This may seem harsh but self-transformation begins with an honest face-to-face confrontation of our own facticity (as unpleasant as it might be); it begins with playing the cards we

⁷² In 2008, regarding high school drop-out rates in America, Whites scored the lowest drop-out rate with the indicator score of 4.8, Blacks scored 9.9, whereas Latinos scored 18.3.

<http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=16>

⁷³ For more on these stats see, Jorge J. E. Gracia, *Latinos in America: Philosophy and Social Identity*; Malden, MA; Blackwell Publishing, 2008 p. 76.

have been dealt, so to speak. For example, confronting one's facticity for the Latino involves looking at one's current historical situation. The latter task is more than just looking at a list of objective stats pertaining to Latinos in education or Latinos in the business sector, but rather it is internalizing these stats. In other words, it is identifying with these "facts" about Latino males and saying, "these facts are my facts....these facts are my people's historical situation...no excuses!"

After confronting our facticity, Latinos must now imagine a fundamentally different and better state of affairs. That is, Latinos must conceive of a different set of possibilities. For some Latinos it may be imagining a life absent of gang affiliation, for others it may be imagining a life in higher education, while for others it may be conceiving of a life without emotional and physical abuse. The point here is that instead of becoming embittered within his or her own facticity, Latinos can and must conceive of a healthy and better way of life. To echo Abalos, Latinos must empty ourselves of the destructive ways of life and create new ways of life. The latter task for the Latino male involves seeking out ideal Latino male role models within the Latino community and outside the Latino community. These role models may be family members, teachers, reformers, friends, clergy-personnel so as long as those who the Latino male imitates is no longer bound by the destructive stories of patriarchy.

However, just conceiving of a different state of affairs is not enough. The Latino male must also become aware of his own estimation of himself. Recall for a moment Kierkegaard's remarks on the aspect of the self as *that which relates itself to itself*. I argued that this is not merely introspective and reflective activity (the mind thinking of its own thinking *per se*) but for Kierkegaard it is introspective activity directed at the self as

a synthesis of contrasting factors. In addition to this, it is one's consciousness of one's inability to integrate the self (because of weakness of will) and it is one's consciousness of itself under a moral obligation to become a self. In other words, the introspective activity is performed from the particular moral category. The moral category is the duty to become an authentic self- one takes serious for the first time in one's life the moral task to become a self. Well this may have been fine and well for Kierkegaard, but what could this all possibly mean for Latino male self-transformation?

I think the former Kierkegaardian remarks are still fresh and relevant for Latino male self-transformation. Once the Latino male conceives of a different and better state of affairs, I submit that the Latino male needs to make an introspective appraisal of his own thinking about Latino male self-transformation. Furthermore, the latter is performed from a certain moral standpoint, that of the duty to become an authentic self.

Latino males need to introspectively appraise and evaluate their thinking about Latino male self-transformation itself. I'm not simply saying that Latino males need only to think critically about problems related to Latino males, but rather we need to think critically about our own thinking about problems related to Latino males. Suppose the Latino male conceives of different life-possibilities (better ways of life). At what point does all mental activity become an actual project of becoming a whole and complete self for the Latino male? In other words, when does the Latino male resolutely decide that the task to become a complete self is indeed a task he *ought* undertake? I submit that when the Latino male reflects upon his condition (his facticity and his possibilities) and thinks about his thinking regarding his condition (thinks of his own thinking of his facticity and his possibilities), the Latino male can now make it his task to transform himself. For

example, Pedro has become convinced that the patriarchal ways of life he has inherited are not only destructive to himself but ultimately destructive to Latinas and the entire Latino community. Pedro now conceives or puts forward to himself different ways of life and alternative life possibilities. Eventually, Pedro takes an estimation of his mental activity (he introspectively thinks of his thinking about his actual life situation). In the activity of introspection, Pedro questions why he is thinking about such matters and why such matters are important for himself and others around him in the first place. Pedro rightly concludes that the inherited stories of patriarchy are morally wrong and need to stop. As a result of such introspective thinking, Pedro considers it now his duty to transform himself into a complete self. At this point, Pedro is now introspecting through a moral lens, a la Kierkegaard, a category in which it is now Pedro is highest task to become a self.

Lastly, Kierkegaard's remarks on the *spiritual-dependent self* are also invaluable to Latino male self-transformation in terms of becoming vulnerable by seeking help from the other. I have already shown that for Kierkegaard by cashing out the third aspect of the self as dependent on the "other" (I have argued that the "other" need not be God) this brings out the relational aspect of becoming a self. Furthermore, Kierkegaard is able to bring out the aspect of failing to become a self because one refuses to be dependent on the other. How does this all relate to Latino male self-transformation?

After the Latino male make it his highest priority to become a healthy and whole self, it is imperative that he seek help from others inside and outside the Latino community. Again, consider Pedro in his journey to become a complete self. Pedro's success of self-transformation will largely turn on exactly who Pedro stands in relation to.

That is, Pedro's self is in some way dependent upon who he keeps company with and who he surrounds himself with. Again, if Pedro surrounds himself with positive Latino role models then this will help his task of self-transformation. It is imperative that Latino males seek out other Latino males that have rejected the archetypal stories of patriarchy and have moved on to create better ways of life. Part of the reason that Latino males fail to become a complete self is because many Latino males refuse to seek help from other males. To seek out help requires both vulnerability and humility in that one has to open up and seek the help of the "other" and this may require admitting that one needs help or that one has made a mistake. Again, for Latino males, the latter is commonly understood to be a sign of weakness and thus many Latino males fail to actualize the task to become a whole and complete self. Now I want to turn to Kierkegaard's remarks on subjectivity and bring to light his contribution to this contemporary problem.

II. Kierkegaard's Subjectivity and Latino Male Self-Transformation

Kierkegaard's remarks on subjectivity are also invaluable in the service of Latino male self-transformation in these three ways (1) the Latino male can orient his mind to think subjectively about problems related to his own existence, (2) the Latino male can utilize "double-reflection" in attempting to apply "knowledge" to his existence, (3) and the Latino male is able to put into practice the insights of Kierkegaardian inwardness, existence, and passion.

If we take Kierkegaard's distinction on objective thinking and subjective thinking and apply to our discussion of Latino male self-transformation, some important features emerge. First, thinking about the problem of Latino male self-transformation in terms of

thinking about it subjectively as opposed to thinking about it objectively To be sure, - (we can easily imagine what thinking objectively about this problem would look like- through a social scientific detached set of lens, and I don't necessary disapprove of such an inquiry, I simply want to keep in mind Kierkegaard's distinction between subjective and objective thinking) and bring out certain existential features to bear on this current problem. In other words, just as Abalos has maintained, the problem Latino male self-transformation is more than simply a problem of quantifiable stats and ethnic demographics, but rather it is, a la Kierkegaard, an existential problem too. It is a problem that requires Latino males to think critically about their own existence. Again, lest we forgot what is at stake here, I'm not suggesting, nor would Kierkegaard, that Latino males are to run off to seek refuge in private seclusion in order to engage in existential thought. What's being communicated here is that Latino male self-transformation is to some degree an existential problem because the Latino male is being asked to think about his life in terms of what it means to really exist. Although I do not deny the value in thinking about this current problem objectively -it does have its place- but along with Kierkegaard I maintain that we cannot lose sight that this is an existential problem as well. It is a problem that Latino males must at some point bring to bear on their own existence.

Once Latino males approach the problem of self-transformation through a subjective and existential set of lens, then it remains the task of the Latino to wrestle with how to apply the antidote to their lives. In other words, it is one thing to have a wealth of knowledge on Latino males, but it is another thing to take this knowledge and determine how to appropriate this knowledge to one's current situation.

Kierkegaard's notion of "double reflection" is of importance here. Recall that for Kierkegaard, the first reflection refers to the passing of knowledge (communicating) from one speaker to the hearer. Again, we can imagine what this would look like in an academic setting. Suppose Pedro has attended a series of lectures on dealing with Latino male self-transformation. Suppose further that Pedro was an attentive listener and jotted down notes of what he considered to be of importance. At this point, Kierkegaard would suggest that the type of reflection that has occurred is first reflection, the passage of information from the speaker to the listener. However, Kierkegaard would point out that the task is unfinished because given the subject matter (Latino male self-transformation is an existential problem) it requires double reflection. Double reflection is the type of reflection in which the hearer takes the information communicated (first reflection) and then struggles to appropriate and integrate into one's life. In other words, in order for existential communication to take place, Pedro must take what is communicated at the lecture series and determine how this "information" can be graphed into his existence.

Finally, Kierkegaard's characterization of subjectivity in terms of inwardness, existence, and passion are also useful in our dialogue. For Kierkegaard, the notion of inwardness referred to activity whereby the individual would put him or herself in a position to be left alone, especially from social roles and social status, in order to contemplate concerns of an existential nature. Now such private contemplation is not for its own sake, but rather to the individual to take action concerning becoming a self. For many Latinos a good dose of inwardness would not entirely be a bad thing. Many Latino males have in fact inherited and assumed very dangerous social roles such as machismo patriarchy and *El hombre fuerte*. Kierkegaardian inwardness would require the Latino

male to strip away those carefully constructed social roles which he has inherited and evaluate his values and projects in vulnerable isolation.

Furthermore, Kierkegaard would then require of the Latino male to begin to exist. Of course Kierkegaard was not talking about mere biological existence, he is referring to a unique type of existence in which the individual engages in a struggle to bring together the temporal and the eternal. What could all this mean for Latino male self-transformation? Again, I think that Kierkegaard's insight here is useful.

For Kierkegaard, the individual must struggle with taking ethical ideals and duties (the eternal) and attempt to apply them to one's existence (the temporal). That is, Latino males, once confronted with the problem of self-transformation, must now attempt to bring these ideals and moral duties into their existence and their facticity (the temporal). This is not easy to do. Consider the case of Pedro again. After Pedro has receiving invaluable information regarding self-transformation (first reflection) and then attempts to integrate this information into his life (double reflection), he now has to take these ethical ideals and moral duties (the eternal) and apply them to his current real life situation; his facticity (the temporal). That is, the difficult task remains for Pedro to take the antidote of self-transformation back into the patriarchal workplace or the patriarchal barrio. How can such a difficult task be performed? Kierkegaard's remarks on passion seem to help answer this question.

For Kierkegaard, the passions were not merely uncalculated bursts of emotion, but rather were a kin to what we mean by values. Values, for Kierkegaard could be honed and developed by the individual in order to give shape and meaning to the individual. For

example, Pedro realizes his finite and temporal limitations (perhaps coming from a lower social-economic class and having a certain physical abnormality), yet he imagines and presents to himself the non-actual (the possible- perhaps possibilities of a different life). All that has gone on in Pedro at this point is reflection and thought. What is now needed is for Pedro to bring to close the reflective process of imagination (conceptualizing the various possibilities) and take a certain course of action; however, this can only happen when Pedro decides to act. Pedro is moved to action by employing Kierkegaardian passion.

In sum, I have brought to the surface some of Kierkegaard's claims regarding the self in terms of one's facticity, imaginatively conceiving of different and better ways of life, moral introspection, and seeking help from others. I have also pointed to Kierkegaard's remarks on subjectivity as helpful sign posts in the journey of Latino male self-transformation. The sign posts discussed were subjective thinking, double reflection, and Kierkegaardian subjectivity in terms of inwardness, existence, and passion. I'm persuaded that Kierkegaard's ideas on the self and subjectivity can and do in fact provide insight and impetus for Latino male self-transformation.

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis has been to explore Kierkegaard's conceptions of the self and subjectivity and then to apply Kierkegaard's insight on these matters to the contemporary problem of Latino male self-transformation. Kierkegaard is commonly viewed as the standard of introverted and selfish thinking; however, I have demonstrated that this view is not quite right. Kierkegaard's preoccupation with the self and subjectivity does not necessarily negate and short circuit attempting real solutions to real life social problems. On the contrary, I have demonstrated that Kierkegaard's insight on the self and subjectivity can provide Latino males with real life tools for dealing with real life problems concerning self-transformation. These tools are invaluable for the Latino male to not only dislodge himself from the dangerous social archetypes of patriarchy, but to seek out healthy role models in his journey of self-transformation.

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Appendix

The Metaphysics of Identity

Throughout the entirety of the thesis, specifically in chapter three, I have spoken of Latino male self-transformation. Obviously the term, ‘Latino/a’ is an ethnic and social label that picks out a certain ethnic and social identity. However, all such talk presupposes a notion of identity which in turn presupposes a certain understanding of the concept ‘identity’ itself. An exhaustive conceptual analysis of the term ‘identity’ and the philosophical problem of identity is beyond the scope of this work, nevertheless a few remarks are necessary.⁷⁴

As I mentioned earlier, the name ‘Latino/a’ is a socially constructed ethnic label, but what are we to make of the term, ‘identity’? Whether or not ethnic labels/ names and ethnic identities are desirable and useful is another matter altogether; my concern right

⁷⁴ In what follows, my discussion on identity will aim to get clear on personal identity as opposed to the general metaphysical issue of identity. The general metaphysical issue of identity seeks to give account of the relation that each thing bears just to itself. For example, it is apt to consider Leibniz’s law at this point. Leibniz’s law of the indiscernibility of identicals: $(x)(y) [(x=y) \rightarrow (P)(Px \leftrightarrow Py)]$ states that for any x and any y , if they are indeed identical to each other, then for any property P , P will be true of x if and only if P is true of y . This principle sheds light on the statement, “Mark Twain is quantitatively identical to Samuel Clemens.” Mark Twain and Samuel Clemens are quantitatively identical just in case they share all properties in common with itself. That is to say, if we can find one thing that is true of x (Mark Twain) that is not the same of y (Samuel Clemens), then it follows that x and y are not identical, indeed they would be different. However, my discussion on identity will be limited to personal identity not the general metaphysical problem of identity.

now is the term 'identity' because however ethnic identity or racial identity is cashed out; they all presuppose a generic notion of identity.

Unpacking the notion of identity requires us to venture into metaphysics. That is, when referring to identity, social or otherwise, there are always metaphysical assumptions and commitments presupposed from the outset. Thus, any discussion about Latino male self-transformation necessitates disambiguating the term, 'identity' and getting clear on what the nature of identity amounts to.

When philosophers discuss the nature of identity, they usually have in mind the problem of identity. In order get at what the problem of identity amounts to, consider the four different questions below:

- 1) What is it for X to be identical to/ be the same entity as X irrespective of time?
- 2) What is it for X to be identical to/ be the same entity as X at a certain moment in time?
- 3) What is it for X to be identical to/ be the same entity as X through time?
- 4) What kind of criteria is available in order for us to know that a given X and Y are identical

The first three questions are metaphysical questions, whereas question four is an epistemological question.⁷⁵ Question one is the generic metaphysical question regarding

⁷⁵ Questions 1 through 3 take a metaphysical criterion as a criterion of personal identity such that x provides an explanation of what y consists in and provides an explanation of y's nature. Question 4 takes

identity without reference to time. In other words, the first question seeks to locate the necessary and sufficient conditions of what makes entity X identical to X regardless of time. For example, what makes Juan Doe to be Juan Doe regardless of time is a question of achronic identity. This is the philosophical problem of identity proper which seeks to establish what makes a thing be the thing it is. Answers to this question in reference to the identity (achronic identity) of Juan Doe have varied from Descartes substantial self or ego to Hume's bundle of perceptions.⁷⁶ Suppose we dilate on this point further. We can see that those that maintain the *Soul theory* of personal identity maintain that the achronic personal identity of the person resides in some kernel that is the soul, the ego, or the self which is not only the ground of all personal experiences but is present throughout the person's life. On the other hand, proponents of the *Bundle theory* of personal identity

an epistemological criterion as a criterion of personal identity such that x provides an explanation of how we can know what y's nature consists in.

⁷⁶ René Descartes notion of achronic identity emerges in his discussion on the self in *Meditation I* and *II*. In his quest to find the one indubitable truth, *cogito ergo sum*, Descartes is lead to the conclusion that his he is a 'thinking thing' in addition to his physical body. For Descartes, the true "achronic identity" of himself is the simple and indivisible, "I" present throughout his life; John Cottingham, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* vol. II, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p 18-19. On the other hand, David Hume blasted such a notion of substantial self. Via Hume's epistemology, Hume demonstrates that he has no sense impressions of a substantial self or "I", but rather all he is aware of is one sense impression after another. For Hume, the error in positing "the self" is a result of a confusion in which the connectedness of consciousness is mistaken for the existence of a soul. That is, the unity and the continuity of one's perceptions (they are occurring in a single-sense perceiving individual) leads us mistakenly to posit the existence of an underlying "real" container or substratum of our perceptions. However, Hume argues that no such substratum can be found, only one perception after another:

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure, I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception...I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perceptual flux and movement...(T, 252-253).

denies that there is any such soul or substantial self, instead all there is regarding achronic personal identity is a collection or a bundle of perceptions one following the other.

Before moving on to discuss questions two and three, I will tie the former remarks to the contemporary problem of Latino male self-transformation. Suppose that someone claimed that there is a growing need in the Latino community for Latino males to undergo self-transformation because of the damage being inflicted to the Latino himself and others in the community as a whole. The metaphysical assumptions in the former claim are numerous but for my discussion notice the claim assumes some generic metaphysical notion of identity. What is the Latino that being referred to? Is the Latino a substantial self, ego, soul, or a collection and parade of mental events? Again, a host of metaphysical assumptions underlie the former claim regarding Latino male self-transformation.

Now questions two and three are particular types of metaphysical questions of identity with respect to time. Question two seeks to understand what it is for X to be X at one particular moment in time. This is referred to as synchronic identity because it seeks to understand the necessary and sufficient conditions of X to be the thing it is a particular moment in time. For example, what makes Juan Doe to be Juan Doe at time T^1 is a question regarding synchronic identity of Juan Doe. Question three, on the other hand, seeks to understand the identity of some entity through the passage of time. What makes Juan Doe to be Juan Doe at two or more different times is a question of diachronic identity because it seeks to understand the necessary and sufficient conditions of X to be the thing it is at time T^1 , T^2 , and so forth (Gracia 2000). Before moving on to question four, a few more technical distinctions regarding metaphysical identity are in order.

First, in respect to diachronic identity, a further distinction can be made between quantitative and qualitative diachronic identity. For example, Juan Doe at time T^1 is diachronically identical to Juan Doe at time T^2 if and only if Juan Doe is the same person at time T^2 as he was at time T^1 . The latter conditional refers to numerical or quantitative identity because the same entity is present at both times. However, we can also speak of Juan Doe being diachronically identical (or not) to Juan Doe at different times if and only if his character or personality is qualitatively the same. Again, this sense of identity refers to qualitative identity as opposed to numerical identity. We can speak in general categories of diachronic identity of Juan Doe in terms of Juan Doe at time T^1 being Juan Doe at time T^2 just in case he is numerically or quantitatively the same person, but Juan Doe at time T^1 not being Juan Doe at time T^2 just in case his personality has changed over time. Thus, we can meaningfully speak of identity in two different senses. We can speak of some X being numerically identical to X , but X not being qualitatively identical to X .

Of course this now raises the problem regarding what makes somebody the same person (in a quantitative or numeric sense) at different times. Regarding the former problem, here is brief display of some of the most popular general criteria that have been proposed to answer the following: X at time T^1 is the same person as Y at time T^2 if and only if:

- 1) Y has the same soul as X (the *Soul theory*)
- 2) Y has the same body as X (the *Body theory*)
- 3) Y has the same brain as X (the *Brain theory*)
- 4) Y remembers the thoughts and experiences of X (the *Memory theory*)

At this time I cannot provide an exhaustive treatment of the various theories above, but a few comments are in order. Proponents of the *Soul theory* can refer to the substantial soul or ego that persists and is present throughout time. Again, the drawback on this account is how could we ever know and verify that there is a substantial soul that persists throughout time and is present at all times.⁷⁷ However, *Bundle theorists* would have to demonstrate what *Bundle* is crucial for one's continued numeric identity.

On the other hand, *Body theorists* can point to the body as criterion of what accounts for X's persistent identity through time. That is, just in case X has the same body at any given time as Y can both X and Y be said to be the same. John Locke in *Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690)* via his famous thought experiment, *The Prince and the Cobbler*, opposed both *Soul* and *Body theories*.⁷⁸ Locke asks us to

⁷⁷ I need to make some crucial and subtle distinctions here in the discussion in order to avoid equivocating. The objection that soul or the self cannot be what accounts for the persistence of X at different times because we could never know if indeed a soul or self in fact exists, is really an issue regarding an epistemological sense of criterion. That is, the objection to the account of diachronic quantitative identity located in a soul or a self is an objection that is asking how we could ever know that there is a soul or a self on empirical grounds. However, there are two different senses of criterion that are independent of one another: a metaphysical sense of criterion and an epistemological sense of criterion. For example, even if we could never know or verify empirically that there is indeed a soul or a substantial self that remains throughout time, it could be still be true that diachronic quantitative personal identity consists in the sameness of a soul or substantial self. But issue here is the metaphysical sense of criterion. In other words, we want to know what the nature of identity consists in regardless of whether or not we could ever know (epistemological sense of criterion) if that nature obtains in any particular case.

⁷⁹ John Locke seems to be the first philosopher to address the problem of personal identity in its current and modern form. Locke argues in favor of the memory theory via his famous thought experiment, *The Prince and the Cobbler*.

consider the soul of a prince, carrying with it his stream of consciousness. Suppose we were to switch the prince's stream of consciousness with that of a cobbler. The person with the prince's body would now seem to remember the thoughts and experiences of the cobbler, and the person with the cobbler's body would now also seem to remember the thoughts and experiences of the prince (2.27.15). Would the person in the prince's body now be the cobbler? We intuitively think that the person who wakes up with same stream of consciousness is the same person who had the same stream of consciousness even though their physical bodies are now different.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Other key essays, in my opinion, that should be consulted when wrestling with issues of providing an account of personal identity are: John Perry's "*A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality*," in which all four criteria are represented. In the essay, the dying philosophy professor (Gretchen Weirob) wants to know whether or not it's possible to survive the death of her body. The clergyman (Sam Miller) and former graduate student (Dave Cohen) both try to defend the criteria that allows for immortality. In the end professor Weirob (representing the Body theory) seems to win the debate albeit she does pass away. In Derek Parfit's essay, "*The Unimportance of Identity*" he argues that when it comes to caring about my future it matters far less that it's my future (that the future person will be me) as opposed to that the future person will be related to me in the right way psychologically. In other words, personal identity just isn't important to the things that really do matter in our lives.