

## Kierkegaard's Criticism of Hegel's "Synthesis"

The problem of "synthesis" was considered by Hegel as the unfolding of thinking process and it was the very problem that engaged Kierkegaard's constant attention as his thinking developed. "Synthesis", with Hegel, is concerned with the dialectical process of "development" innate to logos—development from the potential plane to the actual one—in which every movement is consummated through negation (Verneigung), transition (Übergang) and mediation (Vermittlung). Kierkegaard's understanding of "synthesis", however, consisted in radically recovering himself amidst the mis-relationship (Miß-Verhältnis) in which he himself was related to his own being. He commented on a Hegelian thinker: "However beautiful a lace may be knit by a lace-knitter, it makes me sad to think of such a poor, jaundiced fellow." An existent person, rather than being indifferent to abstract speculation, is infinitely concerned with the fact of existence as a whole. It is the difficulty in the existent that constitutes the central concern of an existent person. Therefore, Hegel's problem of "synthesis" meant for Kierkegaard the way in which an existent person lives with decision and primordial freedom. It is at this point, therefore, that Kierkegaard's thinking takes on the other hand the direction from Hegel's Sittlichkeit to Kant's Moralität, and farther, beyond this, over to the realm of religion of "a solitary man" (der Einzelne als Einzelner). In this way, the understanding of synthesis, with Kierkegaard, consisted in approaching self-dichotomizing suffering shrouded in human existence, and in thoroughly dying amidst the suffering in the actual plane. Therein he wanted to realize the paradoxical simultaneity of transformed suffering. Therefore, to satisfy such a need of life as a whole in its bare problem-consciousness is, so to speak, to aim at bringing about unity not through the mediation (Vermittlung) in the quantitative, continuing "development" (Entwicklung), but through the "leaping" (Sprung) over qualitative "breach" (Bruch mit der Immanenz). In the process of thus realizing

(Aneignung) truth within one's own being, there is a continuous tension between certainty (Gewißheit) and uncertainty (Ungewißheit). Kierkegaard's understanding of synthesis is to be seen in the process of deepening and enveloping the tension in the dimension of "faith" (Glaube). It could thus be said that the implication of Hegelian "synthesis" found its counterpart in Kierkegaard's conception of "repetition" (Wiederholung) rather than in his idea of "synthesis".

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