

# Kierkegaard's Literary Production by Quarterly Rates

*Af Niels Jørgen Cappelørn og Alastair McKinnon*

It seems clear that there are real and important connections between Kierkegaard's life and literary production and that information about one should lead to a fuller understanding of the other. It also seems clear that, his own misgivings notwithstanding, he was essentially a writer; someone almost driven to express himself in writing and perhaps even in print.<sup>1</sup> There is then perhaps some point in publishing figures recently produced showing his quarterly production rate during his brief but very active literary career.

For most possible uses of this report Kierkegaard's writings are best divided into four categories or classes. The first are the *Samlede Værker* or published works (hereafter *SV*), running to approximately 1,942,032 words and thirty-five titles, both depending upon how one counts them. The remainder consist of the various groups or collections which together constitute the *Papirer* (hereafter *Pap*). The B group is closely related to his literary production as such and includes manuscripts at various stages some of which were actually printed as part of *SV* and, our only concern in this report, those which never reached this state. The A group is Kierkegaard's own personal diary and consists mainly of his reflections upon his own life and that of the world around him, his responses to various situations, comments upon his own and others' work and, frequently, his own mental and physical condition, etc. The C group consists mainly of excerpts from his own reading, lecture notes, comments upon his studies, discussions of the works and views of others, etc. For present purposes this order is also their order of importance and will therefore be followed throughout.

Quarterly production figures for *SV* were determined by dividing the number of word-tokens in each volume by the number of quarters required for its composition<sup>2</sup> and, where more than one volume was involved in a particular quarter, summing the results. Thus the total of 102,614 words for the fourth quarter of 1844 is the sum of

86,512 (one half of *Stadier paa Livets Vei*) and 16,102 (one half of *Tre Taler ved tænkte Leiligheder*). The only exceptions to this rule were those relatively few cases in which, on our reckoning, the work in question may have begun in the last two or three weeks of a quarter; in all such cases we began with the new whole quarter and divided the volume evenly over the remainder.<sup>3</sup> This is perhaps not a perfect strategy but granted what one knows about the writing of books it is hard to see how, at this distance, one could improve upon it.

As neither of the above kinds of information were available for any of the papers we naturally had to deal with these in a different way. In fact, we counted by hand the number of pages from each group in each quarter and multiplied this by the average number of words per page in that category; by 317 for B, 296 for A, and 295 for C, these variations being due to differences in the nature of the material. Incidentally, this same method was used to estimate the amount in the C group (approximately 35,400 words) for the period 1831 to December 1833. These results are perhaps slightly less precise than those for SV but would seem entirely adequate for all foreseeable purposes.

The totals resulting from these operations are presented in Table 1 and in bar-chart form in Figures 1-5.

| Year | Quarter | SV   | B    | A     | C*    | Total |
|------|---------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1834 | 1       |      |      |       | 2065  | 2065  |
|      | 2       |      |      | 592   | 2950  | 3542  |
|      | 3       |      |      | 1776  | 4425  | 6201  |
|      | 4       | 951  |      | 2664  | 5310  | 8925  |
| 1835 | 1       |      |      | 1184  | 5605  | 6789  |
|      | 2       |      |      | 3552  | 2655  | 6207  |
|      | 3       |      |      | 7992  | 3540  | 11532 |
|      | 4       |      | 6657 | 3256  | 2655  | 12568 |
| 1836 | 1       | 5389 |      | 3256  | 15930 | 24575 |
|      | 2       | 3487 | 1268 | 2368  | 8260  | 15383 |
|      | 3       |      |      | 4144  | 2360  | 6504  |
|      | 4       |      |      | 5032  | 2065  | 7097  |
| 1837 | 1       |      |      | 13320 | 3540  | 16860 |
|      | 2       |      |      | 6216  |       | 6216  |
|      | 3       |      |      | 5920  |       | 5920  |
|      | 4       |      |      | 3552  | 13275 | 16827 |

*Kierkegaards Literary Production by Quarterly Rates · 23*

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Quarter</i> | <i>SV</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>C*</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------|----------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|--------------|
| 1838        | 1              |           | 6657     | 1480     | 295       | 8432         |
|             | 2              | 9532      |          | 2368     | 2065      | 13965        |
|             | 3              | 9532      |          | 3848     | 9440      | 22820        |
|             | 4              |           |          | 5328     | 12095     | 17423        |
| 1839        | 1              |           |          | 6512     | 10915     | 17427        |
|             | 2              |           |          | 6808     |           | 6808         |
|             | 3              |           |          | 10064    |           | 10064        |
|             | 4              |           |          |          | 4130      | 4130         |
| 1840        | 1              |           |          |          | 590       | 590          |
|             | 2              |           |          | 888      |           | 888          |
|             | 3              | 26381     |          | 8880     |           | 35261        |
|             | 4              | 26381     | 1585     | 888      | 5900      | 34754        |
| 1841        | 1              | 26381     |          |          | 2065      | 28446        |
|             | 2              | 26381     |          |          |           | 26381        |
|             | 3              |           | 951      | 5032     |           | 5983         |
|             | 4              | 57433     | 634      | 5323     | 21830     | 85225        |
| 1842        | 1              | 57433     | 15216    |          | 20945     | 93594        |
|             | 2              | 60807     |          | 2368     |           | 63175        |
|             | 3              | 57433     |          |          |           | 57433        |
|             | 4              | 57433     |          | 2664     | 6195      | 66292        |
| 1843        | 1              | 17356     | 19337    | 8880     | 7670      | 53243        |
|             | 2              | 53513     | 317      | 3552     |           | 57382        |
|             | 3              | 37307     |          | 2664     |           | 39971        |
|             | 4              | 24072     |          | 1776     |           | 25848        |
| 1844        | 1              | 43026     | 7608     | 592      | 10620     | 61846        |
|             | 2              | 81216     |          | 2960     | 1180      | 85356        |
|             | 3              | 37178     |          | 4440     |           | 41618        |
|             | 4              | 102614    | 2536     | 2960     |           | 108110       |
| 1845        | 1              | 102614    |          | 1184     | 590       | 104388       |
|             | 2              | 75481     | 7291     | 6512     |           | 89284        |
|             | 3              | 71357     |          |          |           | 71357        |
|             | 4              | 92441     |          | 4736     |           | 97177        |
| 1846        | 1              | 19584     | 10144    | 10064    | 885       | 40677        |
|             | 2              | 39942     | 9827     | 7696     |           | 57465        |
|             | 3              | 39942     | 35504    | 5328     |           | 80744        |
|             | 4              | 39942     | 35504    | 13320    |           | 88766        |
| 1847        | 1              | 55392     | 14582    | 12432    | 295       | 82701        |
|             | 2              | 47486     |          | 11760    |           | 59246        |
|             | 3              | 90557     |          | 16576    |           | 107133       |
|             | 4              | 43071     | 4755     | 19832    |           | 67658        |
| 1848        | 1              | 56211     | 1585     | 18056    |           | 75852        |
|             | 2              | 49374     |          | 20424    |           | 69798        |
|             | 3              | 43794     |          | 31672    |           | 75466        |

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Quarter</i> | <i>SV</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>A</i> | <i>C*</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------|----------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|--------------|
| 1848        | 4              | 43794     | 8559     | 36112    |           | 88465        |
| 1849        | 1              | 12214     | 3170     | 42328    |           | 57712        |
|             | 2              | 7646      |          | 55352    |           | 62998        |
|             | 3              | 9486      | 1585     | 46472    |           | 57543        |
| 1850        | 4              | 6704      | 11729    | 50912    |           | 69345        |
|             | 1              |           | 3487     | 64528    |           | 68015        |
|             | 2              |           | 5072     | 59496    |           | 64568        |
|             | 3              |           | 4755     | 48840    |           | 53595        |
|             | 4              | 4019      |          | 29304    |           | 33323        |
| 1851        | 1              | 3000      | 12046    | 52096    |           | 67142        |
|             | 2              | 18236     |          | 20720    |           | 38956        |
|             | 3              | 26965     | 15533    | 18944    |           | 61442        |
|             | 4              | 13656     | 9193     | 5624     |           | 28473        |
| 1852        | 1              | 13656     | 6340     | 10942    |           | 30938        |
|             | 2              |           |          | 24272    |           | 24272        |
|             | 3              |           |          | 35816    |           | 35816        |
|             | 4              |           |          | 11248    | 1180      | 12428        |
| 1853        | 1              |           | 2853     | 15984    |           | 18837        |
|             | 2              |           | 1585     | 8288     |           | 9873         |
|             | 3              |           | 5389     |          |           | 5389         |
|             | 4              |           | 951      | 12136    |           | 13087        |
| 1854        | 1              | 1842      | 15216    | 7400     |           | 24458        |
|             | 2              | 1533      |          | 39960    |           | 41493        |
|             | 3              |           | 1268     | 72816    |           | 74084        |
|             | 4              | 2150      | 7925     | 103304   |           | 113379       |
| 1855        | 1              | 7987      | 14582    | 4736     |           | 27305        |
|             | 2              | 47321     | 11729    | 8288     |           | 67338        |
|             | 3              | 21248     | 22507    | 8584     |           | 52339        |

*Table 1. Kierkegaard's Quarterly Production*

\*Also, approximately 35,400 words in C between 1831 and December 1833

Our immediate purpose is not to speculate upon the significance of these facts but simply to present them as detailed data for the investigation and perhaps speculation of others. It may however be helpful to call attention to some of the more obvious patterns which appear to be present. As we see from Fig. 1, SV shows a surprisingly symmetrical curve peaking in 1844; indeed, the only notable exceptions to this overall pattern are the trough for 1849-50 and the sharp upturn for 1855.

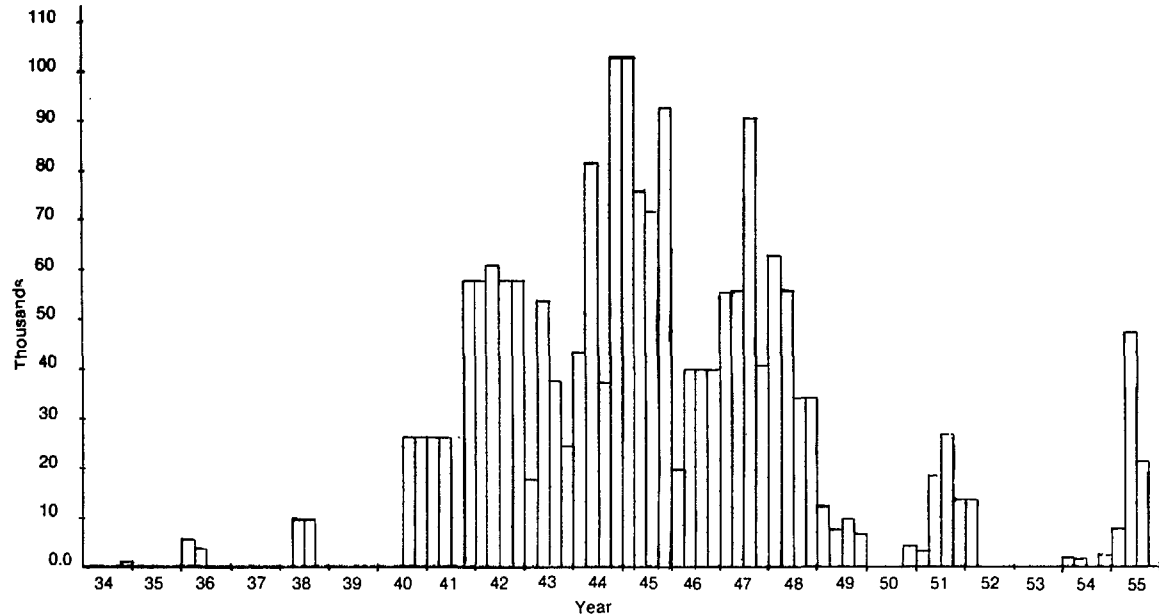


Fig. 1. Kierkegaard's SV by Quarterly Rate

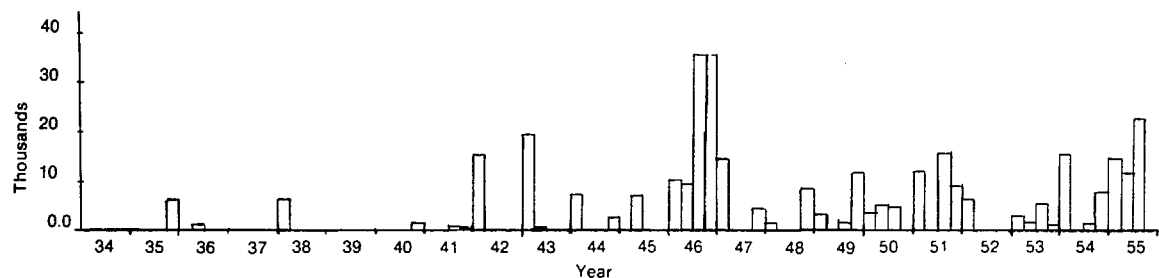


Fig. 2. Kierkegaard's B Papirer by Quarterly Rate

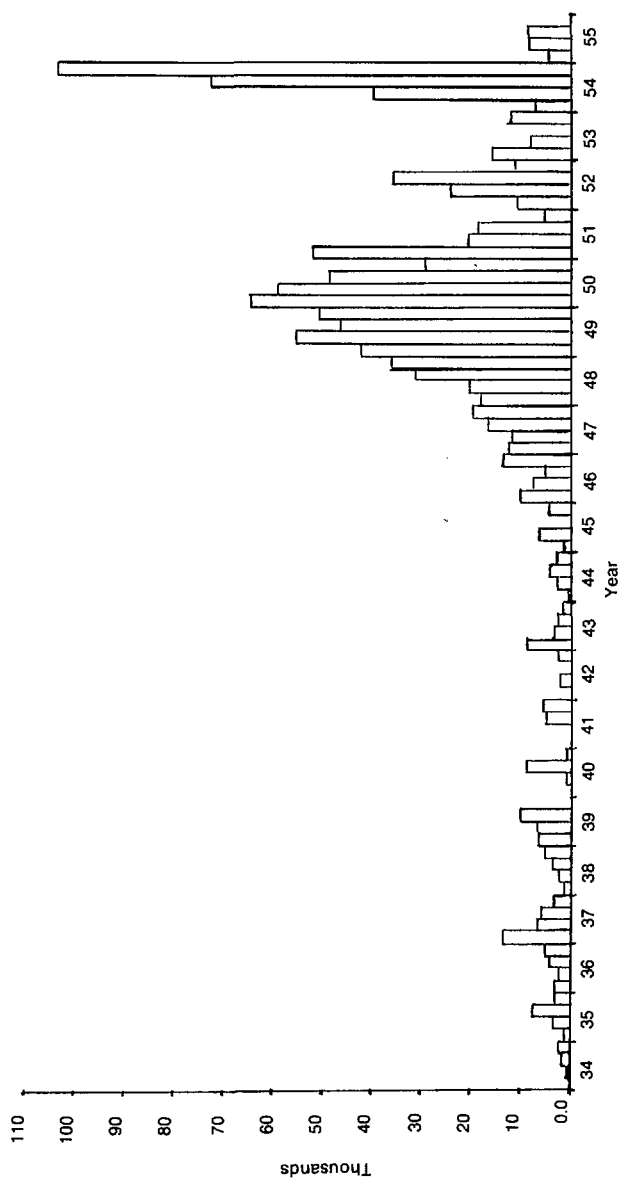


Fig. 3. Kierkegaard's A Papirer by Quarterly Rate



Fig. 4. Kierkegaard's C Papirer by Quarterly Rate

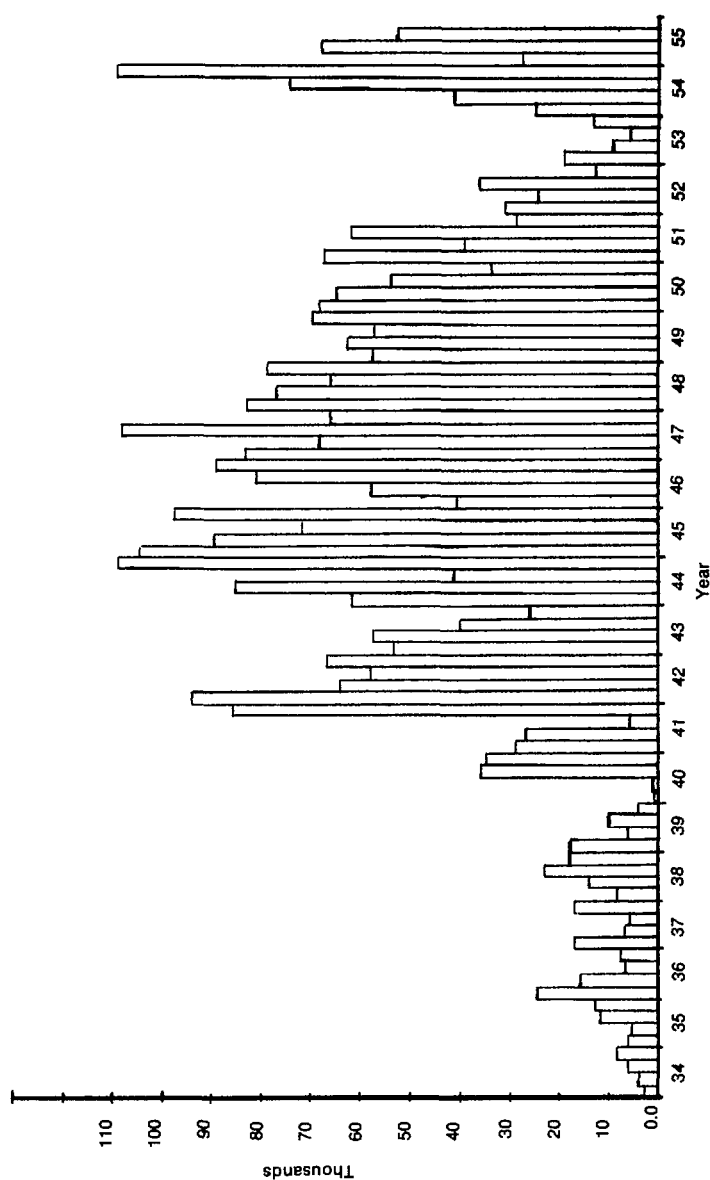


Fig. 5. Kierkegaard's Total Literary Production by Quarterly Rate

Figure 2 shows that the overall pattern of B is perhaps best described as intermittent or episodic. Of the three highest peaks in this group (1843, 1846, and 1855), the first is accounted for mainly by the unpublished autobiographical writing *Johannes Climacus eller De omnibus dubitandum est*,<sup>4</sup> the second mainly by *Bogen om Adler*,<sup>5</sup> and the third by various elaborations of articles related to *Bladartikler 1854-55* and *Øieblikket*.<sup>6</sup> It is in fact clear that in general these papers are closely connected with SV and that, had they been published, the pattern of the latter would have been yet more regular and symmetrical.

The A group has a pattern surprisingly similar to that of SV but with certain important differences. As Fig. 3 shows, it has a very long left or leading tail. It also has a regular bell curve but its peak is less pronounced and is considerably to the right; in fact, it first peaks in 1850.<sup>7</sup> Yet more obviously, it shows an extremely sharp upturn for 1854, most of which is accounted for by Kierkegaard's comments following the death of Bishop Mynster and Martensen's proclamation of him as a »Witness to the Truth«.<sup>8</sup>

C shows a pattern very different from any of the preceding. In the first place, it is confined almost entirely to the first half of his literary career. More surprisingly, it shows a marked tendency to peak in the first and fourth quarters of the year. This is particularly obvious from 1839 onwards; indeed, from that time on there is only one other single quarter (second quarter, 1844) which contains writings from this group. This pattern might be normal for a university student but Kierkegaard ceased to be such with his final examination in Divinity or, at least, with the acceptance and defence of his thesis in 1841.<sup>9</sup> This pattern is then something of a puzzle and perhaps the most that can be said at this point is that it *may* be evidence that he did not suffer Christmas depression.<sup>10</sup>

It may be worth noting that B appears to show a slight tendency to repeat this same pattern; at least, that it does so down to and including 1844. But the tendency is only slight and the observation merely a conjecture. And, it should be added, A gives some evidence of the opposite trend as instanced, for example, in 1839 and 1840.<sup>11</sup> But this again is only conjecture. The relevant data are numerous and complicated and any yearly patterns in this group could be uncovered only by detailed statistical analysis; as this is beyond our present interest we shall not now pursue the matter further.



Overall totals are given in detail in Table 1 and indicated in Fig. 5. In the latter particularly one sees the effects of adding the various groups of the *Pap* to *SV C* adds a left tail. B supplements *SV* particularly in 1846 (though the first quarter is still low); it also increases the quantity produced in 1855. The A group makes three substantial alterations; it tends to flatten the peak of the central curve, moves it more to the right, and greatly increases the upturn at the end. In fact, this overall result may be seen in a variety of ways: as a more or less even curve peaking in 1844-47; as a bi-modal curve peaking in each of these years; or, most probably, as three separate curves spanning the years 1834-39, 1840-53, and 1853-55, respectively. In any event, and this is beyond any such interpretation, this chart shows three distinct peaks all with surprisingly similar values: the fourth quarter of 1844, the third quarter of 1847, and the fourth quarter of 1854. These are, without doubt, his three most productive quarters. Such, in any event, is the matter in grossest outline.

Kierkegaard's diary contains numerous comments upon his authorship, the difficulties of being a writer, the condition of his body and, especially, his mind, its influences upon his work, etc. From this vast store almost everyone will have at least one remark against which he will wish to check these facts. It may therefore be salutary to refer to one such comment which seems almost totally at odds with this report. In this entry,<sup>12</sup> written some days after the event, Kierkegaard describes his experiences during and immediately following the preaching of *Guds Uforanderlighed* in Citadellets Kirke on May 18th, 1851. In it he complains about the pain involved in such physical exertion and writes that on the following day he was utterly exhausted and thereafter suffered terribly. Indeed, one gets the impression that he was perhaps unable to write a word for the next month or two. In fact, it seems doubtful that even this experience had any effect on his actual output; certainly it is not discernible in either our individual or overall totals.

Hopefully other Kierkegaard scholars will find these data useful in their own work but we conclude with the mere mention of one important matter to which they would seem particularly relevant. As said at the outset, Kierkegaard was essentially (and perhaps compulsively) a writer, a person driven to express himself in and through the written and perhaps printed word. Granted this, and given due caution, the present record can then be seen as at least a rough

index of his overall psychic state or potential during his productive years. Of course the bare outline provided in this report does not give the whole story but there is reason to believe that it does at least point to those situations and events in his life which should be considered in this connection.

## Notes

1. Cf., e.g., the following.

»In accordance with Journal NB. p. 251 [i.e., VIII, 1 A 82] I have recently begun to work out some lectures on the dialectic of ethical and ethical-religious communication. In the meantime it has become clear to me that I am not qualified to give lectures. I am accustomed to working things out in detail; the vegetative fertility of my style and exposition, every line thoroughly thought out, is too essential for me. If I were to give lectures I would insist on working them out like everything else and as a consequence read them aloud from a manuscript: which I do not care to do. But I cannot be satisfied with any other method.« (*Pap.* VIII, 1 A 120, n.d., 1847) (In the translation of these and other passages from *Pap.* we have relied heavily upon *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, ed. and transl. by Howard H. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, I-II, 1967, 1970, [III - VII, 1975-78].)

»So I once again have put the lectures away and have taken up my interrupted work (the first part of which I have finished): *Works of Love*. The dialectic of communication must be done as a book.« (*Pap.* VIII, 1 A 121, n.d., 1847).

»Fundamentally, to be an author has been my only possibility. The thought of becoming a rural pastor has always been in my mind... But even if I could have done it, I nevertheless would not have been able to do it at first, for my need to write was too great, writing satisfied me too much.« (*Pap.* X, 2 A 104 p. 80, n.d., 1849)

2. See McKinnon and Cappelørn, »The Period of Composition of Kierkegaard's Published Works« *Kierkegaardiana* IX, 1974.
3. The following is a brief summary of these »adjustments«. *To opbyggelige Taler* (1843) have been treated as beginning in the first quarter of 1843 rather than as in Dec., 1842 (see paper mentioned in note 2, above); *Tre opbyggelige Taler* (1843) as beginning in the third quarter of 1843 rather than in June of that year; *To opbyggelige Taler* (1844) as beginning in the first quarter of 1844 rather than in Dec., 1843; *Philosophiske Smuler* as beginning in the second quarter of 1844 rather than at the end of March of that year; *Stadier paa Livets Vei* as beginning in the fourth quarter of 1844 rather than in Sep.; and *Øieblikket* as beginning in the second quarter of 1855 rather than at the end of March of that year. All these minor adjustments were made in order to present a truer and more accurate picture of the actual course and shape of the production.
4. *Pap.* IV B 1 pp. 103-150; cf. *Johannes Climacus, or De omnibus dubitandum est*, tr. by T. H. Croxall, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958.

5. *Pap.* VII, 2 B 235 pp. 5-230; cf. *On Authority and Revelation. The Book on Adler*, tr. by Walter Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955. Later Kierkegaard divided this book into seven different parts, two of which were published as *Tvende ethisk-religieuse Smaa-Afhandlinger*; cf. *The Present Age and Two Minor Ethico-Religious Treatises*, tr. by Alexander Dru and Walter Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940, pp. 71 ff.
6. *Pap.* XI, 3 B 86-200 pp. 132-334.
7. The following may be noted in this connection.
 

»Many times I was all set to publish the writings about myself, but, no. I was able to write them with the same composure I customarily have in my work, but the minute I took them out with the thought of publishing them, I felt an uneasiness, an overstraining I had never sensed before.

»That was my boundary ...« (*Pap.* X, 2 A 106 p. 83, n.d., 1849)

»... I constantly fear that communication of this sort [*Om min Forfatter-Virksomhed*] somehow obligates me promptly to express it existentially, which is beyond my capability to do, nor is that what I mean ...«

»...«

»That is why I thought I first of all ought to get a pastoral appointment or something like that, in order to show that I do not make myself out to be better than others.

»But that again has its own special difficulties, and so the time has passed and I have suffered exceedingly.« (*Pap.* X 3 A 190, n.d., 1850)

»For a long time I believed that I had not long to live: ...

»I have also delayed in order to give R. Nielsen room to set out.

»But if I am to go on living, there is not a moment to waste – and therefore I have sent a manuscript [i.e. *Indøvelse i Christendom*] to the printer.« (*Pap.* X, 3 A 381, n.d., 1850)

»But the main point is that the spirit has not moved me to a firm and fixed conviction that now is the time, something I did feel about the timing of publication of *Practice in Christianity*.« (*Pap.* X, 3 A 423, n.d., 1850) Cf. also Kierkegaard's remarks at the end of July, 1851 concerning the publication of *Om min Forfatter-Virksomhed* and *To Taler ved Altergangen om Fredagen*:

»Now they are being printed. I feel inexplicably, unspeakably happy, calm and content, and overwhelmed.

»Infinite love! I have suffered much during the past days, very much, but then it comes again. Once again my understanding of my task is clear to me but with greater vividness, and even though I have blundered 17 times – nevertheless an infinite love in its grace has made it all completely right.« (*Pap.* X, 4 A 351, n.d., 1851).
8. Bishop Mynster died Jan. 30th and was buried Feb. 7th, 1854. On Feb. 5th, the fifth Sunday after Epiphany, Professor Martensen preached a sermon in Christiansborg Slotskirke (the Court Chapel) in which he eulogized Mynster as 'a genuine witness to the truth in the holy chain of witnesses which stretches from the days of the Apostles'. (cf. *Prædiken, holdt i Christiansborg Slotskirke paa 5te Søndag efter Hellig Tre Konger, Søndagen før Biskop Dr. Mynsters Jordefærd*. Af Dr. H. Martensen, København, 1854, p.5)

It is clear from the almost explosive production which followed that Kierke-

gaard felt Mynster as a real obstacle in the way of his intended attack upon the Established Church. This is also evident from many passages in the *Pap.*; cf., e.g., the following:

»... Above all, there is one consideration that has constantly held me back, restrained my tongue or my pen, a consideration for this highest clergyman of this Church, a man to whom I – also in remembrance of a dead father – feel drawn in an inexplicable, almost morbid, love – and I must believe that he would be very sorry that it be said.« (*Pap.* X, 6 B 232 p. 372-3, n.d., 1853)

»... Time passed, again conscience began wanting to engage me in conversation ... Suppose, it said to me, that the old gentleman were dead, then do you think it easier to set out and in words get said altogether unequivocally, briefly and bluntly, the specific something you have to say. You assume that it is devotedness to the old gentleman – and this I will not completely deny – that holds you back. But watch out, could not this also be a little selfishness, that you want to protect yourself, that you think the matter cannot be either as serious or as painfully exhausting for you as soon as he is gone ...« (*Ibid.* p. 376)

»Now that he [Bishop Mynster] is dead without having made it [a confession to Christianity that what he represented was not really Christianity, but only a milder form of it], everything is changed; all that is left is that by his preaching he has hardened Christianity into a deception.

»And everything is changed in my melancholy devotion to my dead father's pastor. For it would be too much if even after his death I could not speak more freely of him, even though I know well that my old devotion and my aesthetic admiration will always have a certain fascination for me.

»...«

»From the time that a hidden misunderstanding came between us, it was my wish that I should at least succeed in avoiding any attack on him during his life-time. And I thought that I myself might die first.

»And yet it almost came to the point where I believed I had to attack him. There was only a single sermon of his that I did not hear, and that was the last [i.e. on December 26th, 1853, in Christiansborg Slotskirke]. I was not hindered by sickness, on the contrary I went to hear Kolthorf. For me the meaning of this was that now it must happen, you must break with your father's tradition. It was the last time Mynster preached. Praise God, is that not like a sign of Providence?« (*Pap.* XI, 1 A 1 pp. 5-6, March 1st, 1854)

»But now he [Bishop Mynster] is dead, and this is significant for me, I am now ready for it, and now I can and will say quite directly what hitherto I have only aimed at rather indirectly, and therewith enter my Christian plea ... that Christianity actually does not exist, or exists only in a very unreal sense ...« (*Pap.* XI, 3 B 38 p. 78, March, 1854)

»Now that the old Biskop is dead, removing that consideration together with much else that made me keep indefinite (who I am) what I intend, I now can and must and will speak as directly as possible.« (*Pap.* XI, 3 B 53 p. 100. This entry bears no date but it is clear that it was written in January, 1855).

9. Kierkegaard was registered as a theological student at the University of Copenhagen on Oct. 30th but it was only after the death of his father that he began

seriously to study for his final examination. The connection is implicitly made in his Diary:

»... my plan in those days to take my final examination in Divinity. I decided this out of piety for my dead father...« (*Pap.* X, 2 A 399 p. 283, n.d., 1850) In fact, Kierkegaard took his degree in Divinity on July 3rd, 1840 and his thesis *Om Begrebet Ironi* was accepted by the Faculty of Philosophy on July 16th and was defended on Sept. 29th, 1841.

10. The conjecture is not irrelevant in view of some of his comments concerning the celebration of Christmas; cf., e.g., *Pap.* X, 2 A 283, n.d., 1849.
11. See Table 1 and Fig. 3.
12. »About Myself«.

»On Sunday, May 18th, I preached in the Citadel Church. It was on my first. my favorite, text: James I. Also, I confess, with the thought of 'her', also whether it would give her pleasure to hear me.

»I suffered very much in advance from every possible strain, as I always do when I must make use of my physical being.

»I delivered the sermon. It went fairly well, but I spoke so faintly that people complained about not being able to hear me.

»When I went home I even felt well, animated. My intention had been to deliver a few such sermons during the summer – of course, after preparing them in detail.

»But in the meantime it became clear to me that this was going to take an abnormal amount of time and would take a lot out of me.

»Then the thought occurred to me: You can, after all, preach *ex tempore*.

»It struck me that I would then be taking a desperate risk.

»But what happens? On Monday I was so weak and worn out that it was terrible.

»Several days went by. I did not relinquish the idea of preaching *ex tempore* and thus accentuating Christianity existentially as far as possible.

»Yet I felt that it went against my whole nature.

»I became more and more listless. But I did not give up the idea entirely.

»But eventually I had to give it up for the time being.

»Then I really got sick. I began to feel terribly the dismaying, agonising pain which constitutes my personal limits, something which had not happened to me for a long, long time.

»At the moment I took this as punishing for not having proceeded swiftly enough.

»I became more miserable.

»On Sunday, the one following May 18th, I read one of Mynster's sermons as usual and the text for the day was about the thorn in the flesh: Let my grace be sufficient for you.

»That struck me.

»Meanwhile I was still reluctant to give up my idea, even contemplated forcing myself to do it. Now my torment increased.

»So I changed my mind, saw that once again I had wanted to go beyond my limits, and now I rest in the thought: Let my grace be sufficient for you. Inward deepening is my task, and there is much of the poetic in me.

»On the morning of Sunday the 18th I had prayed God that something new might be born in me (I do not know myself how it occurred to me); even then the thought pressed in on me that just as parents bring up their children and finally bring them to confirmation, in the same way this was the confirmation to which God was bringing me.

»And in a way that has happened. Something new has been born in me, for I see my task as an author in a different way – it is now dedicated in a quite different way to advancing religion directly. And I have been confirmed in this, and this is how it is with me.

»The special reason I had such misgivings about venturing so far out was grounded in a very different concern that vexes me: the problem of my livelihood, and I was so afraid of this turning out to be a drastic delusion that instead of doing something about it I ventured farther out ideally.

»God surely will keep on doing all that is good for me, he who I can never sufficiently thank for what has been done to me.« (*Pap. X*, 4 A 323 pp. 183-4, n.d., 1851).