Kierkegaard's Terminology - and English

by ROBERT WIDENMAN

Before embarking upon his authorship Kierkegaard undertook exhaustive studies of the problems concerning language and communication, this with an eye towards arriving at a medium of expression in which content and form would embody a close interrelationship, and at a terminology that would not engender ambiguity. As a result of these efforts the various terms and expressions permeating his authorship shows a remarkable consistency in meaning and application – even when Kierkegaard does not himself supply us with a definition – as indeed this was essential to his entire production, or, as Lars Bejerholm puts it: »S. K.'s reflections concerning language's designatory function are in this respect ["That terms contain an unequivocal designation"] a systematic presupposition for his theories of communication,"[1] and when one reflects that the entire authorship constitutes a communication it becomes understandable that his systematic use of language likewise must rest as the foundation for the authorship itself.

The question of communication, especially of indirect communication, as well as the specific problems relevant to many Kierkegaardian categories, cannot in their full breadth concern us here, partially because a good portion of this work has already been done, partially because such an undertaking in an essay would be ridiculous, and principally because our concern here is what has happened to Kierkegaard in English. Hence, we shall, in the following, limit ourselves to a few general remarks with respect to translating and to defining from a linguistic standpoint – to the extent that that be possible – a few of those terms which cronically have given rise to translatorial headaches.

The first difficulty facing the translator consists not necessarily in knowledge of the two languages involved – that is assumed – but in a comprehension of the author's perhaps especial use and significance of key

expressions and terms which are likely to be found throughout the entire authorship, for these will be the terms providing us with an entrance card for admission to his thought. This difficulty will now be compounded by several factors. For the first, the very fact that there are two languages involved, next the period during which the author wrote (languages are subject to change), then the author's sources and background, and finally the specific intention of the author.

If, bearing this in mind, we now turn to Kierkegaard, we must first note that his production took place in the early nineteenth century, at a time when the Danish orthography was not yet fixed,[2] and when the Danish language contained many words and expressions which have since either disappeared completely or undergone radical modifications in meaning. Because Kierkegaard very frequently made use of colloquial expressions, understanding some of his nineteenth-century, Copenhagen slang, and any hope of following in English, let us say, his Danish style will necessitate studies of the language of that period,[3] and consequently the use of Danish dictionaries of that age.

Secondly, and most important, the philosophic terminology of Kierkegaard's time had but recently been imported into Danish, principally via literal translation from German, more specifically, from the Speculative Idealism raging at the time (according to some, to the detriment of Danish[4]), and this importation was of considerable significance for scientific usage in Denmark. However, Kierkegaard did not simply, without further ado, take over an entire Hegelian terminology; Hegel's terms and categories were drastically reworked by Kierkegaard so as in many instances to acquire a significance quite at variance from that employed in speculation. The content of many of Kierkegaard's concepts represents a radical departure from traditional usage, for the simple fact that Kierkegaard's thinking likewise constituted a break with tradition, which is to say that he encountered a difficulty to which every genius who has imparted something new has been exposed.

To this must be added the very nature of the Danish language, in particular when set into contrast to English with the latter's admixture of two disparate language-groups, the Teutonic and the Romance. Belonging to the Teutonic

group, many Danish words possess an extremely broad meaning, or several meanings, in some cases contradictory ones (the famous *at ophæve* – to preserve or to abrogate). What one author,[5] in comparing ancient Greek to modern Western languages, said of German is to some extent attributable to Danish as well: "The imprecision and lack of immediate perspicuity into which English occasionally deviates and from which German occasionally emerges, is quite foreign to Greek." The English reader can find examples of this ambiguousness in his own language, merely by comparing many of our synonyms, where those of Germanic origin generally have a broader sense while those of French derivation tend to bring definitions into narrower confines.

To all of this must be added the complications arising when an attempt is made at translating thought from one language into another, especially if two languages do not have an immediate kinship. That Kierkegaard himself was aware of this fact is evident from a rather interesting entry in the *Papers*,[6] where he remarks that in ancient times, when only one language was used for literature, there existed a fixed terminology which, with the later employment of national languages and the emergence of the concomitant differences in nuances contained in variegating modes of expressing the concepts, has since disappeared and been rendered impossible.

This question of terminology was for Kierkegaard of itself an essential point for debate with speculative philosophy. It was his view that the philosophers of his age had brought all definitions to confusion, chiefly by employing the same terms in different disciplines, thereby denuding the former of any consistency in content and of the power of conviction, while at the same time rendering it impossible to distinguish between the sciences.[7] The result of their emasculation of the concepts was the aestheticizing of religion (in particular of the religious address).[8] The problem then is to translate without reverting to the same confusion.

With this as a backdrop, let us now take a look at how Kierkegaard has fared in English. The history of Kierkegaard's entrance into the English language is supplied – at least in part – by Walter Lowrie in an article entitled "How Kierkegaard Got into English",[9] a rather revelatory piece of

work. At first, one cannot but be impressed by "the indefatigable Dr. Walter Lowrie's"[10] ardor in organizing and arranging for funds – and even himself defraying costs where necessary – for the purpose of introducing Kierkegaard to the English reader; without the expenditure of this energy a good portion of Kierkegaard's works might still be unknown to the English speaking world. But in another and more important department, that of translating, his quest to break all existing speed records[11] is most decidedly to be deplored, for this fact alone has most certainly lain at the bottom of many glaring inconsistencies, which, combined with a lack in English of the most important of Kierkegaard's journal entries, have gone far to hamper both American and British scholarship. This, then, brings us to the purpose of the essay, to wit, a closer look at those words and expression which in the past have been the cause not only of difficulties but also of a departure from Kierkegaard's terminology.

Virkeligheden: Until Howard Hong's revision of the *Fragments* appeared, it had been the custom to render this word by both 'reality' and 'actuality', with the former predominating by far.

The *Virkelighed* employed by Kierkegaard is in fact Hegel's *Wirklichkeit,* but with a sense far more profound than that found in, f. i., Hegel's Logic, and never in the more general sense of 'reality' (Dan: *Realitet,* Ger:*Realität*). The latter is used by Kierkegaard in the sense of validity, as in the validity or reality of thought,[12] which is a far cry from the more concrete actuality with which he was occupied. Reality for Kierkegaard lacks the phenomenal side and is indifferent to time, and consequently to motion.

For Kierkegaard, actuality always includes the contingent and the element of time, it being a composite of two otherwise incompatible elements, the necessary or intellectual aspect and the phenomenal. His concept af actuality fits closely into the pattern laid down by Aristotle in his *Categories* and *Metaphysics.* Since, however, the actuality with which Kierkegaard principally is concerned is that of an existing human being, his concept always involves a doubleness that accentuates the element of time. Having come into existence, and thus now partaking of time and occupying space, he is, in an empirical sense, of course an actual human being. However, in addition to this there is

the problem of individuation, that of existentially actualizing (or taking over) the personality as conceived, but principally as conceived as an obligation. Into this pattern are fitted the ideas of repetition and faith. This double aspect of actuality has been most succinctly expressed by Dr. Malantschuk as follows:[13] "If, then, there were to be given an actual-being of such a nature that behind its phenomenal being it were to contain not only the thereto corresponding conceptual side – in accordance with the basic presuppositions for truth and actuality – but if behind this phenomenal appearance's actuality with its conceptual aspect still another actual-being could conceal itself, that again were to possess both real and ideal aspects, and in addition to this were to lay claim to eternal existence, then we would be faced with an entirely new form of actual-being." This concept goes far beyond that of Hegel, but in a completely different direction, for Hegel culminates in fact by transcending actuality.

The translator's clue here is, however, the usage employed – and consistently – in the English versions of Hegel's works, and especially in his Logic. The Hegelian category at which Kierkegaard is persistently aiming is that of Actuality,[14] and not Reality,[15] the latter having represented for Hegel a quite different stage in the development of thought. Further, the basic schema stems from investigations of both Aristotle and Plato, and in both these instances it has been customary to employ the more concrete 'actuality'.

As things now stand, it is an extremely knotty undertaking, that of differentiating in the English translations between these two notions, for they have been utilized interchangeably, with the result that only by studying the context are we able to distinguish between them. In the *Postscript*[16] the terms 'validity', 'reality' and 'actuality' have been freely intermingled, while in *The Concept of Dread*[17] and in *Stages on Life's Way* 'reality' has been made to serve as a translation for both *Virkelighed* and *Realitet,* and that in successive passages in which the contexts could not possibly permit of such.

Throughout, 'reality' and 'actuality' are employed as synonyms in the English translations, and yet this is not the case, even from the point of view of English etymology and definition. 'Reality', of French and Latin origin, expresses primarily a *relation* or correspondance between appearance and essence , *viz.,* the present state or condition of things as perceived in a repre-

sentation so vivid as almost to imbue the representation with concrete existence or to confuse it with the concrete object represented. In its etymological meaning the word pertains to things in law, hence the modern sense of genuine, valid. 'Actuality', on the other hand, always infers a phenomenal, present existence in time[18] and in contradistinction to what is potential or possible. Its original meaning was act or present existence (it is interesting to observe that the modern French *actuel* means current, and the modern Danish *aktuel* 'of current interest, topical').

Here, then, there can be no doubt; *Virkeligheden* must be rendered by 'actuality' if one is not to run the risk of emasculating one of Kierkegaard's most important concepts, to say nothing of confusing two entirely different terms.

Forstand: This word was the subject of no small amount of correspondance between Swenson and Lowrie,[19] and well it might have been, for between the Danish *Fornuft* and *Forstand,* on the one side, and the English reason and understanding, on the other, there exists no direct concordance, while, to add to the complication, Kierkegaard has dismissed as invalid an entire philosophic tradition calling for a differentiation in gradation between understanding and reason (or *Forstand* and *Fornuft*). Moreover, the two Danish words (like the English) are used idiomatically in a myriad of combinations, each of which strays quite far from the significances of the two words proper. It would seem, judging from the aforementioned reference and from remarks appearing in Lowrie's Forword to the *Postscript,* that Swenson and Lowrie engaged in a heated debate on this subject, with Swenson preferring 'Reason' as a translation of *Forstand,* whereas Lowrie held tenaciously to 'Understanding'. Swenson's thinking in this respect is available to us, as is an indication of Lowrie's,[20] but the full exposition of the latter's grounds for his choice remains buried in a bundle of correspondance now reposing at the University of Minnesota.[21]

The distinction between perception, understanding and reason (Ger.: *Verstand* and *Vernunft,* respectively, for the last two) owes its principal elucidation, of course, to Kant's epistemology, in particular as developped in *The Critique of Pure Reason.* For Kant (we leave perception out of the picture

here), understanding is a "faculty of rules" whose function consists in a synthesizing of perception and conception so as to arrive at judgements that yield the categories, or abstracts of experience; reason, by contrast, in addition to providing the interconnection between the understanding's separate, conditioned results, is also itself a *source* of conceptions furnishing universal propositions or "principles".[22] In essence, Hegel had appropriated this distinction. For Hegel, understanding deals with 'limited' abstractions, namely, it holds fast to antitheses between universals and particulars and is consequently unable to transcend the principle of contradiction. Reason occupies a much more eminent position, for in the culmination of the logical system it becomes identified with spirit, the notion, where all contradictions have been reconciled and surmounted, and where reason as a productive faculty brings forth and identifies itself with actuality.[23]

Kierkegaard rejects completely this division of the cognitive powers, and in fact often uses *Forstand* and *Fornuft* as synonyms.[24] Firstly, there could be no such thing as an intellectual faculty capable of validly reconciling existential contradictions, since the contradictions with which he was occupied were absolute or qualitative; quite the contrary, it is precisely reason's inability to despatch them that brings about its downfall (and herein lies also the absolute character of the Paradox), the contradiction consisting in the fact that there is to be brought into existence a relation to a something that defies thought, but which the reason nevertheless will think.

Furthermore, reason for Kierkegaard implies some elements which Hegel most certainly would have regarded as a serious detriment to all thinking. Nowhere does Kierkegaard give us a dictionary-definition, but what it involves may be inferred from its use within the authorship. The first concrete indication is found in the *Fragments*[25] and an excellent summary of reason's employment here is provided by Swenson's note to the first edition (retained in Dr. Thulstrup's second edition):[26] Reason "is not", quoting Swenson, "to be taken in any abstract-intellectual sense, but quite concretely, as the reflectively organized common sense of mankind, including as its essential core a sense of life's values. Over against the 'Paradox', it is therefore the self-assurance and self-assertiveness of man's nature in its totality. To identify it with any abstract intellectual function, like the function of scientific

cognition, or of general ideas, or of the a priori, or of self-consistency in thinking, etc., is wholly to misunderstand the exposition of the *Fragments.* Specifically, Kant's distinction between Reason and Understanding, or any other similar distinction [f. i., Hegel's] is wholly beside the point. The Danish word here translated is *Forstanden,* but this should not mislead anyone into thinking that it ought to be translated by 'Understanding' and interpreted in contradistinction to 'Reason'."[27] If this definition now be supplemented with a few deatils, such as the fact that the reason can despair (SV VII, p. 210 note), that the despairing individual employs a part of his reason to explain away the other part's despair (211), and that the reason acts with passion (SV IV, p. 242), then it becomes evident that with Kierkegaard's usage we are dealing with something entirely new. To be sure, *Forstand* represents for Kierkegaard the objective moment in a human's composition, yet this is not a disconnected entity or activity whose sole function consists in a neat arrangement of the categories or in a cogitation devoid of subjective content, but it entails rather a thinking whose source of energy derives from an infinite interest connecting the subject and the objective, and whose material, provided both by experience and by imagination, is resolved into a possible intended for actualization. Reason does not and cannot do away with existential contradictions, which in themselves furnish an additional tension. Per Lønning has quite rightly called this "tenkningen som lidenskap".[28]

What, then, are we to do in English (my own predilection is already quite obvious)? There are two basic problems; first, the special use within speculative philosophy and, second, the colloquial uses of the various terms available to us. The first could most certainly constitute a serious objection to the use of 'reason', for it is to be feared that a reader acquainted with the English versions of Hegel's and Kant's works – or of those philosophers who separate them – might go so far as to identify Kierkegaard's concept with the higher instrument of thought as defined by the former two philosophers. Granted that such a mistake must of necessity be based either on a superficial reading of Kierkegaard, or on the accident that the reader is excessively taken up with and pre-inclined by speculative thought (which possibility is rapidly dwindling), yet the constant appearance of such a word in critical passages does give the problem an element of reality. But, by the same token (and

Swenson has pointed this out in the correspondance referred to above), the employment of 'understanding' is equally liable to engender the same difficulty, only in the opposite direction (and apparently already has. Cf. Garelick: "; the offence [committed by Christianity"] to the heart follows from the shock to the understanding and the rejection of reason."[29] Garelick has throughout employed 'reason' as the faculty in question, despite the fact that 'understanding' appears in the *Postspript).* We have, therefore, no way via translation of circumnavigating this little issue.

The next to which we should turn our attention is colloquial usage (which, by the way, is an aspect that Kierkegaard always took into account). In Swenson's letter mentioned above he gives us examples of common usages of *Forstand og Aabenbarelse* (Swenson actually uses the Swedish *Forstandet och Uppenbarelse*) as against "Reason and Revelation", a poignant observation, for we no more oppose 'understanding' and revelation than do the Danes *Fornuft* and *Aabenbarelse.* In general use, the two Danish words in fact have meanings opposite to those one might expect, *Forstand* inclining more towards the intellectual, and *Fornuft* towards the reasonable or common sense. A *fornuftig* person is one who is reasonable, while a *forstandig* individual is sensible or intelligent.

The English equivalents pose similar problems, albeit with shades of differences. Understanding is generally used to indicate the positive result of a reflective process, or in the sense of a knowing or intelligent person – or even a person sympathetic to the cares of others – but it is in the significance as comprehension, apprehension, that my chief objection to utilization of understanding as a translation of *Forstand* lies, since in Kierkegaard's works, and particularly in the *Fragments* and *Postscript,* the latter word is frequently placed side by side with the precise Danish equivalent of understanding, namely, *Forstaaelse,* and it is not always that we are able to circumvent muddiness by substituting English synonyms. By way of example let one just translate the following from the *Fragments* (SV IV, p. 242), but in following Lowrie's wishes: "Dersom Paradoxet og Forstanden støde sammen i den fælleds Forstaaelse, da er Sammenstødet lykkeligt som Elskovens Forstaaelse, ..." and: "Er Sammenstødet ikke i Forstaaelse, da er Forholdet ulykkeligt, og denne Forstandens, om jeg saa tør sige, ..." With such examples it is not hard to

imagine the possible result, while the *Postscript,* in which 'understanding' does the job of 'Reason' in the *Fragments,* does indeed offer us some fine examples.

Lowrie has at any rate been constant to his preference for 'understanding', whereas Swenson, after having employed 'Reason' in the *Fragments,* then reverted to Lowrie's favorite in the bulk of his portion of the *Postscript,* not without, however, falling back in a few instances to 'reason' (this time without a capital 'R'); Prof. Hong, in his revision of the *Fragments,* retained both 'Reason' and (as mentioned above) Swenson's already cited note, but now, with his translation of the *Papers* his (Hong's) choice has again fallen upon 'understanding'. What the outcome of all this will be is difficult to say, for Lee Capel, in his recent translation of *The Concept of Irony,*[30] divides his glosary into two compartments, those having a "one-to-one correspondance" and those which cannot readily be directly translated, offering, as they do, difficulties; peculiarly enough, *Forstand* and *Fornuft* have been placed in the first category. *Forstand* = understanding; *Fornuft* = reason. With this, we seem almost to have relapsed into the speculative distinctions ...

Anfægtelse: This word is perhaps the worst of them all, there existing in English not even an approximation to it in meaning, while it nevertheless constitutes an important category in Kierkegaard's religious thinking..

Defined by a Danish dictionary of Kierkegaard's time,[31] *at anfægte* has the following meaning: "1. Actually to assault with arms, but used [in this sense] figuratively only. *At anfegtes* (to be tempted [*fristes*]) by the Devil; *anfegtes* (to be insulted) with respect to one's honor; *anfegtes* (to be plagued) by sufferings, by severe illness. The son's misfortune does not *anfegte(r)* him (it does not touch him, he does not take it seriously, to heart). *Anfegtelse, en.* Temptation [*Fristelse*] uneasiness anxiety of the mind." (*Anfegtelse* is an older spelling).

Kierkegaard has offered no few pages to this term, f. i.; SV II, pp. 135 ff; III, pp. 117 ff., 346 ff.; VII, pp. 448 ff.; Pap. VIII[1] A 93; IX A 392, X[1] A 452, 477, 478 – to mention but the most important. His clearest definition is given in the *Postscript* itself (SV VII, pp. 448 ff.). The distinction between anfægtelse and temptation (*Fristelse*) lies basically in that the former emanates

from the higher, the latter from the lower. Put into more concrete terms, it is the feeling of doubt incurred by the thought that over against God one has gone too far and ought now to turn back to a lower sphere, thus in the last instance rejecting the final leap of faith. This brings with it an incomprehensible suffering, for it seems as though the concept of God itself has brought about the suffering, which, assuming a profound love for God, must entail a collision whose solution cannot be sought rationally. Temptation inhers in the ethical stage, and here the enticing is always the lower; anfægtelse appertains, on the other hand, to the religious where the individual has discovered, through his efforts at relating himself absolutely to the absolute, a limit where his reason collides with his will so that he is frightened back; if he gives in, he will most certainly content himself with the ethical, the universal, in which he would be prone to find his comfort. In anfægtelse there is incurred no guilt, which is of course not the case with temptation.

Another form of anfægtelse might be found in the (rare) case of an individual who extends himself too far into the spiritual, to the point of desiring to be pure spirit, while at the same time exacting of God the requisite assistance (this hypothetical case is extremely dialectical, for it could also be a form of pride). Here the solution rests, not of course in renouncing his love for God, and the concomitant suffering, but in bringing himself to a realization that he is, after all, situated in time and as such is not entitled to make absurd claims upon himself. This case (described in X^1 A 452) most certainly has a direct relationship to Kierkegaard himself. Abraham is the representative in the authorship of an individual who has had to wrest himself from the snares of anfægtelse, which would force him to save his son and bend himself to the ethical.

The various and sundry English expression that have been coined to cover this word, trial by temptation, etc., just do not help at all and are, if anything, distracting. Swenson finally found himself obliged to incorporate into English a foreign word (when he arrived at the decisive part of the *Postscript,* pp. 410 ff.), *viz., Anfechtung,* the German equivalent. The problem now boils down to one of pronunciation. Much as I should always hesitate to import into English foreign, unknown words, the lack in this instance is so glaring that is becomes a necessity, but *Anfechtung,* when it pops up in the

middle of an English sentence, brings with it the savor of an unpleasant, contagious disease, for which reason the Danish *anfægtelse,* which at least is pronouncable in English, is much to be preferred. Whatever be the choice, let it be hoped that in future revisions and translations the cumbersome and meaningsless expressions hitherto employed will be discarded.

Tilværelse, at være til, at være; Existents, at existere; Tilblivelse, at blive til, at blive: Many words and much ink have been expended in an effort to arrive at a rendering in English of the subtle but significant nuances separating some of these expressions, and at an accurate interpretation of the third group. Since all of them in one way or another have to do with existence, I have lumped them together, but with three subdivisions: those deriving from the copulative 'to be' (*at være*), 'existence' and 'to exist', and lastly, those originating from the auxiliary verb 'to become' (*at blive*).

The copulative verb *at være* is in itself no problem, but as soon as '*til*' is added we are in trouble, since we immediately find that our English vocabulary does not stretch far enough to equate with both *at være til* and *at existere,* and worse, we have no word or expression to render satisfactorily *Tilværelse* or *at være til. Tilværelse* is defined by Molbech's dictionary mentioned above (col. 1213) as "a thing's being, not alone in thought or in the idea, but in the real, in actuality (existence)." But then it continues with: "to have a pitiful *Tilværelse* (to live a pitiful life)." *Tilværelsen,* if used in a more general sense, gives a representation of the actual, persisting world with all its contingencies, attributes, etc., but it gives us a rather static picture. When applied to an individual it usually refers to his present life or welfare and is almost invariably – in colloquial usage – employed in such a manner as to indicate just how things stand with that person. A sentence such as "jeg er til for din skyld" would best be translated by "I am here (or exist) for your sake".[32] *Existents,* by contrast, brings us to the idea of being situated in time and space and thus accentuating motion as one of its essential ingrediences; it has, so to speak, more breadth or extention, or, in Kierkegaard's terminology – since the existence with which he is concerned is that of a human being – it implicates becoming or change. Beyond this the category of existence does not go: "Nothing historical can be indifinitely certain for me

except the fact that I exist [*er til*] ... which is not something historical."[33] "When it is the case that he, actually existing, constantly reproduces in his existence the form of existence [*Tilværelsens Form*], then as existing he is constantly just as negative as positive,...;"[34] and: "Sin is the new existence-medium. Aside from this, *to exist* means merely that the individual, by having come into existence, exists [*er til*] and is in the process of becoming; ... aside from this to exist is not a more sharply defining predicate, but the form of all the more sharply defining predicates..."[35] To be noted in these passages is the differentiation made between existence as constituting mere presence in time and as being subjoined to form (*Tilværelse*), on the one hand, and existence inclusive of a process of becoming (*er i Verden*) on the other; the first expresses nothing historical (other than the fact that a coming-into-existence has taken place), while the second intimates the individual's historicity, *viz.,* his 'process of becoming'. *At være til* does yield the notion of a time-space existence (and to that extent it differs radically from the copulative 'to be'), of the presence of an existent, and as such may be said to be a 'static' concept, to wit, static in contradistinction to 'to exist' which gives a sense of continuity.

Unfortunately, we have no definite means of rendering this distinction in English, apart, that is, from the expedient of resorting to substitutes such as reality, presence, etc. (which Swenson and Lowrie have done), but even with the ingenuity shown in this respect by our translators the full thought never quite comes through to the surface in English.

Tilblivelse and *at blive til* present the above situation in reverse; it is not possible in Danish to differentiate between 'to come into being' and 'to come into existence', the two Danish terms above having to serve for both. Until the advent of Kierkegaard's works this problem (as well as many others) was not to acute, but now where precision is required and with stress having been placed on existence and on an absolutely paradoxical form of generation, we become obliged to settle this question if we are to produce a faithful reproduction in English of Kierkegaard's thought, especially since the category of change (*Forandring*) is pivotal in his thinking. Heretofore (with the exception of Prof. Hong's revision of the *Fragments*), a maze of expressions have been drawn upon, with 'coming-into-being' and 'to come into being', respectively, as the most preferred.

In the *Fragments,* Prof. Hong was concerned with one kind of change, that of coming into existence in the sense of generation,[36] especially with respect to the Eternal in time, i. e., "not the Eternal as coming into being but as coming into temporal-spatial existence with its particularity and contingency: the Incarnation."[37] Prof. Hong having already covered this point, I shall here confine myself to a few remarks relevant to change as applied in the *Post-script,* and as delineated more concretely in *The Sickness Unto Death.*

In these two works, the central issue is that of bringing into existence a contemplated actuality, i. e., of actualizing a possibility, which though having existence yet does not have existence for the individual until it has been given concretion through an act of the will. In *Either/Or* this receives the following expression:[38] "The choice here makes two dialectical movements at one time; that which is chosen does not exist [*er ikke til*] and comes into existence by means of the choice; what is chosen exists [*er til*], otherwise it would not be a choice." This movement is from actuality → possibility → actuality, and the actuality under discussion is in inwardness – which again brings us back to the observations made under "*Virkeligheden*", and to the quotation borrowed from Dr. Malantschuk. In both the changes involved here, and in the qualitative change indigenous to the act of believing, there occurs yet another change, a transformation of the individual's entire existence, hence a qualitative change copresent with that of coming into existence.

In *The Sickness Unto Death* (and in *Either/Or*), that which must come into existence for the already existing individual is the selv as posited under the category of necessity whose possibility lies in the choice of possessing and thus giving it actuality. But the ultimate actuality consists in the act of faith, i. e., in a rebirth; here again, another qualitative change.

The simultaneous changes which here take place, or the transformations within a transformation, are perhaps better expressed by the Danish *Tilblivelse* with its ambiguity than by the more exact English, but even in this instance we must give actuality and existence their due – hence, 'come into existence'.

Angest: The difficulty with this word, especially as employed by Kierkegaard, lies in its wide application as opposed to the more precise terms available to

us in the Romance languages. By Molbech *Angest* is defined thusly:[39] "Angest, en. Actually anxiety or oppression, pressure on the heart; but used only for: a high degree of fear for or worry over a forthcoming or immanent danger." For Kierkegaard the essential difference between *Angest* and fear (*Frygt*) consists in the fact that the former requires no object, whereas the latter does, which determination likewise equates with colloquial usage (this is not to say that *Angest* cannot be directed to a known, concrete object). Unlike the definition quoted above, *Angest* can, within its qualitative determination, also undergo quantitative changes in gradation. It is for this reason that he can speak of an *Angest* that is "friendly and mild", or of a "sweet anxiety".[40]

'Dread', by contrast, is crushing in its implications, and is certainly at the root of the many accusations made against "existential philosophy" for being extremely pessimistic (Sartre's school has helped, of course), as dread generally requires a known object and always signifies a fear raised to its utmost intensity. It its indeed a shame that the first translations of *Begrebet Angest* set into movement a tradition that now will be difficult to arrest, and yet when this work is revised (and it will have to be) the title (and the concept) will most certainly have to be changed to read: *The Concept of Anxiety.* 'Anxiety' does not fully translate the original either (for it does not go far enough in intensity), but it at least permits of the various quantitative gradations studied in *Begrebet Angest,* and is, moreover, a determinant known to modern psychology.

The book under discussion and *The Sickness Unto Death* constitute another, very special problem in terminology. These two works are in content profound studies in psychology, but being authored at a time when psychology was in its infancy, and when, therefore, a psychologic terminology as such for all practical purposes did not exist, the language employed by Kierkegaard has in itself been a detriment to proper research by competent psychologists. To this date, no such work exists. What is required here is a re-wording that would at the same time transpose Kierkegaard's terminology into that which grew up during the early part of this century (with Freud, Adler, Jung, etc.), and entail a broadening of Kierkegaard's "algebraically" described, psychological states; the scholar who embarks on this project will find himself writing several thick volumes but he will also be instrumental in giving a

further depth to modern knowledge of man. As things stand at the present, both works are all too often treated as systematic excercises in metaphysics and ontology.

The answer to the question of how Kierkegaard has fared in English would seem from the above almost to be that we ought to start from scratch. In truth the bulk of the existent translations will have to be revised, at least the *Postscript, Concept of Anxiety* (let us henceforth call it), *Stages, Fear and Trembling, The Sickness Unto Death, Either/Or* and *Repetition;* these, along with the *Fragments represent* the core of the authorship and must constitute a homogenous whole in terminology, if they are not simply to be the source of confusion. In the above, I have taken into account only the most important of those concepts that consistently have underlain confusion in translation, without giving space to such as *Indesluttethed, Bestemmelse, Gud – Guden,* in short, to the many words and expressions encountered by the English reader in the Prefaces, Introductions and Forewords to the works available to us; and yet many of them play significant rôles both for clarity and for style.

The final solution cannot be other than to follow the example of the Danes, Germans, French and Japanese and publish – under the direction of *one* editor – Kierkegaard's collected works in English. This, however, is not to be expected in the immediate future, such a project being in direct conflict with our Anglo-Saxon mentality.

NOTES

[1] Bejerholm, Lars; *"Meddelelsens Dialektik",* (Lund) 1962, p. 36; this is the most exhaustive work on the subject of terminology and communication theories. The above translation from the Swedish is my own, as are all other translations, where not otherwise indicated.

[2] It was not until 1948 that the Danish Government stepped in with a much needed reform.

[3] Cf. Clausen's remarks on this subject in his memoires, *Optegnelser om mit Levneds og min Tids Historie,* (Copenhagen), 1877; quoted in N. Thulstrup's *Kommentar til Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift,* Gyldendal (Copenhagen), 1962, pp. 87 ff.; an English translation of the latter is now in the hands of the printer.

[4] Kitto, H. D. F.; *The Greeks,* Penguin Books (Edinburgh), 1965, p. 28.

[5] Pap. VIII[2] B 87.

[6] Cf. SV IV (2nd edition), pp. 384, 443; VI, pp. 437 f.; VII, pp. 191 note, esp. 351 f., 563 note. Both the *Papers* and the works are replete with animadversions to linguistic use.

[7] Cf. SV 7, p. 563 note: "Using this form it will be possible to orientate oneself, and,

without being disturbed by whether anyone employs the name of Christ and an entire Christian terminology, simply to observe the categories." This entire footnote is missing from the English version of the *Postscript;* however, the translators have compensated for this – by inserting on p. 181 a footnote belonging to *Stages,* p. 426 (SV VI, pp. 494/5).

8 *Repetition,* transl. by Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press (Princeton), 1941, pp. 177 ff.

9 *Ibid.,* p. 191; quoted by Lowrie from Dr. John McConnachie.

10 *Concept of Dread,* transl. by Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press (Princeton), 1957, p. vii, where the translator remarks that the translation was completed in a space of thirty-one days (!).

11 The *Postscript,* Kierkegaard's principal work, and one whose equal is not to be found in Western European or American literature, has in translation suffered a fate to which few if any classical works have ever been exposed. Regrettably – very regrettably – still unfinished upon Swenson's death, Lowrie terminated the work without apparently ever having even closely checked the proofs against the Danish original. Result: omission of words, phrases and whole sentences of several lines in length (enough, in all, to fill 4–5 printed pages), two sets of terminology, two styles (Lowrie's and Swenson's), two modes of expression (despite Lowrie's assurance in the Foreword that he had followed Swenson's) and a rendition which at times is so liberal as to make one wonder just what unknown Danish edition was employed. The *Postscript* (where Lowrie urged Swenson "to sin boldly") will simply have to be re-translated.

12 *Postscript,* p. 292; SV VII, pp. 316–17. S. K. has *Realitet, Tanke – Realitet* which Swenson has rendered by 'validity'.

13 Malantschuk, Gregor; "Warheit und Wirklichkeit in Sören Kierkegaard's existentiellem Denken" in *Symposium Kierkegaardianum,* Munksgaard (Copenhagen), 1955, p. 172. Compare SV II, p. 232.

14 *Hegel's Science of Logic,* transl. by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, Vol. I–II (London and New York) 1961, pp. 160 ff.

15 *Ibid.,* Vol. I, pp. 124 ff.; Vol. II, pp. 220 ff.

16 Especially pp. 267 ff.; SV VII, pp. 288 ff.

17 *Concept of Dread,* pp. 9 ff,; SV IV, pp. 314 ff.; *Stages Om Life's Way,* transl. by Walter Lowrie. Princeton Univ. Press (Princeton), 1945, pp. 384 f.

18 *Webster's Third International Dictionary,* 3rd ed., G & C Merriam Co. (Springfield, Mass.), 1961, pp. 1890 and 22, respectively.

19 Swenson, David F.; *Something About Kierkegaard,* ed. by Mrs. Swenson, Augsberg (Minneapolis), 1941, pp. 218–13.

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Repetition,* p. 189.

22 *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason,* transl. by N. Smith, Macmillan & Co., Ltd. (London), 1964, pp. 301 f. The above is hardly meant to be an analysis of Kant's thinking on this subject, but only an outline for purposes of comparison.

23 *The Logic of Hegel,* transl. by William Wallace, 2nd ed., Oxford Univ. Press (Oxford), 1892, § 79, pp. 143 ff.; cf. the translator's excellent note concerning this dichotomy, pp. 400 ff.; *Sc. of Logic,* Vol. I, pp. 56 ff. Cf. Niels Thulstrup's *Kierkegaards Forhold til Hegel,* Gyldendal (Copenhagen), 1967, pp. 215 ff.

24 Pap. VIII[1] A 672; SV XI, p. 298: "; thi Fornuft, Forstand, er menneskelig talt, det Seende, men Troen er mod Forstand."

25 *Fragments,* esp. pp. 61 ff.; SV IV, pp. 242 ff.

26 *Ibid.,* pp. 222 f.

27 This definition makes the concept "offence" a bit more concrete.

28 Lønning, Per; *"Samtidighedens Situation",* Land og Kirke (Oslo), p. 125.

29 Garelick, Herbert M.; *The Anti-Christianity of Kierkegaard,* Martinus Nijhoff (The

Hague), 1965, p. 37.
30 *The Concept of Irony,* transl. by Lee M. Capel, Collins (London), 1966, pp. 430 ff.
31 *Dansk Ordbog,* ed. by Chr. Molbech, 2nd ed., Gyldendal (Copehagen) 1859, col. 77.
32 Cf. SV IX, pp. 100 ff.
33 SV VII, p. 69.
34 *Ibid.,* p. 72.
35 Ibid., p. 574.
36 *Fragments,* pp. xii ff.
37 *Ibid.,* p. xiii.
38 SV II, p. 232.
39 *Dansk Ordbog,* col. 78.
40 SV IV, p. 378.