

hope within a given individual, perpetuated over a period of time, is one aspect of the psychic conflict that is seen by later writers, including myself, as anxiety.¹⁶ But Spinoza does not cross the threshold into the problem of anxiety itself. In marked contrast to Kierkegaard in the nineteenth century, he does not see conflict between hope and fear as persistent or necessary; fears can be overcome by courageous dedication to reason, and hence the problem of anxiety does not confront him.

A similar difference between Spinoza and philosophers of the nineteenth century is evidenced in the treatment of confidence and despair. In Spinoza's terms we are confident when the cause of doubt has been removed from our hope—i.e., we are certain the good event will occur. And we are in despair when the element of doubt is removed from our fear—i.e., when we are certain that the evil event will occur or has occurred. For Kierkegaard, in contrast, confidence is not the removal of doubt (and anxiety) but rather the attitude that we can move ahead *despite* doubt and anxiety.

In Spinoza it is that word *certain* which strikes us so boldly. If one believed, as apparently Spinoza in his century could believe, that such intellectual and emotional certainty could be achieved, enviable psychological security would result. This belief, of course, underlay Spinoza's constructing a *mathematics* of ethics; one should be as certain about an ethical problem as one is about a proposition in geometry. The essential point is that for Spinoza the removal of doubt and the attainment of certainty is possible if we direct ourselves by the "certain advice of reason."

The central problem of anxiety does not intrude itself into Spinoza's thought. One cannot escape the conclusion that, given the cultural situation in which he lived, his confidence in reason served him satisfactorily.¹⁷

16. Cf. Kurt Riezler, *The social psychology of fear*, *Amer. J. Sociol.*, May, 1944, p. 489. For examples of such psychic conflicts underlying anxiety, see what I describe as the "rift between expectation and reality" which underlay some of the neurotic anxiety of the cases in Part II, page 355, below.

17. It is, however, to be borne in mind that Spinoza's seventeenth-century cultural situation was not only different from the situation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also that his confidence in reason was different from the deteriorated forms of rationalism in the nineteenth century. These

PASCAL: THE INADEQUACY OF REASON

Though representative of the eminent intellectuals of the seventeenth century in his mathematical and scientific genius, Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was the exception in that he did not believe human nature, with all its variety, richness, and contradiction, could be comprehended by mathematical rationalism. He believed that rational certitude about man was not in any sense identical to rational certitude in geometry and physics. Thus he sounds to us like a contemporary, while Spinoza sounds like a man from a different age. The laws that operate in human life are, to Pascal, laws of chance and "probabilities." Hence he was impressed by the contingency of human existence.

When I consider the brief span of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and behind it, the small space that I fill, or even see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces which I know not, and which know not me, I am afraid, and wonder to see myself here rather than there; for there is no reason why I should be here rather than there, now rather than then.

On beholding the blindness and misery of man, on seeing all the universe dumb, and man without light, left to himself, as it were, astray in this corner of the universe, knowing not who has set him here, what he is here

last involved a denial and repression of emotion. Also, since we are chiefly interested in Spinoza as a spokesman for the confidence in reason in the seventeenth century, it is important to emphasize that he was by no means merely a rationalist in the contemporary connotation of that term. His ethical and mystical interests gave a broad and profound context to his thought and was absent in the later and more limited forms of rationalism. For example, if we should follow out to the ultimate step his analysis of how to overcome fear (and anxiety, so far as anxiety appears as a problem), we should discover that each *destructive affect must be overcome by a stronger, constructive one*. We should also find that he defined the ultimate constructive affect in the curiously mystico-rationalistic phrase, the "intellectual love of God." In other words, fear (and anxiety) can be overcome in the last analysis only by a religious attitude toward one's life as a whole. It should also be mentioned, by the way, that one important consequence of the broad base of Spinoza's thinking was that he was able to avoid the dichotomy between mind and body which characterized other philosophies of his day.

for, or what will become of him when he dies, incapable of all knowledge I begin to be afraid, as a man who has been carried while asleep to a fearful desert island, and who will wake not knowing where he is without any means of quitting the island. And thus I marvel that people not seized with despair at such a miserable condition."¹⁸

Pascal was thus directly concerned with not only anxiety which he himself experienced but which he believed he observed underneath the surface of the lives of his contemporaries, evidenced in the "perpetual restlessness in which men pass their lives."¹⁹ He noted the unceasing endeavors of people to divert themselves from escape ennui, to avoid being alone, until "agitation" becomes an end in itself. The great bulk of diversions, he felt, were actually endeavors of people to avoid "thoughts of themselves," for if they should pause for self-contemplation, they would be miserable and anxious.

In his preoccupation with the contingent and uncertain aspects of human experience, Pascal took cognizance of the fact that reason was offered by his contemporaries as a guide to certainty but he believed that reason is undependable as a practical guide. It is not that he devaluated reason as such. On the contrary, he believed it to be the distinctive quality of man, the source of man's dignity in the midst of unthinking nature, and the source of morality ("to think well . . . is the principle of morality"²⁰). But in practical life reason is undependable because it is "pliable to every sense," and sense reports are notoriously deceptive. Moreover, usual confidence in reason is faulty, he held, because it fails to take into account the power of the emotions.²¹ Pascal conceived of the emotions in both a positive and a negative sense. He valued in the emotions that were not comprehended in rationality, expressed in this beautiful and justly quoted sentence: "The heart has reasons which the reason knows not of." On the other hand,

18. *Pascal's pensées*, ed. and trans. G. B. Rawlings (Mt. Vernon, N.Y., 1946), pp. 36, 7.

19. *Pascal's thoughts*, trans. Edward Craig (New York, 1825), p. 116.

20. *Pascal's pensées* (Rawlings ed. and trans.), *op. cit.*, p. 35.

21. It is interesting to note in connection with Pascal's lament that the emotions were not reasonable, that it became Freud's endeavor, more than three centuries later, to extend the domain of reason to include the emotions.

the emotions often distort and overrule reason, and reason becomes mere rationalization. Overconfidence in reason often facilitates the abuse of reason to support mere custom, or the power of kings, or to rationalize injustice. In practice, reason is often a matter of "Truth on this side of the Pyrenees, error on that."²² He was impressed with the frequency with which self-interest and vanity are the actual motivations of men, and are then justified by "reason." Greater trust could be placed in reason, he remarks epigrammatically, if "reason were only reasonable." In all these qualifications of the prevalent confidence in reason, it is clear that Pascal valued very highly what he termed a "genuine love of and respect for wisdom," but he felt that love of and respect for wisdom are rare phenomena in human life. Hence he saw the human situation much less optimistically than his contemporaries. "We are placed in a vast medium," he observed, "ever floating uncertainly between ignorance and knowledge."²³

We have suggested that the confidence in reason, as interpreted by the intellectual leaders of the seventeenth century, served to dispel anxiety. It is some support for this hypothesis that Pascal, the one who could not accept the rationalistic solution to human problems, was at the same time the one who could not avoid anxiety.

Pascal stands as an exception, however, to the prevalent formulations of his day, and to the central stream of the philosophical developments in the modern period.²⁴ On the whole, the belief that through reason Nature could be mastered and man's emotions ordered served the intellectual leaders of that day relatively satisfactorily, so that the problem of anxiety rarely is confronted in their thought. I suggest that the cultural position in which Spinoza and the other thinkers of this classical phase of the modern period

22. Rawlings (ed. and trans.), *op. cit.*, p. 38.

23. Craig (trans.), *op. cit.*, p. 84.

24. The question of why he was an exception, and why he experienced inner trauma and anxiety to a much greater degree than his contemporaries, would take us afield from this discussion. We might, however, mention Cassirer's suggestion that Pascal's view of man is really a carry-over from medievalism, and that despite Pascal's scientific genius, he had not really absorbed the new view of man which had emerged at the Renaissance.

found themselves *did not result in the inner trauma which was to occur to comparable intellectual leaders in the nineteenth century and to vast numbers of people in the twentieth century*. The central belief in the power of autonomous reason gave a psychological unity to the culture which was not to be threatened with serious disintegration until the nineteenth century.

KIERKEGAARD:

ANXIETY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the nineteenth century we can observe on a broad scale the occurrence of fissures in the unity of modern culture which underlie much of our contemporary anxiety. The revolutionary belief in autonomous reason which had been central in the inception and structuralization of modern culture was now supplanted by "technical reason."²⁵ The rapidly increasing mastery over physical nature was accompanied by widespread and profound changes in the structure of human society. The economic and sociological aspects of these changes concern us in a later section, but here it is important to note the changes at that time in people's views of themselves.

This was the era of "autonomous sciences." Each science developed in its own direction; but a unifying principle, as Cassirer phrases it, was lacking. It was against the consequences of "science as a factory" that Nietzsche warned; he saw technical reason progressing rapidly on one hand and the disintegration of human ideals and values on the other, and he feared the nihilism which would result. The views of man presented in the nineteenth century are not divorced, in most cases, from the empirical data produced by the advancing sciences; but since science itself was without a unifying principle, there was great variance in the interpretations of man. "Each individual thinker," Cassirer remarks, "gives us his own picture of human nature"; and whereas each picture is based upon

25. This term "technical reason" is Paul Tillich's. It refers to the fact that in the nineteenth century reason, in practice, became increasingly applied to technical problems. The theoretical implications of this growing emphasis on the technical aspects of reason were not widely appreciated at the time.

empirical evidence, each "theory becomes a Procrustean bed on which the empirical facts are stretched to fit a preconceived pattern."²⁶ Cassirer continues:

Owing to this development our modern theory of man lost its intellectual center. We acquired instead a complete anarchy of thought. . . . Theologians, scientists, politicians, sociologists, biologists, psychologists, ethnologists, economists all approached the problem from their own viewpoints. To combine or unify all these particular aspects and perspectives was impossible . . . every author seems in the last count to be led by his own conception and evaluation of human life.

Cassirer feels that this antagonism of ideas constituted not only "a grave theoretical problem but an imminent threat to the whole extent of our ethical and cultural life."²⁷

The nineteenth century was marked by a cultural compartmentalization, not only in theories and in the sciences but in other phases of culture as well. In aesthetics, there was the "art for art's sake movement" and an increasing separation of art from the realities of nature—a development attacked toward the end of the century by Cézanne and Van Gogh. In religion there was a separation of theoretical beliefs and Sunday practices from the affairs of weekday life. The compartmentalization in family life is vividly portrayed and attacked by Ibsen in *The Doll's House*. With respect to the psychological life of the individual, the nineteenth century is broadly characterized by a separation of "reason" and "emotions," with voluntaristic effort (will) enthroned as the method of casting the decision between the two—which resulted generally in a denial of the emotions.

The seventeenth-century belief in the rational control of the emotions had now become the *habitus* of repressing the emotions. In this light it is easy to understand why the less acceptable emotional impulses, such as sex and hostility, should have undergone particularly widespread repudiation. It is this psychological disunity which set the problem for the work of Sigmund Freud. His discoveries relating to unconscious forces and his techniques designed to assist the individual to find a new basis for psychological

26. *An essay on man, op. cit.*, p. 21.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

unity can be adequately understood only when seen against the background of compartmentalization of personality in the nineteenth century.²⁸

In view of this psychological disunity, it is not surprising that anxiety should have emerged as an unavoidable problem in the nineteenth century. It is not surprising also that in the middle of that century we should find Kierkegaard producing the most direct, and in some ways the most profound, study of anxiety to appear up to that point in history. The disunity itself was, of course, anxiety-creating. The search for a new basis for unity of personality, as pursued by Kierkegaard and later by Freud, necessitated first of all confronting, and so far as possible solving, the problem of anxiety.

This breakdown in the unity of thought and culture was keenly felt by a number of sensitive and prophetic thinkers of the nineteenth century, many of whom can be grouped under the term Existentialists. The existentialist movement dates from the German philosopher F. W. J. Schelling's Berlin lectures in 1841, delivered before a distinguished audience including Kierkegaard, Engels, and Burckhardt.²⁹ In addition to Schelling and Kierkegaard, existential thinking is represented on one wing by the "philosophers of life"—Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and later Bergson—and on its sociological wing by Feuerbach and Marx.³⁰ "What all philosophers of

28. Freud often wrote of his aim of making unconscious material conscious, and thus increasing the scope of reason. In his more theoretical writings (see *Civilization and its discontents* and *The future of an illusion*), he has a concept of reason and science which is inherited directly from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But in actual practice his concept of reason, involving as it does a union of conscious experience with the vast store of unconscious tendencies within the individual, is a quite different thing from "reason" in traditional rationalism.

29. Paul Tillich, Existential philosophy, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1944, 5:1, 44-70. Since Tillich's own thinking participates in the Existentialist tradition, his descriptions of the movement have special cogency and will be quoted frequently in this section.

30. The relationship of this form of thought to American pragmatism, as presented by William James, will be clear. Modern representatives of existentialism include Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Gabriel Marcel.

Existence oppose is the 'rational' system of thought and life developed by Western industrial society and its philosophical representatives."³¹ Tillich characterized the endeavors of these existential thinkers as "the desperate struggle to find a new meaning of life in a reality from which men have been estranged, in a cultural situation in which two great traditions, the Christian and the humanistic, have lost their comprehensive character and their convincing power." Tillich continues:

During the last hundred years the implications of this system have become increasingly clear: a logical or naturalistic mechanism which seemed to destroy individual freedom, personal decision and organic community; and analytic rationalism which saps vital forces of life and transforms everything, including man himself, into an object of calculation and control. . . .³²

In their rejection of traditional rationalism, the existential thinkers insisted that reality can be approached and experienced only by *the whole individual, as a feeling and acting as well as a thinking organism*. Kierkegaard felt that Hegel's system, which confuses abstract thought with reality, was nothing short of trickery. Kierkegaard and others in this line believed that passion (using this word as meaning full commitment) cannot be divorced from thinking. Feuerbach wrote, "Only that which is the object of passion really is."³³ Said Nietzsche, "We think with our bodies."

Thus, these thinkers sought to overcome the traditional dichotomy between mind and body and the tendency to suppress the "irrational" aspects of experience. Pure objectivity is an illusion, Kierkegaard held; and even if it weren't, it would be undesirable. He emphasizes "the word 'interest' (*inter-est*), which expresses the fact that we are so intimately involved in the objective world that we cannot be content to regard truth objectively, i.e., disinterestedly."³⁴ Kierkegaard reacted strongly against rigid definitions of such terms as "self" and "truth"; he felt they could be defined only dynamically, i.e., dialectically, as continuously developing among

31. Existential philosophy, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

34. Walter Lowrie, *A short life of Kierkegaard* (Princeton, N. J., 1944), p. 172.

living people. "Away from speculation," he cried, "away from 'the System' and back to reality."³⁵ He insisted that "truth exists for the particular individual only as he himself produces it in action."³⁶ This sounds like a radical subjectivity, which on the surface it is; but it must be remembered that Kierkegaard and the others in this movement believed that this was the way to a genuine objectivity as opposed to the *artificial* objectivity of the "rationalistic" systems. As Tillich expressed it, these thinkers "turned toward man's immediate experience, toward 'subjectivity,' not as something opposed to 'objectivity,' but as that living experience in which both objectivity and subjectivity are rooted."³⁷ Also, "They tried to discover the creative realm of being which is prior to and beyond the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity."

It was the aim of these thinkers to overcome the compartmentalization of their culture by a *new emphasis on the individual as a living, experiencing unity*—i.e., the individual as an organism which thinks, feels, and wills at the same time. The existentialists are important in this study, not only because the dichotomy between psychology and philosophy is broken down in their thought, but also because now for the first time in the modern period *anxiety comes directly into the foreground as a specific problem*.

We turn now directly to Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). He is regarded on the Continent, according to Brock, as "one of the most remarkable psychologists of all time, in depth, if not in breadth, superior to Nietzsche, and in penetration comparable only to Dostoevski."³⁸

The keystone idea in Kierkegaard's little book on anxiety,³⁹

35. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

36. *The concept of dread*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, N. J., 1944), p. 123.

37. Tillich, p. 67.

38. Werner Brock, *Contemporary German philosophy* (Cambridge, 1935), p. 75. For an appreciation of Kierkegaard by a twentieth-century psychologist, see O. H. Mowrer, *Anxiety, in Learning theory and personality dynamics* (1950). Mowrer believes that it was necessary for Freud to produce his work before the insights of Kierkegaard could be widely understood.

39. *The concept of dread*, *op. cit.* Walter Lowrie states that in English "we have no word which adequately translates *Angst*" (preface to above edition, p. ix). Hence, after much deliberation, Dr. Lowrie and the other

published in 1844, is the relation between anxiety and freedom. Kierkegaard held that "anxiety is always to be understood as oriented toward freedom."⁴⁰ Freedom is the goal of personality development; psychologically speaking, "the good is freedom."⁴¹ Kierkegaard defines freedom as *possibility*. This he views as the spiritual aspect of man; indeed, it is not inaccurate to read "possibility" whenever Kierkegaard writes "spirit." The distinctive characteristic of the human being, in contrast to the merely vegetative or the merely animal, lies in the range of human possibility and in our capacity for self-awareness of possibility. Kierkegaard sees man as the creature who is continually beckoned by possibility, who conceives of possibility, visualizes it, and by creative activity carries it into actuality. When the specific content of this possibility is, in psychological terms, I shall discuss below in dealing with Kierkegaard's ideas of expansiveness and communicativeness. It suffices here to emphasize that this possibility is human freedom.

Now this capacity for freedom brings with it anxiety. Anxiety

early translators of Kierkegaard decided to use the term "dread" as a translation into English of Kierkegaard's *Angst*. I certainly agree that the term "anxiety" in English is often used in superficial ways, for example, to mean "eagerness" ("I am anxious to do something") or as a mild form of worry or has other connotations which do not at all do justice to the term *Angst*. But the German *Angst* is the word which Freud, Goldstein, and others use for "anxiety"; and it is the common denominator for the term "anxiety" as used in this book. The question is whether the psychological meaning of "anxiety" (in contrast to the literary meaning) is not very close—in fact much closer than the term "dread"—to what Kierkegaard meant by *Angst*. Professor Tillich, who was familiar with both the psychological meaning of *Angst* and Kierkegaard's works, believed this to be true. I endeavor in this book to preserve both of these meanings, the superficial and the profound, by the two terms "normal anxiety" and "neurotic anxiety," in any case. Professor Lowrie generously gave me permission to render the term "dread" as "anxiety" in the quotations from his translations of Kierkegaard, in order to conform with the usage of terms in this book. After all these difficulties, I was delighted to discover that the most recent translation by Kierkegaard scholars restores "anxiety" to its rightful place. See *The concept of anxiety*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna V. Hong (Northfield, Minn., 1976).

40. *The concept of dread*, p. 138.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

is the state of the human being, says Kierkegaard, when he confronts his freedom. Indeed, he describes anxiety as "the possibility of freedom." Whenever possibility is visualized by an individual, anxiety is potentially present in the same experience. In everyday experiential terms, this may be illustrated by our recalling that every person has the opportunity and need to move ahead in his development—the child learns to walk, and moves on into school, and the adult moves into marriage and/or new jobs. Such possibilities, like roads ahead which cannot be known since you have not yet traversed and experienced them, involve anxiety. (This is "normal anxiety," and is not to be confused with "neurotic anxiety," which will be considered below. Kierkegaard makes it clear that neurotic anxiety is a more constrictive and uncreative form of anxiety which results from the individual's *failure* to move ahead in situations of normal anxiety.)⁴² There is anxiety in any actualizing of possibility. To Kierkegaard, the more possibility (creativity) an individual has, the more potential anxiety he has at the same time. Possibility ("I can") passes over into actuality, but the intermediate determinant is anxiety. "Possibility means *I can*. In a logical system it is convenient enough to say that possibility passes over into actuality. In reality it is not so easy, and an intermediate determinant is necessary. This intermediate determinant is anxiety . . ."⁴³

Viewing anxiety developmentally, Kierkegaard begins with the original state of the infant. This he terms the state of innocence,

42. Kierkegaard goes on to insist that, for the realization of selfhood, one must always move ahead: "So it is too that in the eyes of the world it is dangerous to venture. And why? Because one may lose. But not to venture is shrewd. And yet, by not venturing, it is so dreadfully easy to lose that which it would be difficult to lose in even the most venturesome venture, and in any case never so easily, so completely as if it were nothing . . . one's self. For if I have ventured amiss—very well, then life helps me by its punishment. But if I have not ventured at all—who then helps me? And, moreover, if by not venturing at all in the highest sense (*and to venture in the highest sense is precisely to become conscious of oneself*) I have gained all earthly advantages . . . and lose my self! What of that?" Kierkegaard, *Sickness unto death*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, N. J., 1941), p. 52. (Italics mine.)

43. *The concept of dread*, p. 44.

in which the infant is in immediate unity with its natural condition, its environment. The infant has possibility. This entails anxiety, but it is anxiety without specific content. In this original state anxiety is a "seeking after adventure, a thirst for the prodigious, the mysterious."⁴⁴ The child moves ahead, actualizing his possibilities. But in the state of innocence he is not self-consciously aware that the possibility of growth, for example, also involves crises, clashes with, and defiance of his parents. In the state of innocence, individuation is a potentiality which has not yet become self-conscious. The anxiety connected with it is "sheer possibility," i.e., without specific content.

Then in human development comes self-awareness. Kierkegaard cites the story of Adam as a presentation in myth form of this phenomenon. Disposing immediately of the deteriorated view of this myth as a historical event, he insists that "the myth represents as outward that which occurred inwardly."⁴⁵ In this sense the myth of Adam is re-enacted by every human being somewhere between the ages of one and three. Kierkegaard interprets it as a portrayal of the individual's inner awakening into self-consciousness. At some point in development there occurs the "knowledge of good and evil," as the myth puts it. Then *conscious choice* enters the picture of possibility. There occurs a heightened sense both of the portentous nature of possibility and of the responsibility that goes with it. For now the possibility of conflict and crises confronts the individual; possibility is negative as well as positive. Developmentally, the child now moves toward individuation. And the road over which he moves is not one of immediate harmony with environment or specifically with parents, but a road which continually skirts the edges of defiance of this environment; and indeed in many cases the road must move *directly through* actual experiences of conflict with parents. The threat of isolation and powerlessness and the consequent anxiety arise at this point in the child's development (discussed on pages 000ff. below). Individuation (becoming a self) is gained at the price of confronting the anxiety inherent in taking a stand *against* as well as *with* one's environment. Describ-

44. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

ing the moment of this heightened awareness of the possibility of freedom, Kierkegaard speaks of "the alarming possibility of being able."⁴⁶

It may be helpful to point out here that Kierkegaard's central problem when he writes psychologically is how a person can will to be himself. *To will to be himself is man's true vocation.* Kierkegaard holds that we cannot specifically define this self one is to be, *for the self is freedom.* But at considerable length he points out how people try to avoid willing to be themselves: by avoiding consciousness of the self, by willing to be some one else or simply a conventional self, or by willing to be oneself defiantly, which is a form of tragic, stoic despair and, therefore, doomed to fall short of full selfhood. His word "will" is not to be confused with nineteenth-century voluntarism, which consisted chiefly of repression of unacceptable elements within the self. Rather, *this willing is a creative decisiveness, based centrally on expanding self-awareness.* "Generally speaking, consciousness, i.e. consciousness of self, is the decisive criterion of the self," he writes. "The more consciousness, the more self. . . ."⁴⁷

This is not a foreign language to anyone conversant with modern psychotherapy. One basic aim of therapy is to enlarge self-awareness by means of clarifying inner self-defeating conflicts which have existed because the individual has been forced to block self-awareness at earlier times.⁴⁸ It is clear in therapy that these blockages in self-awareness have occurred because the person has been unable to move through accumulations of anxiety at various points in his growth. Kierkegaard makes it clear that selfhood depends upon the individual's capacity to *confront anxiety and move ahead despite it.* Freedom, to Kierkegaard, is not a simple accretion, nor does it occur as spontaneously as the plant grows toward the sun when the rocks that block it are removed (as the problem of free-

46. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

47. *Sickness unto death*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

48. It should be clear that Kierkegaard, like the exponents of modern psychotherapy, is not speaking of what is sometimes called "unhealthy introspection." Such introspection arises not from too much self-awareness (which is a contradiction in terms in Kierkegaard's view) but rather from conditions of blocked self-awareness.

dom is sometimes oversimplified in deteriorated forms of psychotherapy). *Freedom, rather, depends on how one relates oneself to oneself at every moment in existence.* This means, in present-day terms, that freedom depends on how responsibly and autonomously one relates to oneself.

When Kierkegaard speaks of the awakening of self-awareness following the state of innocence of the child, one is tempted to compare this with the data of contemporary psychology. The difficulty in such a comparison is that the equivalence is never entirely complete. For example, Kierkegaard's idea of the self is only partially contained in the psychological term *ego*, which is its nearest equivalent. But we can say that the awakening of self-awareness is roughly parallel to what is now meant in some psychological quarters by the "emergence of the ego." This occurs generally somewhere between the ages of one and three; we can observe in babies that this self-awareness does not exist, whereas it is discernible in the child of four or five. So far as Kierkegaard's own view goes, he believed this change is a "qualitative leap," and cannot, therefore, be adequately described by scientific methods. Kierkegaard's aim is to describe phenomenologically the human situation—of an adult, for example—which he finds as a state of conflict (self-awareness) set against a backdrop of innocence.⁴⁹

As a consequence of this "leap" into self-awareness, anxiety becomes reflective—that is, it now has more content. Anxiety "in the later individual is more reflective as a consequence of the participation of the individual in the history of the race."⁵⁰ Self-awareness makes possible not only self-directed individual development, but also self-conscious historical development. Just as the individual now sees himself as not merely at the mercy of his environment and his natural condition, but as possessing the capacities of choice and independence, so he sees himself likewise as something more than an automaton, swallowed up in a meaningless historical development. Through self-awareness man can mold and to an extent transform his present historical development. This does not annul

49. In philosophical terms, this is the problem of man's "essence" as over against his "existence."

50. *The concept of dread*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

the determining influences of one's historical environment. "Every individual begins in a historical nexus," Kierkegaard writes, "and the consequences of natural law are still as valid as ever."⁵¹ But what is of crucial significance is how a person relates himself to his historical nexus.

Kierkegaard's argument up to this point may be summarized as follows: In the state of innocence there is no separation of the individual from his environment, and anxiety is ambiguous. In the state of self-awareness, however, there occurs the possibility of separation as an individual. Anxiety is now reflective; and the individual can through self-awareness partially direct his own development as well as participate in the history of the race.

We now come to a crucial point. Anxiety involves inner conflict; this is another and important consequence of self-awareness. Anxiety "is afraid," says Kierkegaard, "yet it maintains a sly intercourse with its object, cannot look away from it, indeed will not. . . ." (Our author adds, for reasons the reader can well understand, "If to one or another this may appear a difficult saying, I can do nothing about it.") And again, anxiety

is a desire for what one dreads, a sympathetic antipathy. Anxiety is an alien power which lays hold of an individual, and yet one cannot tear oneself away, nor has a will to do so; for one fears, but what one fears one desires. Anxiety then makes the individual impotent.⁵²

This inner conflict which characterizes anxiety is familiar in modern clinical psychology; it has been described specifically by Freud, Sekel, Horney, and others. Ample illustrations of it can be cited from clinical data, especially in its exaggerated form in neurosis: a patient has sexual or aggressive desires, yet he fears these very desires (including the consequences of them), and a persistent inner conflict is engendered. Every person who has been seriously ill physically knows that he has severe anxiety lest he not get well, yet he flirts with the prospect of remaining sick; *he is sympathetic*, in Kierkegaard's words, *to the prospect he hates and fears most*. This is a phenomenon more profound than the mere desire for the

51. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

52. *The concept of dread*, p. 92.

53. *Ibid.*, p. xii, quoted from his *Journal* (III A 233; Dru No. 402).

"secondary gain" of illness, be it emotional or physical. Possibly Freud was struggling with this phenomenon when he postulated the much questioned formulation of the "death instinct" as in conflict with the "life instinct." It would seem that Otto Rank comes closer to Kierkegaard (and at the same time avoids the less acceptable elements in Freud's postulation) in his concept of the conflict between the "life will" and the "death will."⁵⁴ The conflict occurs not only *in* anxiety, but is itself the product of anxiety—i.e., one has such conflict to the extent that one already has anxiety in the situation.

In any case, Kierkegaard makes it clear that he would not limit this inner conflict to neurotic phenomena. He believes that in every possibility, in every experience of anxiety beyond infancy, the conflict is present. In every experience the individual wishes to move ahead, actualizing his possibilities; but at the same time he plays with the prospect of not doing so—i.e., there is in him a wish *not* to actualize his possibilities. Kierkegaard would describe the difference between the "neurotic" and "healthy" state by saying that the healthy individual moves ahead despite the conflict, actualizing his freedom, whereas the unhealthy person retrenches to a "shut-in" condition, sacrificing his freedom. The radical distinction between fear and anxiety appears at this point: in fear one moves in one direction, *away* from the feared object; whereas in anxiety a persistent inner conflict is in operation and one has an ambivalent relation to the object. Kierkegaard always insists that although anxiety in the reflective stage has more content, it can never be assigned a wholly specific content, for it describes an inner state, a state of conflict.

Another consequence of self-awareness is that responsibility and guilt feeling enter the picture.⁵⁵ Guilt feeling is a difficult and perplexing problem, to Kierkegaard as well as in contemporary psy-

54. It is interesting that Otto Rank also holds that the healthy individual is the one who can create despite the inner conflict (between "life will" and "death will," in his terms), whereas the neurotic is the one who cannot manage this conflict except by retrenching and sacrificing his creativity.

55. In contemporary psychopathology it is held that there is always anxiety where there is guilt feeling (fear of punishment) but that the reverse is not necessarily true. It will be seen, however, that Kierkegaard is speaking of a different level—i.e., the relation of guilt feeling to creativity.

chology, and to my mind it is often evaded by oversimplification. We can understand Kierkegaard's ideas on the relation between guilt and anxiety only by emphasizing that he is always speaking of anxiety in its relation to creativity. One has anxiety because it is possible to create—creating one's self, willing to be one's self, as well as creating in all the innumerable daily activities (and these are two phases of the same process). One would have no anxiety if there were no possibility whatever. It is valuable to let patients in therapy know this—to point out that the presence of anxiety means a conflict is going on, and so long as this is true, a constructive solution is possible.

Now creating, actualizing one's possibilities, always involves destructive as well as constructive aspects. It always involves destroying the status quo, destroying old patterns within oneself, progressively destroying what one has clung to from childhood on, and creating new and original forms and ways of living. If you do not do this, you are refusing to grow, refusing to avail yourself of possibilities; you are shirking your responsibility to yourself. Hence refusal to actualize one's possibilities brings guilt toward one's self. But creating also means destroying the status quo of one's environment, breaking the old forms; it means producing something new and original in human relations as well as in cultural forms (e.g., the creativity of the artist).⁵⁶ Every experience of creativity has its potentiality of aggression or denial toward other persons in one's environment or toward established patterns within one's self. To put the matter figuratively, in every experience of creativity something in the past is killed so that something new in the present may be born. Hence, for Kierkegaard, guilt feeling is always a concomitant of anxiety: both are aspects of experiencing and

56. The process of creativity has not been adequately explored in contemporary psychology. The testimony of the artists would support Kierkegaard at this point: Degas says, "A picture must be painted with the same feeling as that with which a criminal commits his crime," and Thomas Mann speaks of the "precious and guilty secret" which the artist keeps. One can find more insight into this phenomenon in mythology: in the myth of Prometheus, creativity is pictured as a defiance of the gods. One could ask psychologically whether individuation, and the creativity involved, means a progressive breaking from, and defiance of, the mother; or in Freudian terms, whether creativity is a progressive dethroning of the father.

actualizing possibility. The more creative the person, he held, the more anxiety and guilt are potentially present. "The greater the genius," writes Kierkegaard, "the more profoundly he discovers guilt."⁵⁷

Although sex and sensuality are often made the content for this guilt, Kierkegaard did not believe that sex and sensuality are in themselves sources of either anxiety or guilt. Sex is significant, rather, because it stands for the problem of *individuation and community*. In Kierkegaard's culture as well as in ours, sex is often the clearest fulcrum of the problem of being a self—e.g., having individual desires, urges, yet being in expanding relationships with others. The complete fulfillment of these desires involves other persons. Sex may thus express this *individuality-in-community* constructively (sex as a form of interpersonal relatedness), or it may be distorted into egocentricity (pseudo-individuality) or into mere symbiotic dependence (pseudo-community). In what we may take as an analogy, Kierkegaard speaks of anxiety culminating in the woman at the birth of a child, because "at this instant the new individual comes into the world." *Anxiety and guilt are potentially present at every instant that individuality is born into community*. And this is not only in the figurative sense of the birth of a child, but in the birth of new phases of one's own individuality. According to Kierkegaard, one is, or ought to be, continually creating his own selfhood every instant of his life.⁵⁸

The belief in fate, says Kierkegaard, is often used as a method of avoiding the anxiety and guilt feeling in creativity. Since "fate is a relation of spirit (possibility) to something external," such as misfortune, necessity, or chance, the full meaning of anxiety and guilt are not felt. But Kierkegaard holds that this taking of refuge in a doctrine of fate sets limits to creativity. Thus he believed that Judaism, in which the problem of guilt was frankly faced, represents a higher level than Hellenism, which rested with a belief in fate. The creative genius in the highest sense does not seek to avoid anxiety and guilt through recourse to belief in fate; he creates by moving *through* anxiety and guilt.

One form of the loss of freedom is the state of "shut-upness."

57. *The concept of dread*, op. cit., p. 96.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

"Shut-upness" is a graphic term for the processes of blocked awareness, inhibition, and other common neurotic reactions to anxiety.⁵⁹ This is the state, points out Kierkegaard, that has been characterized historically as the "demoniacal," and since he cites some biblical cases of hysteria and muteness, we know that he is referring to various clinical forms of neurosis and psychosis. The trouble in such cases he felt to be an "unfree relation to the good." Anxiety takes the form of "dread of the good"; the individual endeavors to shut out freedom and constrict his development. Indeed, "freedom is precisely the expansive," Kierkegaard holds; "freedom is constantly communicating," he adds, foreshadowing the concepts of Harry Stack Sullivan.⁶⁰ In the demoniacal state, "unfreedom becomes more and more shut-up and wants no communication."⁶¹ Kierkegaard makes it clear that he is not referring, in the phrase "shut-upness," to the reserve of the creative person, but to shut-upness as withdrawal and as a form of continual negation. "The demoniacal does not shut itself up with something, but shuts itself up."⁶² Hence he also holds that the shut-up is the tedious (the impression of being extinct) and the vacuous. The shut-up person has anxiety when confronted with freedom or the "good" (these two terms are used as synonyms at this point). The "good" in Kierkegaard's sense signifies to the shut-up person a challenge to reintegrate himself on the basis of freedom. The "good" furthermore, he describes as expansiveness, ever increasing communicativeness.

Kierkegaard believed that it is a false compassion to view the shut-up personality as a victim of fate, for this implies that nothing can be done about it. A real compassion involves facing the problem with guilt (i.e., responsibility). This is responsibility on the part of all of us, whether shut-up or not. The courageous man prefers,

59. This will be discussed frequently in subsequent chapters. For example, see particularly the cases of Phyllis and Frances in Chapter 9; see also Chapter 10.

60. *The concept of dread, op. cit.*, p. 110.

61. *Ibid.* Compare Ibsen's description of inmates of a lunatic asylum: "Each shuts himself in a cask of self, the cask stopped with a bung of self and seasoned in a well of self." *Peer Gynt*.

62. *The concept of dread.*

when ill, to have it said, "this is not fate, this is guilt," for then his possibility of doing something about his condition is not removed from him. For "the ethical individual," Kierkegaard continues, "fears nothing so much as fate and aesthetic folderol which under the cloak of compassion would trick him out of his treasure, viz., freedom" (*ibid.*, p. 108 n.). I can illustrate this experientially from a realm which is supposed in our culture to be even more closely referable to fate than psychological disturbances—i.e., infectious illnesses. When I was ill with tuberculosis (before the days of drugs to cure the disease), I noticed, in observing myself and many other patients, that we were often reassured by well-meaning friends and medical personnel that the disease was due to an accident of infection by the tubercle bacillus. This explanation on the basis of fate was thought to be a relief to the patient. But actually it threw many of the more psychologically sensitive patients into greater despair. If the disease were an accident, how could we be certain it would not occur again and again? If, on the other hand, the patient feels that his own pattern of life was at fault and that this was one of the causes of his succumbing to the disease, he feels more guilt, to be sure, but at the same time he sees more hopefully what conditions need to be corrected in order to overcome the disease. From this point of view, guilt feeling is not only the more accurate attitude, but it is also the one yielding the more genuine hope. (Needless to say, Kierkegaard and I are referring to *rational*, not *irrational* guilt. The latter has unconscious dynamics, is unconstructive, and needs to be weeded out.)

Shut-up states, in the last analysis, are based upon illusions: "It is easy to see that shut-upness *eo ipso* signifies a lie, or, if you prefer, untruth. But untruth is precisely unfreedom. . . ."⁶³ He suggests that those who work with shut-up personalities should realize the value of silence, and should always keep their "categories very clear." He believed that the shut-up state can be cured by inward revelation, or "transparency," and his references to this on the psychological level are not unlike contemporary ideas of catharsis and clarification.

Freedom may also be lost psychosomatically. To Kierkegaard

63. *Ibid.*, p. 114 n.

"the somatic, the psychic, the pneumatic" (possibility) are so interrelated that "a disorganization in one shows itself in the others."⁶⁴ He adds a third determinant to the customary psyche and soma, namely the self. It is this "intermediate determinant" which involves possibility and freedom. He did not believe that personality is a mere synthesis of psyche and soma. If it is to be developed to its larger capacities, personality depends upon *how the self relates itself to both psyche and soma*. This is another indication that Kierkegaard's concept of the self is not to be identified with merely a portion of the psyche such as the ego. The self is in operation when an individual is able to view both psyche and soma with freedom and to act on this freedom.

Other examples of the loss of freedom as a result of anxiety are seen in the rigid personalities. These are the personalities, writes Kierkegaard, who lack inward certitude.

A partisan of the most rigid orthodoxy may be demoniacal. He knows it all, he bows before the holy, truth is for him an ensemble of ceremonies, he talks about presenting himself before the throne of God, of how many times one must bow, he knows everything the same way as does the pupil who is able to demonstrate a mathematical proposition with the letters ABC, but not when they are changed to DEF. He is therefore in anxiety whenever he hears something not arranged in the same order. And yet how closely he resembles a modern speculative philosopher who found a new proof for the immortality of the soul, then came into mortal danger and could not produce his proof because he had not his notebooks with him.⁶⁵

The kind of anxiety which is related to lack of inward certitude may show itself on one hand by wilfulness and unbelief—the negating attitude; and on the other hand by superstition. "Superstition and unbelief are both forms of unfreedom."⁶⁶ The bigot and the unbeliever are in the same category with respect to the form of anxiety underlying their frame of mind. Both lack expansiveness; "both lack inwardness and dare not come to themselves."⁶⁷

64. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

66. *Ibid.*

67. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

It is not surprising to Kierkegaard that people should do everything possible to avoid anxiety. He speaks of his "cowardly age" in which "one does everything possible by way of diversions and the Janizary music of loud-voiced enterprises to keep Tonely thoughts away, just as in the forests of America they keep away wild beasts by torches, by yells, by the sound of cymbals."⁶⁸ For anxiety is an exceedingly painful experience. And again we quote, because of its vividness and aptness, his description of this painfulness:

And no Grand Inquisitor has in readiness such terrible tortures as has anxiety, and no spy knows how to attack more artfully the man he suspects, choosing the instant when he is weakest, nor knows how to lay traps where he will be caught and ensnared, as anxiety knows how, and no sharpwitted judge knows how to interrogate, to examine the accused, as anxiety does, which never lets him escape, neither by diversion nor by noise, neither at work nor at play, neither by day nor by night.⁶⁹

But attempts to evade anxiety are not only doomed to failure. In running from anxiety you lose your most precious opportunities for the emergence of yourself, and for your education as a human being. "If a man were a beast or an angel, he would not be able to be in anxiety. Since he is a synthesis he can be in anxiety, and the greater the anxiety the greater the man. This, however, is not affirmed in the sense in which men commonly understand anxiety, as related to something outside a man, but in the sense that man himself produces anxiety."⁷⁰

Kierkegaard writes in his most engaging vein about anxiety as a "school." Anxiety is an even better teacher than reality, for one can temporarily evade reality by avoiding the distasteful situation; but anxiety is a source of education always present because one carries it within. "Even in relation to the most trifling matters, so soon as the individuality would make an artful turn which is only artful, would steal away from something, and there is every probability that it will succeed, for reality is not so sharp an examiner as

68. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

anxiety—then anxiety is at hand."⁷¹ Accepting anxiety as a teacher may seem a foolish counsel, he admits, especially to those who boast of never having been in anxiety. "To this I would reply that doubtless one should not be in dread of men, or of finite things, but *only that man who has gone through the anxiety of possibility is educated to have no anxiety.*"⁷²

On one side—which we may term the negative side—this education involves facing and accepting the human situation frankly. It means facing the fact of death and other aspects of the contingency of existence, and from this *Angst der Kreatur* one learns how to interpret the reality of one's human situation. "When such a person, therefore, goes out from the school of possibility, and knows more thoroughly than a child knows the alphabet that he can demand of life absolutely nothing, and that terror, perdition, annihilation, dwell next door to every man, and has learned the profitable lesson that every anxiety which alarms [*Ängstsel*] may the next instant become a fact, he will interpret reality differently, he will extol reality. . . ." ⁷³

On the positive side, going to school to anxiety enables one to move through the finite and petty constrictions and to be freed to actualize the infinite possibilities in personality. The finite to Kierkegaard is that which "shuts up" freedom; the infinite refers in contrast to "opening up" doors to freedom. The infinite, therefore, is part of his concept of possibility. Finiteness can be defined as one experiences it in the innumerable constrictions and artificial limitations that we observe in the clinic as well as in our own lives. The infinite cannot be so defined, because it represents freedom. In facing anxiety, Kierkegaard extols the attitude of Socrates who

solemnly flourished the poisoned goblet . . . as a patient says to the surgeon when a painful operation is about to begin, "Now I am ready." Then anxiety enters into his soul and searches it thoroughly, constraining out of him all the finite and the petty, and leading him hence whither he would go.⁷⁴

71. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 141. (Italics mine.)

73. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

In such confronting of anxiety the individual is educated to faith, or inward certitude. Then one has the "courage to renounce anxiety without any anxiety, which only faith is capable of—not that it annihilates anxiety, but remaining ever young, it is continually developing itself out of the death throes of anxiety."

To the scientifically minded reader, it may seem that Kierkegaard in the above quotations is speaking in poetic and paradoxical figures of speech. This is, of course, true; but his meaning may be summarized in clear, experiential terms. On one hand he is anticipating the contention of Horney and others that anxiety indicates the presence of a problem which needs to be solved; and in Kierkegaard's mind, anxiety will dog the steps of the individual (if he does not engage in complete neurotic repression) until it is resolved. But on the other hand, Kierkegaard is proclaiming that "self-strength" develops out of the individual's successful confronting of anxiety-creating experiences. This is the way one becomes educated to maturity as a self.

What is so amazing in Kierkegaard is that despite his writing 130 years ago, and despite his lack of the tools for interpreting unconscious material—which tools have been available in their most complete form only since Freud—he so keenly and profoundly anticipated modern psychoanalytic insight into anxiety. At the same time he placed these insights in the broad context of a poetic and philosophical understanding of human experience. In Kierkegaard one finds a promise of the dawning of that day for which the French physiologist Claude Bernard yearned, the day when "the physiologist, the philosopher and the poet will talk the same language and understand each other."