The Meaning of Kierkegaard’s Choice Between the Aesthetic and the Ethical

Abstract

I begin this paper by looking at Alasdair MacIntyre’s critique in After Virtue of Kierkegaard’s notion of an ultimate choice between the aesthetic and the ethical, as described by the pseudonym Judge William in Either/Or Vol. II. MacIntyre argues that it implies that the normative force of ethical principles for a person depends solely on their arbitrary and reversible decision to recognize ethical distinctions— a choice that can be made for no reason. As a first step towards refuting this claim, in §II argue that Kierkegaard’s conception of moral motivation is internalist in a manner that follows Kant’s Religion. I next hypothesize in §III that ultimate choice is not about the authority of ethical principles at all, but rather about their internal incorporation, which can also usefully be understood in terms of identification through higher-order volitions in Harry Frankfurt’s sense. A detailed analysis of the relevant text in Either/Or II confirms this hypothesis, and shows that Kierkegaard, like Kant but unlike MacIntyre, believes that beyond the authority of ethical principles, the additional element of identification supplied by the choice is necessary for moral responsibility. Following this, in subsequent sections I consider how Kierkegaard’s conception of moral choice mediates between Kantian and Aristotelian poles, and how this in fact enables it to answer traditional Hegelian objections that Kantian moral principles are too impersonal to have motivational authority. After clarifying the stages in the genesis of moral responsibility in Kierkegaard’s model, which shows that there is some moral responsibility in the original choice-situation itself, I finally argue that Kierkegaard also has a subtle theory of inward or higher-order volitional character, which allows him to avoid the charge often brought against existentialism that it makes choices arbitrarily reversible and void of dispositional depth.
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The Meaning of Kierkegaard's Choice Between the Aesthetic and the Ethical: A Response to MackIntyre

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Introduction: MackIntyre's Critique of Kierkegaard

In chapter four of his After Virtue, Alasdair MacIntyre argues that in Kierkegaard's Ethikderor (Enten-Eller im Danish) we witness the failure of the Enlightenment Project to provide a "rational justification of morality" to persons characterized by their transcendent freedom. This failure and its results, we are told, occur primarily because the Enlightenment was unable to demonstrate how moral "rules of conduct" can have "authority" or "gerundive force" for concrete agents. MacIntyre argues that the failure of Kant's moral theory in particular is evident when Kierkegaard's pseudonym "Judge William" suggests in Ethikderor that a "radical and ultimate choice" is the only entrance into morality.

MacIntyre notes that at the Judge's presents it, "The choice between the ethical and the aesthetic is not the choice between good and evil, it is the choice whether or not to choose in terms of good and evil." But he argues that the Judge's portrayal of this choice as "ultimate"—i.e. as one in which "there are no rational grounds for choice between either position"—is inconsistent with the Judge's presentation of the 'ethical' as "that realm in which principles have authority over us independently of our attitudes, preferences, and feelings." If this is what the ethical attitude is, how can it be an option for radical choice? The result, MacIntyre thinks, is an incoherent combination of "the notion of radical choice with an unquestioning acceptance of the ethical." Kierkegaard's Judge regards traditional Kantian norms as having objective authority, yet the doctrine of Enten-Eller ist Ened-Eller) is plainly to the effect that the principles which depict the ethical way of life are to be adopted for no reason, but for a choice that lies beyond oneself, just because it is the choice of what is to count for us in a reason.

Kierkegaard does not state any such "doctrine" in Ethikderor, plainly or otherwise. Rather, the Judge presents the absolute choice as a free act in the inward world of personality, but he denies that it is an arbitrary choice. But MacIntyre's argument is that, in spite of Kierkegaard's intentions, the ethic of the aesthetic and ethical categories must be a choice in which the objective force of ethical norms cannot count as reasons. For if a hypothetical chooser is faced with the decision between the ethical and the aesthetic as ways of life, or modes of existence, then
...able with motivation by any rational judgment of objective value. This 'arbitraryness' objection is then usually raised against Kant's conception of moral obligations. Yet, in its entirety, the criticism is seriously misplaced when applied against Kant's position. If the criticism were true, then it would hold that the problem of the will, interpreted as 'a positive contribution towards resolving problems and rescuing the Enlightenment Project.'

II. Kant's Criticism

Kant's argument in the 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals' is that the will is 'a positive contribution towards resolving problems and rescuing the Enlightenment Project.'

If we grant this interpretation, then the incoherence in Kant's account would be much less serious. Since, in this view, principles for practical reason are grounded in our own moral character and not in the supposed subject-matter of reason, the criticism would have to be addressed to the proposition that one's nature is determined by a power that is independent of reason. In essence, the criticism rests on the assumption that reason is not free.

Despite the apparent influence of this critique on the Kantian tradition, the concept of the interplay of the will and understanding, the idea of a 'free' will, and the distinction between 'natural' and 'reflective' will are essential to Kant's thought. These concepts are fundamental to understanding the nature of moral obligation.

The idea that one's nature is determined by a power that is independent of reason is not only a criticism of Kant's philosophy but also a critique of the Enlightenment Project itself. If we grant this interpretation, then the incoherence in Kant's account would be much less serious. Since, in this view, principles for practical reason are grounded in our own moral character and not in the supposed subject-matter of reason, the criticism would have to be addressed to the proposition that one's nature is determined by a power that is independent of reason. In essence, the criticism rests on the assumption that reason is not free.

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framework, then that reason cannot be the motive for doing so, since the choice is reasonless. This claim that Kierkegaard’s theory necessarily implies extremality, however, still depends on MacIntyre’s hypothesis that Kierkegaard intends an absolute choice to serve as a substitute for Kantian pure practical reason.

Kierkegaard and Kant agree in their conception of morality, but Kierkegaard’s theory is beyond the reach of Kantian practical reasoning. Kant’s failure to provide Kierkegaard with his starting point: the act of choice has to be called in to do the work that reason could not do.29

Thus Kierkegaard’s Either/Or is supposed to be the last gasp of the Enlightenment Project: he is trying to make choice work as the basis for binding moral force, when Kantian practical reasoning has failed to do this. Crucial as it is to MacIntyre’s entire project in After Virtue, this hypothesis is very dubious. The Judge in Either/Or certainly never says that rational defenses of moral principles have failed; MacIntyre simply supplies this hypothesised motivation because he wrongly assumes that Kierkegaard has no other independent reasons for introducing the absolute choice between the ethical and the aesthetic.

But before I supply an alternative hypothesis, it is important to realize that, even if in his later religious works and Eiding Discourses, Kierkegaard does not ultimately accept Kant’s formalist definition of rationality in terms of ‘lawlike form’ alone, he never deviates from the metaethical principle that an action is ethical only when the objective normativity of acting for certain ends is itself the motive for so acting. Kierkegaard is in broad agreement with Kant that morality is ‘universal’ and never justified by mere preferences or commands: moral character depends entirely on an inward motivation by recognition of good ends and right actions themselves. It is a mistake, however, to assume that Kierkegaard shared Kant’s view that ethical motivation is sui generis.20

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The highest stage of the ethical (which is directly prior to religious faith) is absolute resignation, in which one act purely from the ‘motive of duty’ in Kant’s sense—even without any practical hope of realizing the ends one is obliged to will.

The metaethical internalism Kierkegaard inherits from Kant also explains why he is not, contrary to widespread assumption, a fideist. In Kant’s Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone,21 we not only find the model for Kierkegaard’s “ethical choices” in Kant’s idea of good and evil ultimate “dispositions” (highest-order maxims that are chosen by the transcendental self)?26 we also find Kant’s thesis that a moral revolution in ultimate character is possible. Without this possibility, the eschatological promise of a final balance between happiness and virtue could have no genuinely ethical significance for us, but only serve as an ‘external’ incentive. Unless the promise of salvation requires a moral revolution in one’s ultimate character, then motivation by this eschatological promise will amount only to divine favor seeking of the sort Nietzsche suspected, rather than religious retribution in accord with pure practical reason. In such religions “which are endeavors to win favor...” man flatters himself by believing either that God can make him eternally happy (through remission of sins) without his having to become a better man, or else, if this seems impossible, that God can certainly make him a better man without his having to do anything more than to ask for it.22

The thesis of moral revolution, then, is motivated by Kant’s own opposition to the Lutheran doctrine of sola fide: unless we can bring about the revolution in our own ultimate maxim, or at least to take the initiative to accept grace, then good works are not even a necessary condition for salvation. Our ultimate character cannot be fixed from all time, because if it is, then good works and moral duty have no religious significance at all.26

It is well known that Kierkegaard was influenced by Kant’s Religion.27 But it is less well understood that Kierkegaard shared Kant’s view that an ethical component (such as ‘good works’) was necessarily included in salvation through faith. Not only is this clear in Kierkegaard’s later religious writings,28 but it is also suggested in passages early in Fear and Trembling that are clearly intended as bars against Danish adherents to sola fide. For example, Johannes de Silentio tells us that in the “world of spirit” where justice applies, it “holds true that only the one who works gets bread...”29 The indispensability of good works is expressed through the ethical stage, which implies that strong moral virtue remains a necessary condition within the stage “beyond” it. Fear and Trembling also makes clear that faith which does not disbelievingly retain within it a commitment to ethical ends and good works, will be mere aesthetic childishness.30 Moreover, the movement of
faith is a volitional movement that identifies the self with its absolute relation to the Divine: it is not constituted by willing to believe something about the truth-value of propositions sola fide. Thus, the sense in which the religious stage of faith is "believing" is the same as the sense in which it is "beyond the ethical": it contains reason dialectically within it, just as it contains the ethical. Kierkegaard's "beyond," unlike Nietzsche's, are cumulative, and for this reason, Kierkegaard is not in any sense a fascist.

These reflections give us an abundant antecedent reason to believe that Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works generally oppose an existentialist analysis of ethical obligation in relation to the heroic will and to faith. This is all the more reason to suspect that if MacIntyre's interpretation leads to the opposite conclusion, something goes wrong in that interpretation.

III. Authentic Identification and the Choice of the Ethical

As we saw, MacIntyre thinks that for Kierkegaard, the "absolute" choice between the aesthetic and the ethical is supposed to be the basis of the authority that ethical principles have for the individual. Although he cites no particular passages to support this, the infamously difficult ones that might give this impression are found near the beginning of the "Equilibrium" letter, where, after explaining that "choice" in the "strict sense" always means having an ethical choice of good or evil, 22 the Judge nevertheless adds:

My callee does not in the first instance denote the choice between good and evil; it denotes the choice whereby one chooses good and evil to exclude them. Here the question is under what determinants one would contemplate the whole of existence and would himself live. It is, therefore, not so much a question of choosing between willing the good or the evil, as of choosing to will, by this in turn the good and evil are posited. 23

The "primordial" choice described here, which I will refer to as a "choice," for short, is thus the choice whether or not one chooses ethically ("chooses," for short), where the ethical choice, implies a particular sort of moral responsibility. But by a choice, that falls within the category of moral responsibility, Kierkegaard means something more than what MacIntyre (following Aristotle) calls an intelligible "human action." To identify an occurrence as an "intelligible" action is in paradigmatic instances to identify it under a type of description which enables us to see that occurrence as flowing intelligibly from a human agent's intentions, motives, passions, and purposes. It is therefore to understand an action as something for which one is accountable. 23

For MacIntyre, it is intelligible human action—a performance that follows from one's beliefs to one's character, desires, dispositions, cognitive apprehensions of value and reasoned deliberation—that involves human persons in moral responsibility and distinguishes them from animals. 24 In this account, MacIntyre is probably also following Hegel. 25

Kierkegaard would not of course deny that when a person has performed a "human action" in MacIntyre's sense (i.e., performed something intelligible to herself and others in terms of its combined cognitive and emotive sources), she is legally liable for it. This Aristotelian condition allows us the classical distinction between wrongs and mere harms: for example, if the act in a way that knowingly violates some law, the harm is not unintentional, but satisfies the standard for criminal culpability. Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works never imply that the aesthetic cannot recognize her legal liability for her actions in this sense, or be held to account for them like anyone else:

Nevertheless, by definition, the aesthetic does not choose "in terms of the ethical." By choice, that is "absolutely ethical" in this categorical sense, then, Kierkegaard must mean something narrower than "human action." What the aesthetic lacks in his actions is a "choice" between good and evil—that makes the will on which he acted good or evil. However, the will to which these moral predicates principally apply—as Kant famously suggested at the beginning of the Groundwork—is something deeper than the action-max which makes an action "intelligible" or "deliberate." It is an unreserved commitment that cannot be dissociated from the self, in the way that even deliberate actions sometimes can be dissociated. As Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writes in the Postscript:

The real action is not the external act, but an internal decision in which the individual puts an end to the mere possibility and identifies himself with the content of his thought in order to exist in it. This is the action. 26

It is only within the will in this deeper sense that Kierkegaard recognizes a capacity for ethical choice and character that has moral worth. What the agent thereby acquires is not merely liability for actions that flowed from an intention internal to her, but strong moral responsibility for willing that intention itself. However, for Kierkegaard, "ethical" choices, that entails "strong moral responsibility" will include only not (1) the volitional conditions which give one's actions the requisite personal significance required if the distinction between good and evil is to apply to the motive of one's act, but also (2) cognitive awareness of the objective authority of moral principles. 27 My hypothesis is that the Judge's primordial choice is about what is required to satisfy the former condition: it has nothing to do with meeting the latter. What is "posited" by this choice, to choose ethically (or with strong moral responsibility) is not the authority of ethical principles but rather the volitional conditions under which the authority of such principles can become relevant to the moral worth of an individual's will. The aesthetic's particular
actions may be judged right or wrong by themselves or by a third party, but not by an action itself, if the action is not the action of the agent. The distinction between (1) and (2) does not occur to Macfadyen, for example, if the agent is you.

This distinction is important because, as Kant had argued, the concept of a moral action is properly limited to actions that are willed intentionally, i.e., actions that are done for reasons. This means that actions can be either moral or immoral, but they cannot be both moral and immoral at the same time. The distinction also implies that actions can be judged right or wrong, but they cannot be both right and wrong at the same time.

Kantian ethics is based on the idea of duty, and it is the concept of duty that makes it possible to distinguish between actions that are moral and actions that are not moral. Duty is defined as a commitment to do what is right, regardless of what one's desires may be. This means that an action is moral if it is done out of duty, and it is immoral if it is done for some other reason.

The concept of duty is important because it allows us to distinguish between actions that are morally right and actions that are morally wrong. The concept of duty is also important because it allows us to distinguish between actions that are moral and actions that are not moral. This is because an action is moral if it is done out of duty, and it is not moral if it is done for some other reason.
In sum, Frankfurt holds that it is inextricatably identifiable (through second-order volitions) that makes persons morally responsible for their actions. This conception of identification, which is anticipated in Kant's Incorporation Thesis,1 implies the idea of a volitional identity, which consists in the transcendental subject's inward will about the sort of social self he/she wants to have, i.e., the dispositions and projects she wishes to express in her actions. The person in Frankfurt's sense is this 'inward self,' which coincides with the authentic will to be a certain sort of outward self.2 A wanton lacks "personality" in this sense.

This brief summary of Frankfurt's analysis provides an invaluable basis for explaining the meaning of the Kierkegaardian 'choice,' to make ethically significant choices. By ethical "choices," between good and evil, or "the act of choosing" that is "essentially a proper and stringent expression of the ethical,"3 the judge means a volition which satisfies the condition for strong moral responsibility implied by Kant's Incorporation Thesis. In other words, "choice," means authentic identification in Frankfurt's sense. To choose in this sense, one cannot just 'wantonly' act on whatever preference wins out in the "economy of one's desires."4 Rather, one must actively associate oneself with some form of deliberate action; the higher-order acts of significant this involve will then constitute an authentic inward self. The primordial choice between the aesthetic and the ethical generally, then, is a choice either to be wanton, or to become a 'person' in the full Frankfurtian sense. If this interpretation can be sustained, then the choice to choose in terms of the ethical has nothing to do with choosing to regard ethical precepts as having normative authority; rather, it means a choice to engage in the kind of authentic identification that ethical principles of good and evil can guide—i.e., to will to act on certain motives, for the sake of identifying with those motives as constitutents of the external character one wants as one's own.

Several themes in the Judge's discussion surrounding the 'primordial either-or' provide convincing proof of this interpretation. First of all, by the aesthetic, Kierkegaard clearly means something similar to wantonness in Frankfurt's sense. The Judge begins the "Equilibrium" letter by contrasting the ethical with which characterizes the "ethical" with the careless indifference of the aesthetic attitude towards alternatives: "Do after all do it—or you will regret both."5 It is not that the aesthetic simply leaves her act on whatever motive happens to gain the upper hand. Rather, "the aesthetic in a man is truly the same to which he is immediately what he is."6 Here the 'immediate' means roughly the same as first-order preferences and dispositions in Frankfurt's sense. The Judge gives the following example:

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The aesthetic choice is either entirely immediate and to that extent no choice, or it loses itself in the multifarious. Thus when a young girl follows the choice of her heart, this choice, however beautiful it may be, is in the strictest sense no choice, since it is entirely immediate.7

Following one's heart in this sense is essentially wanton, lacking in the higher-order volitional movement of intrapersonal identification. No matter how much it is celebrated in German romanticism, this simulacrum of choice—"impulse without incorporation"—does not involve in full moral responsibility, or "mature one's personality."8

The Judge also anticipates Frankfurt by noting that deliberation does not by itself supply the act of will which is missing in the wanton's lack of authentic identification with the impulse acted on. He says to the aesthetic young man, "Yes, if to deliberate were the proper task for a human life, you would be pretty close to perfection."9 To be capable of good or evil, "...the crucial thing is not deliberation but baptism of the will which lifts up the choice into the ethical."10 Thus in the nearby passage (quoted at the beginning of this section) in which the Judge distinguishes between "choosing to will" itself and the moral value of a particular volition, he is referring to this movement which first "fits" us into the higher-order of volitional personality required for choice in the strict sense. When one chooses to will in the ethically relevant sense, one chooses to identify. This same meaning is apparent when the Judge says of the person "who would define his life task ethically" (i.e. as good or evil), "...in making a choice it is so much a question of choosing the right as of the energy, the earnestness, the paths with which one chooses. Thereby the personality announces its inner infinity, and thereby, in turn, the personality is consolidated. Therefore, even if a man were to choose the wrong, he will nevertheless discover, precisely by reason of the power of choice which he chose, that he has chosen the wrong. For the choice being made with the whole invariance of his personality, his nature is purified."11

In this context, it is clear that the "earnestness" and "paths" characteristic of good or evil choice do not signify mere intensity of emotion (which affects other preference can exhibit), but rather that the choice unequivocally associates the inward self with the content chosen. "Personality" in this sense thus means what Frankfurt also calls 'the person,' i.e. the inward self that identifies the 'I' with the sort of outward or social self it will express in its actions. If this is what is required for choice to yield moral responsibility, it makes sense that in such choice, "the I chooses itself—or rather, receives itself,"12 or acquires an inward identity. This "personality" cannot itself remain unaffected in morally responsible choice, because authentic identification constitutes this personality: "The choice itself is decisive for
the context of personality, through the instant of choice the personality immerses itself in the thing chosen.63 Thus the Judge denies that the personality is a transcendental 'x' or pure subject of action, i.e. that 'personality merely nothing more than to be a-kobold, which takes part, indeed, in the movements, but nevertheless remains unchanged.64 The wanton, who lacks "personality," is like the kobold: an unchanging monad moving through the chaotic alteration of his first-order impulses to act. The sense of interpersonal identification involved in the inward personality won through choice, is apparent in the Judge's implication that this personality belongs to the chooser in a special sense, in which we cannot likewise say that the aesthetic's own deliberate activities belong to him. Unlike a person's history, which is "not merely a product of his own acts," the "inward work" of choice "belongs to him and must belong to him unto all eternity.65 It is "incorporated" or appropriated as his own. By contrast, the Judge argues that the aesthetic hedonist "always posits a condition which either lies outside the individual or is in the individual in such a way that it is not posited by the individual himself.66 As before, "positing" here means incorporating: and thus even when his preference or desire is "in him" in the sense that it would count as an 'interior' source of human action, he does not "choose" or identify with this desire as the only he intends to be his first-order will: it is "his" only in the way that his external history is his: i.e. simply by being part of his contingent first-order effectivity. Thus the condition for the aesthetic's happiness is external to himself in the same underlying sense, whether his goal is a purely exterior one, such as beauty, or as interior one, such as the development of a talent.67 Like Frankfurt, then, Kierkegaard's Judge holds that having a self, or being a person capable of moral responsibility, depends primarily on a special sort of intersubpersonal volitional relation, which is prior to all intersubpersonal (Hegelian) dependencies.68 The primordial choice between the aesthetic and the ethic is the initiation of this intersubpersonal relation:

So the either/or proposes in a sense absolute, for it is a question of choosing or not choosing. But since the choice is an absolute choice, as is either or absolute, in another sense, however, it is only by this choice [that the chooser] comes to existence, for with that [the choice between choosing, and not choosing] the choice between good and evil makes its appearance.69

It is apparent here that the objective authority of ethical principles does not originate with the absolute choice, but rather "comes to evidence" and "makes its appearance"—these phrases refer to the newfound personal significance of the objective authority in ethical principles. Although the aesthetic may already have been cognizant of their universally binding force, they apply directly to identifying voluntions, which the aesthetic lacks. He is

in the same position relative to these principles as someone who knows the rules of the road, but never drives. When that someone nervously decides to take the driver's seat for the first time, however, their decision does not create whatever authority they recognize in the traffic laws, Similarly, the person who makes the primordial choice, to begin making 'incorporative', identifying choices is not grounding the binding normative force of ethical precepts, but giving these precepts subjective application within their own will, or giving them personal relevance.

IV. Existential Choice: Kierkegaard's Route Between Aristotle and Kant

In these findings, we have recognized the crucial importance of Kantian "incorporation" or identification in Kierkegaardian choice. We should not, however, assume that Kierkegaard endorses "the ethical" and choice in purely Kantian terms. Kierkegaard's theme of the practical significance of the eternal from an individual perspective derives from Socrates, while his conception of choice is indebted to the Nicomachean Ethics. Ironically for MacIntyre, Kierkegaard scholars writing both before and since After Virtue have emphasized the close connections between Kierkegaard's notion of choice and Aristotle's conception of praxis.69 In 1971, over three years prior to MacIntyre's critique of Kierkegaard, George Stack published a lengthy treatment of "Existential Choice"70 in which he argues that since Kierkegaard's conception is largely derived from Aristotle, it is neither arbitrary nor irrational.71 The fundamental similarity found is the fact that Kierkegaard emphasizes "the distinction between relatively magnifi- cant 'choices' and existential choices... that have relevance for the development of the character of the individual."72 Deliberation, as we have seen, is aesthetic if it never gets beyond what Stack calls intellectual possibilities, or detached speculation about logical possibilities. Deliberation becomes ethical (related to 'choice' in the true sense) for Kierkegaard—as for Aristotle—only when it is about what we might call personal possibilities of action: "For Kierkegaard, as for Aristotle, we deliberate not about the eternal, the necessary, or the impossible, but about that possible (dunato) or that which we believe to be within our power to perform."73 To be ethical, deliberation must be about practical possibilities of action rather than about "disinterested" logical possibilities, but even then it is not by itself sufficient for action, and must terminate in a choice.74 As we read in the Postscripts, there is a "twilight zone" between mere thought or aesthetic deliberation, and action in the fully incorporative sense: Thus when I think that I will do this or that, this thought is not yet an action, and in all eternity it is qualitatively distinct from an act; nevertheless, it is a possibility in which the interest of action and of reality already reflects itself.75
Stock expresses this by saying that, to make an ethical choice, the individual must be personally committed to his own possibilities for action, and his decision must necessarily be a personal judgment that responds to his own personal situation. In this view, the agent's decision is a fundamental aspect of his personal identity. 

This view is supported by the concept of the personal identity, which is defined as the set of all the actions that the agent is capable of performing. According to the personal identity, the agent is responsible for his own actions and decisions, and he must take into account his own personal situation in order to make an ethical choice.

In summary, Stock argues that ethical choices are personal judgments that respond to the agent's own personal situation. The agent is responsible for his own actions and decisions, and he must take into account his own personal identity in order to make an ethical choice.
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John Broome

is aware of will have first-personal significance for her, for she must therefore be
inherently interested in and motivated by some of the same things that motivate her.
In the case of an agent's own preferences or goals, she is very likely to be
motivated by these preferences and goals, even if she does not know what
they are. For example, she might prefer to have a certain object, such as
a book, even if she does not know that she prefers it. This means that the
agent's preferences or goals are endogenous to her. In the case of another
agent's preferences or goals, she might be motivated by these preferences
or goals, even if she does not know what they are. For example, she might
prefer to have a certain object, such as a book, even if she does not know
that she prefers it. This means that the other agent's preferences or goals
are exogenous to her. In either case, the agent's preferences or goals are
endogenous to her.
chooser, however, cannot be merely tacit, for by definition it has a cognitive element—it requires us to think of ourselves as agents capable of strong morally responsible action. This is a position we cannot automatically grow into as Kierkegaard does. As Jegier and Dunning note, the Judge argues later in the "Equilibrium" letter that we must repeat of the aesthetic to move into the ethical: "Thus ethical self-choice is a conscious repudiation of the abstraction and autonomy of the aesthetic stage."

This point is crucial, because the Judge is very clear that once the choice has become explicit, that is, through despair of the aesthetic or through the therapeutic of an existential critique (like the one he is personally answering up to the aesthetic young man), then a primordial responsibility to choose the ethical category is manifest even in the original choice between the aesthetic and ethical. To make this choice 'explicitly' is to make it in the manner of a cognitively informed higher-order volition, an identification. Thus the Judge tells the young man that his purpose is "to bring you to the point where the choice between good and evil acquires significance for you," i.e., to the point where the unavoidability of the primordial choice is explicit. If one openly faces this primordial either/or, then one will be brought to the point where "the necessity of [ethical] choice is manifest."

In other words, because a primordial responsibility already exists when the primordial choice-situation is explicit, a person will recognize the moral necessity of choosing, i.e., of choosing to make ethical choices for themselves. To this account the Judge adds a further more controversial hypothesis: if he can get a person to recognize their primordial duty to become a person responsible for their own character by getting them to stand at "the crossways" where the primordial choice is explicit, then he believes the person will choose the ethical.

To his credit, Maclntyre realizes that the Judge believes that "anyone who faces the choice between the aesthetic and the ethical will in fact choose the ethical." This idea, which has Pascal's Wager as its inspiration, points to the fact that the primordial choice has a theological rather than justificatory significance for Kierkegaard. Unfortunately, Maclntyre dismisses the Judge's conviction on the strength of the following alleged counterexample: ...the aesthetic can be chosen seriously, although the burden of choosing it can be as personally costly as the burden of choosing the ethical. I think of those young men of my father's generation who watched their own entire ethical principle sit along with the death of their friends in the trenches of the mass murder of the Jews and the Somme, and who returned determined that nothing was ever to matter to them again...

The honest urgency of this objection is clear, but we must note that Maclntyre is describing men who gave up the ethical after already living in it. The Judge has an answer to this concern: "who after the ethical has manifested itself to himself chooses the aesthetic is not living aesthetically, for he is sinning and is subject to ethical determination..." Kierkegaard is clearly aware that not everyone can even in the original authority of ethical principles is accepted, their authority can only be rejected in sinful despair that falls to undo their personal reverence.

This is true not only for persons who have already chosen the ethical and confront the primordial choice again when trying to maintain ethical ideals becomes painful enough to require infinite resignation; it is also true for persons who confront this choice, for the first time. If the necessity of choosing the ethical is "evident" in the primordial choice-situation itself when that choice, has become explicit, then even if the Judge's further hypothesis proves false, and the young man facing this choice tries to hurl himself back into the aesthetic, this would be a sinful choice in the presence of moral obligation, not an arbitrary choice without reason. Because the primordial moral responsibility intervenes when choice, becomes explicit, trying to return to the aesthetic can only lead to a form of sin, not to one's original state: as Stack remarks, "Once an individual has made such an 'absolute' choice he has already made an ethical 'turn' even in his deliberate choice to exclude the notions of good and evil."

Thus we have answered Maclntyre's remaining objection: for Kierkegaard's Judge, the choice of whether to become an ethical chooser to whom the categories of moral worth apply is itself a choice involving 'strong moral responsibility.' When this choice is tacit, one always remains in the aesthetic without sinning in doing so. But when the choice becomes explicit, one can only choose the ethical under the requirement to choose it, or reject it in sinful 'defiance' under the same requirement.

However, one might still protest that if the primordial choice becomes explicit only by chance, then the origin of moral responsibility for the individual would be abandoned to moral luck. But Kierkegaard realizes that a complex pedagogical process lies behind the 'making explicit' of this primordial choice—a process in which the resistance or willingness of the individual does play a role. Although one does not just will to keep oneself unconscious of this choice, or just decide to make it conscious, one can be more or less open to learning the lesson, in interaction with others and experience in society, that aesthetic pursuits can give no security in euthanasia or continuity in one's being. For Kierkegaard, everyone is able to despise of the aesthetic when the normal course of life brings them to a point where the issue at stake in the primordial choice should present itself. In other words, the capacity for this choice to become subjectively explicit is innate or inevitable, but the individual has some control over how long this takes in their life.
The Meaning of Kierkegaard’s Choice

But if the aesthetic has a hand in determining whether the primumordial choice comes to explicit consciousness at some particular juncture, then it turns out that the aesthete’s lack of authentic inward personality cannot be pure Frankfurtian ‘wantonness’ after all, i.e., it cannot be completely involuntariness. Rather, the aesthetic has a hand in his wantonness because his innermost personal identity consists in the third-order will not to have second-order volitions, i.e., a highest-order will to remain wanton at the second-order level. This fits with our previous analysis: since choice, is about whether or not to engage authentic identification that consists in second-order volition, the primumordial choice refers to a third order of the will—or to an absolute identification even more ‘inward’ than specific acts of second-order identification and the personality they constitute.

Within the individual, however, this highest-order absolute identification begins as tacit, as the most inward part of volitional identity, it exceeds reflective consciousness. But according to the Judge’s model, no one can be neutral at this highest level. One’s highest-order disposition is already either to choose, aesthetic existence or the reverse. But since the choice, to engage in ethical choice, requires a conversion in which the highest order will come explicitly into question, anyone for whom the primumordial choice is still tacit is en prise still in the aesthetic. Therefore Machiavely construed the choice, in false terms when he said, “Suppose that someone confronts the choice between [the aesthetic and ethical] as yet having embraced neither.” We are here asked to suppose something that is not a possibility in the Kierkegaardian scheme: one may not have embraced either ultimate option explicitly, but one is already in the aesthetic sphere; if one has faced the choice, then one is either in the sin of defiant fakism or a ‘full citizen’ in the ethical (with either a good or an evil character).

This analysis brings out the intended comprehensiveness in Kierkegaard’s theory of the stages of concrete human existence: there is no Archimedian point outside them. The aesthetic is the first existential ‘stage’ of human existence, the ‘default’ position, as it were. Thus we cannot think of the aesthetic as ‘wanton’ in precisely Frankfurt’s sense after all, since for Frankfurt, wantonness means being entirely without inward identification. Despite lacking second-order volitions that would identify him with the first-order intentions of his actions, the aesthetic does have a highest-order tacit identification, which puts him in a kind of ‘bad faith.’

Aesthetic Bad Faith: The Aesthetic tacitly wills not to have any second-order volitions V; with respect to D; (the complex of first-order desires and preferences which generate the motives he actually acts on). In other words, he tacitly intends not to take any authentic stance towards with any of the motives in D; in order to seem to be nothing more than his contingent first-order character.1011

The Judge’s recurring insistence that the aesthete cannot be transparent or revealed to himself because he does not choose points us towards a symptom of this ‘bad faith.’ His highest-order character, which is a will not to choose in the ethical sense, is hidden from him because its tacit purpose is to try to live wholly in the stream of first-order desires and dispositions—to avoid the recognition that he is in an agent in the higher-order sense. It is therefore clear why the choice, which brings about the conversion to the ethical is asymmetrical with the aesthetic state of bad faith: the choice, to choose, requires an awareness of oneself not only as an agent (as we already said), but as one who has her highest-order personality to determine, since choice, is a choice at that level. When the primumordial choice becomes explicit in this way, however, the objective primumordial responsibility to choose, the ethical comes subjectively to bear on it. At this point, one cannot regain the initial aesthetic state. Thus we can summarize Kierkegaard’s scheme in terms of the following four steps from the aesthetic to the ethical:

(1) Volitional State
   Aesthetic highest-order will not to identify with any purpose for acting.

(2) Consciousness
   Tacit choice.
   Choice, has become explicit.

(3) Moral Sense
   Both the objective duty to become an ethical choice, and other ethical principle, lack subjective significance.
   The objective duty to become an ethical choice acquires subjective force; ethical principles governing virtue/vice have objectivity but still no personal relevance or inward application.

(4) Ethical highest-order will, good second-order will, or authentic identification with an end or maxims because of its goodness.

Choice, made to choose, choice, still unsaturated.
Choice, to will the good for its own sake.
The Meaning of Frankfurt's Charge

As we have noted above, the problem of interest is not simply a matter of whether moral reasons are or are not present in the agent's desires. Rather, it is a question of whether the agent has a reason to act in a certain way, and if so, what that reason is. Frankfurt's charge is that the agent's reasons are derived from a form of self-interest that is not itself a reason for action. This is because the agent's desires are not based on moral principles but on personal preferences.

Frankfurt's argument is based on the idea that the agent's desires are not directed towards a moral end, but rather towards a personal end. In other words, the agent's desires are not aimed at the good of society, but at the good of the agent's own personal happiness. This is because the agent's desires are based on personal preferences, which are not necessarily aligned with the moral good.

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argues that utilitarianism requires "bare persons" for whom there are no limits to what is practically possible. But when a person's freedom reaches this extreme, her identity (in the sense of capacity for identification) evaporates: suppose that the field of alternatives from which a person may select is not merely extended; suppose that its boundaries are wiped out entirely. In other words, suppose now that every possible course of action is available and eligible for choice (i.e., personally possible), including those that would affect the person's preferences themselves. Since he can in that case even alter his own will, it seems that he has to confront the choices he must make without any specific volitional character that is definitively his. A person like this is so vacant of identifiable tendencies and constraints that he will be unable to deliberate as to make consistent decisions. He may possibly remain capable of some hollow semblance of choice. If he does, however, it will only be by virtue of a vestigial susceptibility to incite volitional whims. And movements of his will of that sort are inherently so arbitrary as to be wholly devoid of authentically personal significance. 

To avoid the V-H arbitrariness that results from such bare personality, Frankfurt argues, the agent must have a character that guides and gives rational continuity to the history of choices by acquiring and maintaining limitations on what is feasible for the agent to choose—i.e., limitations that make some actions "unthinkable" for a person. Frankfurt understands these limitations which allow for "meaningful conceptions of personal integrity" not as "irresistible impulses" or desires for certain kinds of action, but rather as volitional necessities of the higher-order will itself. On this basis, Frankfurt argues that such volitional necessities, rather than existential choice, must be the origin of authentic personality. All a decision does is to create an intention; it does not guarantee that the intention will be carried out. This is not simply because the person can always change his mind. Apart from inconsistency of that sort, it may be that energies tending toward action inconsistent with the intention remain untamed and undispered.

The problem with decisions is that they will be ineffective if they conflict with underlying volitional necessities of the agent, and even without such a conflict, the decisions will be reversible if they are not backed up by a volitional necessity that would make the opposite decision ineffective. Thus if these theories of choice are to avoid V-H arbitrariness, they must not only focus on decisions that can be effective in shaping one's inward character; they must also show how choice can be involved in the creation of strong volitional dispositions (or even necessities) that would at least tend to block contrary choices.

VII. Kierkegaardian Volitional Character: Why Existential Choice is not V-H Arbitrary

Any worthwhile existentialist approach to personhood and moral responsibility—especially one which traces the moral significance of volitional identification to choices made in libertarian freedom—must have an answer to these objections. In this section, I will briefly show not only that Kierkegaard anticipated these difficulties long before any contemporary critic of existentialism, but also that the absolute choice presented in Either/Or II is insulated from them by a highly interesting existential theory of character.

For Kierkegaard's Judge, not even the aesthetic 'choices' or actions can be V-H arbitrary, because the existing individual is a living being who always (by default or by choice) has a character that consists in certain dispositions to act, which make some options more salient for the individual than others. The free choice of an existing individual is embodied in this existential structure, which has a kind of inertia of its own. As the Judge remarks immediately after introducing the idea of acquiring an 'inward' self, although this involves a choice between logically possible alternatives, the alternatives are never synthetically symmetric in their availability for the individual:

For an instant it is so, for an instant it may seem as if the things between which a choice is to be made lie outside the chooser, that he stands in no relationship to it, that he can preserve a state of indifference over against it...[But in fact] That which has to be chosen stands in the deepest relationship to the chooser, and when it is a question of a choice involving a life problem the individual must naturally be living in the meantime, and hence, it comes about that the longer he postpones the choice the easier it is for him to alter its character... One sees, then, that the inner drift of personality leaves no time for thought experiments, that it constantly hinders upward and in one way or another puts this alternative or that, making the choice more difficult the next instant because [to choose the other alternative] what has thus been posted must be revoked.

In this widely-overlooked passage, Kierkegaard's Judge makes clear that the "personality" of the individual always already takes us more towards some of the options in a given situation, and thus if we wish to act on another option, we must decisively identify with it. Otherwise we will find that we have almost automatically 'chosen'—but without really choosing—the option towards which our dispositions tended. That someone who tries not to decide nevertheless acts as if they had made a choice.

Our analysis of Kierkegaard's 'ethical' choice in terms of authentic identification in Frankfurt's sense can help us understand the idea at work.
the nature of virtue within the existentialist conception of authenticity, but also because it distinguishes volitional character that makes virtue and vice possible from the mere aestheticism of first-order habit. As we have seen, the Kantian side of Kierkegaard’s existentialism includes a critique of living by disposition in the immediate habitual sense, or letting ‘outward’ character take its course. But, pace his unsympathetic critics, Kierkegaard does not thereby exclude all notions of character. The synthesis in Either/Or shows how to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic dispositions, and it turns out that authentic choice is actually impossible without the acquisitions of dispositions of the higher and undiscussable kind, which constitute the authentic character.

That authentic identification itself must have a dispositional structure becomes clear when the Judge emphasizes that the inward self of the ethical chooser is not V-11 arbitrary, or reversible. Aesthetic deliberation and choice among a “multiplicity” of options remains in the category of ‘immediacy’ or outward character...

Choose that is ‘ethically accentuated’ involves identification—an association of the self with some way of acting—that establishes an inward character, which would not even exist if it were ‘bare’ and immediately reversible. In fact, it is even less reversible than one’s outward immediate dispositions. To make this contrast with the inward character acquired by “choosing absolutely,” the Judge even rhetorically contradicts his earlier assertion that the outward or immediate personality has some consistency or inertia. Whereas the limitations on salience imposed by outward dispositions may still leave a multiplicity of options, the possession of inward dispositions to identify or choose, which bring strong moral responsibility and the subjective relevance of norm with them, more sharply limit the relevant options, and ground choices that are much less reversible than outward dispositions to act. A Chillingworth or Napoleon on his malign purpose with the demonic steadiness of an inwardly evil will is far less easily swayed from his path than, say, a Schindler who is addicted to material and sexual pleasures. Thus although it is so often used as a critique against existentialist freedom, V-11 arbitrariness is precisely what Kierkegaard’s conception of personality and the primordial choice is designed to avoid.

In fact, an even stronger claim is implicit in the Judge’s discussion:
choice that has the consequence of 'strong moral responsibility,' or potential moral culpability of the will, would not even be possible if the individual were not asymmetrically connected to his options through dispositions. Right after the passage (cited earlier) where he calls for the "baptism of the will" by choice that lifts it into full moral responsibility, the Judge declares this:

The longer the time that elapses, the more difficult it is to choose, for the soul is constantly attached to one side of the dilemma, and it becomes more and more difficult, therefore, to tear oneself loose. And yet this is necessary if one is to choose and is therefore of the utmost importance if a choice is to signify something."

In other words, if 'ethical' choices were arbitrarily reversible—if it were not at least more difficult (if not impossible) to become a bachelor once one has taken a wedding vow, for example—then there would be no choice in Kierkegaard's strict sense at all, because choices would not establish the kinds of inward volitional characters, or dispositions of identification, that are the only things capable of being absolutely evil or good. Hence if the absolute ethical citizen has any application, then choice must both affect and be affected by inward character in such a way that it alters the availability of options, and thus is not arbitrarily reversible.

This transcendental argument is the basis for all of Kierkegaard's own (non-pseudonymous) treatment of ethical character in his various "coercing" or "upbuilding" discourses. It is confirmed in a somewhat different context in the Sickness unto Death, where Kierkegaard carefully distinguishes between the "own self" which the ethically responsible person chooses to "put on," and the purely abstract "ineffective form, the negative self," which the demonic man in his most absolute despair wills to be. In the self of purely negative freedom—the self of an individual who conscientiously refuses to authentically adopt any inward personality, and instead explicitly maintains the highest-level will to reject all authentic identification—"there can be "nothing steadfast" despite the grandeur of his plans, because every decision he makes lacks correctness and commitment and so is reversible: "The negative form of the self exercises a loosening as well as a binding power; at any time it can quite arbitrarily start all over again." By contrast, the ethical choice, which Kierkegaard characterizes here in terms of "infinite resignation," cannot turn around and "arbitrarily dissolve the whole thing into nothing." Ethical choices such as infinite resignation can never be arbitrarily reversible.

VIII. Conclusion

We have now seen that in the "Equilibrium" letter of Either/Or II, what Kierkegaard means by authentic choice is closely bound up with a form of inward character that rules out V-H arbitrariness as thoroughly as the primordial choice rules out N-M arbitrariness. Choice in the sense of authentic identification, which alone can establish strong moral responsibility, not only has nothing to do with establishing the objective authority of norms; it must also exist in the form of character that is inward but not "noumenal," a character with a history that reciprocally affects and is shaped by the will to identify with moral and immoral motives of action. This characterological facticity ensures that especially in the case of inward volitional identification with one's action-maxims, no choice is arbitrarily reversible.

Once this is recognized, Foucault's and Nagel's objections against existentialist autonomy are answered. Kierkegaard adheres to the Kantian idea of spontaneity in choice, but where Kant contrasts the phenomenal actor in a net of psychological forces with a structureless and unreflective noumenal will, Kierkegaard contrasts the inertia of immediate character with an inward volitional pattern, or process of identification, that itself has a history and a 'depth' of synthetic constraints. Even spontaneous choice, then, is clothed in such a way that it is never utterly 'characterless' self-creation en nihil. Absolute choice as identification always brings a personality into existence by actualizing an option that is accessible or personally possible because of the outward or inward character already "there": as the Judge says, For in case what I chose did not exist but absolutely came into existence with the choice, I would not be choosing; I would be creating; but I do not create myself, I choose myself."

In sum, this analysis shows that several traditional critiques of existentialism cannot apply to Kierkegaard, and are therefore only questionably applied to everyone Kierkegaard influenced. Those who would 'demythologize' existentialism as a myth of atomic individualism or decisionistic moral relativism themselves stand demythologized. The implications of this conclusion go well beyond a mere corrective in our interpretations of Kierkegaard. For it shows that, far from revealing the failure of the Enlightenment Project, Kierkegaard has gone a long way towards showing how to make the Enlightenment combination of negative liberty and metaethical internalism succeed. The new possibilities Either/Or opens up have hardly yet been explored. They depend in large measure on Kierkegaard's unique way of synthesizing the medieval conception of
substantive moral character with freedom as negative liberty, while retaining objective moral standards of right action and ethical norms applying to volitional character. Machiavelli is therefore wrong not only about the meaning and implications of Kierkegaard’s primordial choice between the aesthetic and the ethical; his description of Kierkegaard’s position in the history of ethics is also the reverse of the truth.

Notes
5. Machiavelli, 43.
6. Machiavelli, 42.
8. Either/Or II, 178. He describes this as a solemn choice as an “inward work” of the sort that makes up “the genuine life of freedom,” but he distinguishes genuine positive freedom from “liberum arbitrium” (178). We should also recall that Kierkegaard wrote this part of Either/Or during the winter he spent in Berlin, during which he attended Schelling’s lectures (see Lowrie’s introduction, xx), which would not have encouraged him to believe that spontaneity is noumenal in Kant’s sense. As the Judge says, although “an ethicist presents itself in the case of an individual who must act” (170), he does not understand such practical choice in terms of “formal, abstract freedom” (182).
13. Thus after describing the absolute either/or between the aesthetic and the ethical, Machiavelli compares it to Kierkegaard’s argument, in the Philosophical Fragments, that a “radical and ultimate choice” explains “how one becomes a Christian.” This idea, he says, not only militates against Hegel, but “destroys the whole tradition of rational moral culture” (41). Thus Machiavelli in so many words charges Kierkegaard’s Fragments with a fictionism that is directly contrary to Kant’s rationally grounded moral faith.
14. This is the second of the Judge’s three letters contained within Either/Or II, and it is near the beginning of the letter that the Judge introduces and expands on his ideas of the choice between the aesthetic and the ethical.
15. For Machiavelli, in fact, it is clear that Kierkegaard is as much an “enigmatist” as Sartre: there is an essential difference between the Judge’s response to the aesthetic “young nin” of Either/Or I and Sartre’s critique of the French bourgeoisie “who cannot tolerate the recognition of their own choices as the sole source of moral judgment” (After Virtue, 22).

The Meaning of Kierkegaard’s Choice

17. Korsgaard, 311.
18. ibid.
20. Machiavelli, 47. I should also note that, for reasons partially presented in IV, I doubt that Kierkegaard does entirely agree with Kant’s ethics, as Machiavelli claims. Kierkegaard is open to non-formalist accounts of the good and virtue, as long as they come with the right conception of volition and choice.
22. I leave the notion of normativity open in this description, because as I have suggested, for Kierkegaard (unlike Kant) metaethical intuitions need not imply deontological, formalist definitions of the right and the good. Medieval virtue theorists also had internalist conceptions of virtuous motivation.
24. Although the Judge rejects the atemporal abstractness of Kant’s noumenal self, on the first page of the “Equilibrium” letter, he follows Kant in saying: “there is only one situation in which either/ or has absolute significance, namely, when truth, righteousness and holiness are lined up on one side, and lust and base propensities are lined up on the other side...” Either/Or I, 161.
25. Kant, Religion, 47.
26. It is a measure of the strength of Kant’s insistence on good works and moral progress for eucharistic salvation that John Silber even felt that Kant’s theory is inimical to any adequate notion of divine forgiveness or mercy (Silber, cxxxii). I am not sure if this is a fair criticism of Kant, but it certainly indicates the strength of his emphasis on morality as an essential element of religioseness.
27. Although as Silber rightly points out, Kierkegaard opposed Kant’s belief that strong “demonic” evil is impossible for human beings (Religion, cxxxii), while in particular, Walter Lowrie’s “Introduction to Attack Upon Christendom” (Princeton University Press, 1968), xvi. The title of Works of Love is also meant to emphasize this point.
29. Fear and Trembling, 47.
30. Either/Or II, 170. “Whenever in a stricter sense there is [a question of an] ethical, one can always be sure that the ethical is involved. The only absolute either/or is the choice between good and evil, but that is also absolutely ethical.”
32. Machiavelli, After Virtue, 209.
33. As Machiavelli says, “Human beings can be held to account for that of which they are the authors; other beings cannot” (209). Yet Machiavelli would at least need to add that a human being is typically are aware of the intelligibility of his action.
enable a selection to choose from; on the other hand, the act of choice has far more importance for him” (171). 117 *Ethics* 173.

Kierkegaard’s hedge selects marriage as his paradigm of decisive ethical choice in the first letter of *Ethics* Book II. Clearly, marriage would be meaningless if it entailed no change in oneself which made the option of being unmarried at least less available than it was when one was trying to decide whether to propose.

One will recognize here an echo of the first line of chapter one of Kant’s *Groundwork*. That is appropriate, because this analysis of will in terms of volitional identification or ‘incorporation’ both makes clear the meaning Kant had intended in that infamous first line, and why Kierkegaard follows Kant in a view that leads to the same conclusion.


Note that this ‘defiant’ person’s will is fundamentally the same in structure as the aesthetic ‘bad faith’ (as I analyzed it), but with this crucial difference: the highest-order will not to identify or authentically care about anything is fully open in the demonic person (in Nietzschean ‘amor fati’ style), whereas it is only tacit in the aesthetic’s bad faith. This is important, because it shows not only why the demonic man sins while the ordinary aesthetic does not, but also why every aesthetic has the potential to become demonic if, when the moment of primordial choice comes, he or she rejects ethical existence.

Søren Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, 69. Of course the demonic man is responsible for his defiance of the ethical: this is consistent, because his highest-order project is not itself V-H arbitrary, even though it is the project of being thoroughly V-H arbitrary in second-order character.

123 *Sickness* 79. 125

117 *Ethics* 173.

118 *Ethics* II, 219-220.

Editorial Policy

Each January issue of the *Southwest Philosophy Review* contains papers presented at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Philosophical Society. Papers in the July issue are selected by the editor, with the advice of the members of the Advisory Board and other referees, from open submissions to the *Review*. Comments on papers previously published in the *Review* are solicited and will be considered for publication.

Book reviews will be considered and books for review are solicited from publishers and authors, with preference for publications by members of the Southwestern Philosophical Society.

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Upon acceptance of a paper for publication, the author will be requested to provide the editor with a computer diskette holding the file of the manuscript.