Kierkegaard on the nature of woman.

Sheila Marie. Drummond

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KIERKEGAARD ON THE NATURE OF WOMAN

by

Sheila Marie Drummond

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the Department of Religious Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1986
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ISBN 0-315-31953-4
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE AESTHETIC MEN OF EITHER/OR I</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Juan and the Ethical Determined Seducer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faust</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE AESTHETIC MAN'S RELATION TO WOMAN</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE AESTHETIC MAN'S CONCEPTION OF WOMAN</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The model &quot;young girl&quot; versus other girls and women</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A &quot;young girl's&quot; development</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man is self-contained; woman is relative</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman and the religious</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ETHICAL MAN'S RELATION TO WOMAN</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;THE ETHICAL MAN'S CONCEPTION OF WOMAN</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Woman's beauty increases with the years&quot;</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Woman explains finiteness&quot;</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Woman is humble&quot;</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman saves man</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman and the religious</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipation</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The categories of the ethical: do they apply to woman?</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

CHAPTER

III. THE RELIGIOUS MAN'S RELATION TO WOMAN .................. 114

S.K.'S AND THE RELIGIOUS MAN'S CONCEPTION OF WOMAN

The equality of man and woman ............................. 130
Woman is more sensuous than man .......................... 133
Woman and "homeliness" ..................................... 137
Woman is characterized by devotion .......................... 141
Man is reflective; woman is instinctive
or intuitive .............................................. 145

S.K.'s discussion of woman and man's relation
to woman (1854-5) ........................................ 151
S.K.'s statements about women and the nature of
woman (1854-5) ........................................... 160

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 174

VITA AUCTORIS ................................................. 177
ABSTRACT

KIERKEGAARD ON THE NATURE OF WOMAN

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This thesis surveys and analyses Kierkegaard's pseudonymous and signed assertions about woman and women. As Kierkegaard recognized and wrote about three stages or spheres of existence (namely, the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious), so this thesis is divided into three parts. Chapter One examines those assertions about woman and women that are made by pseudonymous representatives of the aesthetic sphere of existence. Chapter Two examines statements about woman and women that are made by pseudonyms describing the ethical sphere of existence. Chapter Three examines assertions about woman and women that are found in Kierkegaard's pseudonymous and signed religious works. Statements that appear in signed, but not necessarily religious, works are also examined.

Two questions are asked and answered in this thesis. (1) According to Kierkegaard, how does a man residing in each of the three spheres of existence perceive women and conceive of the nature of woman? (2) According to Kierkegaard, how does a man residing in each of the three spheres of existence typically relate to a woman or women?

The following constitute some of the results of our investigation. According to Kierkegaard and most of his pseudonyms, woman is characterized by devotion and humility while man is characterized by pride and self-sufficiency. Man is further characterized by reflectiveness while woman possesses an "instinctive sagacity" or intuition. Because of man's nature, he must move from the aesthetic through the ethical if he is to
reach the religious and the Christian. Woman, by contrast, "leaps" directly from the aesthetic to the religious. But there is some doubt as to whether Kierkegaard thinks she can be truly Christian. Despite the fact that he and his pseudonyms describe woman as more naturally religious than man, Kierkegaard first implies and later asserts that "the essentially Christian task requires a man."
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could not have been completed without the efforts and encouragement of a number of people. To those who served on my thesis committee I am especially indebted.

Dr. Dietmar Lage was my first reader and the recipient of many rough drafts. This thesis would have remained at an early stage of development had his questions and comments not forced me to 'go further'. For those much-needed suggestions and for all his help and encouragement, I am grateful.

Dr. J. Norman King agreed to serve as second reader on the thesis committee and showed a personal interest and willingness to help throughout. For his efforts on my behalf I am grateful.

Dr. Harry A. Nielsen of the Department of Philosophy served as the outside reader on the committee. His profound knowledge of Kierkegaard and his personal interest in the subject of this thesis enabled me to approach him with confidence. For his warm words of encouragement and his helpful suggestions along the way, I am grateful.

I am indebted to numerous other individuals for their help and support. Dr. Timothy L.L. Suttor wisely suggested the topic of this thesis. His influence upon me intellectually and spiritually can scarcely be described.

I am indebted to two women for their services as translators. Mrs. Birte Bird brought her expertise to bear on a little-known article by Kierkegaard entitled "Another Defense of the Exceptional Talents of Women". This article does not appear elsewhere in English. Mrs. Elsie Flaming used her knowledge of the German language to unravel one of the few articles written on Kierkegaard and women. For their efforts I am
grateful.

It was a great relief to learn that Mrs. Mary-Lou Byng would be typing this thesis. I had absolute confidence in her, and appreciated her friendliness and encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Don Flaming. I probably would not have embarked upon this intellectual journey had it not been for his constant love and support. To him I dedicate this work.
INTRODUCTION

Kierkegaard scholar Gregor Malantschuk has noted that "approximately a third of Kierkegaard's authorship deals in some form or another with the relation between man and woman."\(^1\) It is therefore surprising that very little research has been done in this area by Kierkegaard scholars. This thesis will focus upon Kierkegaard's assertions about the relation between the sexes, but also (or more especially) upon his assertions about women and the nature of woman.

Kierkegaard (hereafter referred to as S.K.) did not approach the subject of the nature of the sexes in any systematic way. (He does not have a consistent, systematic 'theory' of the sexes.) Nevertheless, we can approach a study of S.K.'s assertions about woman systematically. This we can do by making use of his 'theory' of the three stages or spheres of existence.

Based upon his own experience and his observations of human nature, S.K. concluded that people typically orient their lives in one of three ways. Persons inhabiting the aesthetic sphere of existence are primarily concerned about and motivated by the quest for personal pleasure. Kierkegaard was convinced that most people are basically 'aesthetic' in the sense described above, despite protestations to the contrary. In his works describing the aesthetic sphere of existence, S.K. makes use of pseudonyms and fictional characters who themselves are 'aesthetic'. In this way, he shows us what the aesthetic life looks like so that we can recognize ourselves as aesthetes.

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S.K. asserted that the aesthetic life ultimately leads to despair. The pleasure we seek is short-lived and ultimately unfulfilling. The point of despair is valuable, however, as it can prompt us to change our fundamental orientation from that of the pursuit of pleasure to something 'higher'. James Collins notes that the transition from one sphere to another is made "only by a "leap" or free decision on the part of the individual."\(^2\)

The second sphere of existence that S.K. describes is that of the ethical. The ethical person is primarily motivated by a desire to do his or her duty. He or she has discovered that there is freedom when one chooses to bring one's life into conformity with universal norms and expectations. But noble as the ethicist's aims are, she or he will inevitably experience despair in the face of failure to live up to the ideal. When this happens, a "leap" to the religious (S.K.'s third and highest sphere of existence) is possible and necessary.

It is the point of view of this author that we can approach the study of S.K.'s assertions about woman by making use of his 'theory' of the three stages of existence. Chapter One of this thesis will examine those assertions about woman and women that are made by representatives of the aesthetic mode of existence. Chapter Two will examine those statements about woman that are made by representatives of the ethical. Finally, Chapter Three will consider the religious man's conception of woman, as revealed in S.K.'s pseudonymous and signed religious works. We will also be reviewing S.K.'s assertions about woman that appear in signed, but not necessarily religious, works.

It is important to realize that the pseudonyms' assertions about woman and women do not necessarily represent the point of view of S.K. For example, Judge William's statements about woman reveal the perspective of the ethical man but they do not necessarily reflect the personal opinions of S.K. We will regard a pseudonymous assertion about woman as indicative of S.K.'s point of view if (1) it is repeated consistently in works representing all three spheres of existence, or (2) if it is echoed in his Journals and Papers.

We will be asking two questions of S.K. in this thesis. Firstly, how does a male residing in each of the three spheres of existence perceive females and conceive of the nature of woman? Secondly, how does a man residing in the aesthetic, ethical, and religious spheres typically relate to a woman or women? We will also be examining S.K.'s signed (but not necessarily religious) works for evidence of his conception of woman.
CHAPTER ONE

In S.K.'s three works depicting the aesthetic mode of existence (they are *Either/Or*, volume I; *Repetition*, and 'In Vino Veritas' in *Stages on Life's Way*), S.K. makes use of a number of pseudonymous writers, speakers, and fictional characters. James Collins notes that "most of (S.K.'s) views on aestheticism are presented through the agency of characters in the aesthetic writings who themselves report this way of life."¹ In viewing the various pseudonyms and characters that populate S.K.'s "aesthetic" works, we come to recognize the aesthetic mode of existence and ourselves as aesthetes. S.K. refers to this type of communication with his reader as "indirect communication". He does not tell readers what they are like or pontificate about the likely consequences of their way of life, but 'paints a picture' of the aesthetic life, for example, and lets readers identify themselves in it. The motto at the beginning of *Stages on Life's Way* expresses this admirably: "Such works are mirrors: when a monkey peers into them, no Apostle can be seen looking out."²

In *Either/Or I*, S.K. makes use of three male figures in his attempt to represent the aesthetic way of life. An examination of these figures will be included in this thesis, not only so that we might understand S.K.'s conception of the aesthetic mode of existence better, but for the primary purpose of understanding the aesthetic conception of women and woman. In order to understand what the aesthetes are saying about women and woman and why they are making these statements, we need to understand the source of the statements, namely, the aesthetes. In this chapter we will also be considering how and why the various aesthetes relate to women as they do. Again,
an understanding of the aesthetes themselves is necessary for this.

In *Either/Or*, Don Juan, Faust and the Seducer are important male figures. They represent or embody aspects of the aesthetic life. The discussion of Don Juan contained in *Either/Or* also includes a discussion of the "ethically determined seducer". This seducer is not to be confused with the character of Johannes the Seducer (or the Seducer) who appears later in the book. By an ethically determined seducer, the pseudonymous author of *Either/Or* means an individual who is a seducer. Johannes the Seducer is such an individual, but through the discussion of the ethically determined seducer, the seducer is discussed generally. We will begin our discussion of the male figures of *Either/Or* with a consideration of the aesthetic figures of Don Juan and the ethically determined seducer.

**Don Juan and the Ethically Determined Seducer**

The author of *Either/Or* (a pseudonym identified by S.K. as 'A') explains the origin and nature of the figure of Don Juan. Don Juan was a Medieval creation, a response to or a consequence of a Christian interpretation of human life.

The conflict between flesh and spirit which Christianity brought into the world, the Middle Ages had to regard as a subject for its consideration, and to that end, they made the contending forces individually the subject of reflection. Don Juan is, then, if I dare say so, flesh incarnate, or the inspiration of the flesh by the spirit of the flesh.

The novelty of this point of view can be seen when it is contrasted with the Greek view. In the latter, love was "essentially faithful" because "the psychical" was "always in harmony with the sensuous".
By contrast, Don Juan's love is purely sensuous and therefore faithless.
"It loves and seduces not one but all." 4

'A' explains that Don Juan does not represent a particular individual in whom sensuousness resides but represents sensuousness itself. He is the personification of sensuousness. As such he is immediate (unreflective), a nonconscious power or force. 'A' contends that Don Juan is absolutely musical as "immediate action finds its expression in music." 5 He cannot be described adequately with words precisely because he is so immediate and unreflective. Only music can indicate something of his true nature and power. Finally, it should be noted that because Don Juan is an elemental force or passion (he is not an individual with a conscience, capable of reflection), we cannot judge him under ethical categories. They simply do not apply to him.

According to the legend, Don Juan seduces 1,003 women "in Spain alone". (It will be recalled that his love is purely sensuous and therefore faithless.) According to 'A', Don Juan might have defended his behavior with the following explanation: "I am no husband who requires an unusual girl to make me happy; every girl has that which makes me happy, and therefore I take them all." 6 'A' explains elsewhere that "the object of [Don Juan's] desire is the sensuous, and that alone." 7 For this reason, "it is not the uncommon that Don Juan desires, but the common, and this [Zerlina, one of the seduced in Mozart's opera, Don Juan] has in common with every woman." 8

The pseudonymous author of Either/Or is describing in rather poetic terms the phenomenon of the 'sex object'. Psychical love is for the individual whereas "(s)ensuous love...can lump everything
together. The essential for it is woman in the abstract... Don Juan is attracted to all women, the "common" no less than the "uncommon". Indeed, what is uncommon in a woman (her particularities) Don Juan is not interested in. It is what she has in common with all other women (namely, her sexuality, her womanhood) that Don Juan desires and is attracted to.

To summarize some of the above points, the author is discussing sensuousness in and through the figure of Don Juan. This elemental force of nature does not fall under ethical categories simply because it is a force of nature and therefore immediate, nonconscious and amoral. Indeed, the author speaks of Don Juan positively rather than negatively (or admiringly rather than disapprovingly.) We have a sense of the vibrant, exuberant, irresistible nature of the force that is Don Juan.

One might ask how it is that Don Juan is able to seduce 1,003 women. 'A' explains that Don Juan does not rely upon strategies and eloquence to achieve his goal. Rather, it is desire, the energy of sensuous desire [by which Don Juan seduces]. He desires in every woman the whole of womanhood, and therein lies the sensuously idealizing power with which he at once embellishes and overcomes his prey. The reaction to this gigantic passion beautifies and develops the one desired, who flushes in enhanced beauty by its reflection. As the enthusiast's fire with seductive splendour illumines even those who stand in a casual relation to him, so Don Juan-transfigures in a far deeper sense every girl, since his relation to her is an essential one.

Don Juan is said to relate to each girl essentially. Since he relates to women sexually and only sexually, we may conclude that for the author, a woman is essentially a sexual being. To relate to her
sexually is to relate to her essentially. Because Don Juan relates to her essentially, she is "transfigure(d)" by this relation.

The transforming effect upon women of an encounter with Don Juan is described in yet another passage. The author describes a scene he once claims to have seen. A group of girls ("who were all in the dangerous age of being neither grown-up nor children") were playing at jumping over a ditch and were being helped, to the delight of all concerned, by a young man. If the author imagines the young man to be Don Juan, he concludes that the effects of this game would be rather more serious. "The young girls fling themselves into his arms, swiftly he catches them, and as swiftly sets them down on the other side of the ditch of life."\(^{11}\) Don Juan is not effected by even a single encounter with one of the 1,003 but all of the seduced are transformed by their encounter with him because he relates to them "essentially".

The figure of the Seducer is foreshadowed in the discussion of Don Juan and the ethically determined seducer. It may be assumed that the figures of Don Juan and the Seducer are one and the same, but the author assures us that they are not. There are important differences and these are discussed at some length.

To begin, Don Juan does not represent a particular individual but "is interpreted ideally, as force, as passion."\(^{12}\) He is not to be understood as a person who is both sensuous and spiritual, reflective and capable of being subjected to ethical categories. He is simply sensuousness itself. The seducers that we generally refer to are in fact individuals and as such are spiritual as well as sensuous, reflective and moral beings.
It was stated above that Don Juan's desire seduces, that it is the sheer power of the force that is Don Juan that overwhelms and seduces the "girls". The "ethically determined seducer"*, by contrast, is not able to overcome the objects of his desire in this way but must rely upon reflection and eloquence to achieve his goal. "The power of such a seducer is speech, i.e., the lie." The author notes that because the seducer does not lack consciousness and is reflective (in other words, is a person), we can and do subject him to ethical categories (judge him ethically).

'A' is at pains to convince us that Don Juan is "absolutely musical". Only music can convey to us something of the nature and reality of Don Juan. "The music represents Don Juan as power rather than as an individual." And again, "passion, unreflective and substantial, finds its expression in opera." By contrast, "The cunning of an ethically determined seducer I can clearly set forth in words, and music will try in vain to solve this problem". The seducer is dependent upon words to secure his prey, and his seduction can be described most accurately with words.

It is said of Don Juan that "the object of his desire is the sensuous, and that alone." This is not true of other seducers. They desire "something more than the merely sensuous." Specifically,

*The author ('A') uses this phrase to refer to the individual who is a seducer. This individual can be and is distinguished from Don Juan, who is not an individual. Unlike Don Juan, the "ethically determined seducer" can be subjected to ethical categories, that is, judged ethically. The character of the Seducer is an incarnation of the ethically determined seducer.
"the reflective Don Juan enjoys the deception, enjoys the cunning. The immediate enjoyment is over, and a greater enjoyment is found in contemplating the enjoyment." 18

It was stated above that 'A' does not subject Don Juan to ethical categories. He argues that we cannot judge Don Juan ethically and he does not do so. He does, however, describe Don Juan in positive terms. He is powerful, energetic, unreflective, musical, pure and unadulterated sensuousness, life itself. We have a sense of the force that is Don Juan. We also have an impression that the author rather likes and approves of this force. Don Juan appears to us as innocent and child-like in his straightforwardness and simplicity.

The ethically determined seducer is an entirely different character. In a foreshadowing of the events described in 'The Diary of the Seducer', 'A' writes:

'To deceive a young girl by a promise of marriage is indeed poor art, and because one is low enough to do this, it by no means follows that he is worthy of being called a Don Juan.' 19

In the above statement, 'A' has subjected the seducer to ethical categories already; he has judged him ethically. If we are to draw any conclusions from the author's attitude toward Don Juan and the seducer (so often one and the same figure in the popular mind), it is that the author does not at all disapprove of or reject sensuousness or 'life itself'. He describes Don Juan factually but also approvingly and appreciatively. What is it that 'A' rejects in the figure of the seducer? Obviously, it is the element of cunning and deceit that the seducer enjoys even more than the satisfaction of desire. 'A' is ready to speak approvingly of Don Juan but he is not ready to speak so of
the seducer. Indeed, he is anxious to make the distinction between the two clear, to put an end to the common misconception that the ethically determined seducer and Don Juan are one and the same figure. To those who would regard Don Juan as an ethically determined seducer, 'A' writes:

To tell a young peasant girl that she is pretty, that she has sparkling eyes, to beg her to turn round in order to observe her form, does not exhibit Don Juan as someone exceptional but simply as a lewd fellow who looks over a girl as a dealer does a horse.

There is something magnificent about Don Juan, and nothing at all "magnificent" about the "lewd fellow" in the description above.

Finally, 'A' argues that we regard Don Juan and the seducer differently by virtue of the fact that the former is an impersonal force and the latter, an individual. The ethically determined seducer falls within the category of the interesting, as Don Juan does not.

As soon as we interpret Don Juan as an individual rather than as a force, he is surrounded by obstacles and conflicts. He encounters resistance in the one he would seduce (she is not immediately overwhelmed by the desire that is Don Juan) and so he must counter this resistance by means of careful observation, reflection, and deception. The seducer also encounters obstacles to his success in the environment and must contend with circumstances, other people's resistance, and custom and tradition. The whole seduction process becomes a game that requires intelligence, calculation, and callousness to win. The ethically determined seducer finds the whole process of seduction 'interesting' and 'exciting'. We too, upon hearing of the seduction, wonder how it took place. To quote 'A', "The immediate Don Juan must seduce 1,003;
the reflective need only seduce one, and what interests us is how he did it."21 The seducer is caught up in the interesting, and so are we upon hearing of him.

Summary

In and through the figure of Don Juan, S.K. tells us that sensuousness is an important component of the aesthetic mode of existence. Far from condemning sensuousness itself, 'A' describes Don Juan (the personification of sensuousness) in positive terms. We have a sense of the exuberance and the force that surround Don Juan like an aura. The author speaks approvingly, even with respect, of 'sensuousness itself'.

S.K. shows us where sensuousness 'goes wrong' in the figure of the ethically determined seducer. The problem is not sensuousness per se but the role that sensuousness plays in the life of the person who is its devotee. In such a person, moral or religious principles "which might regulate and discipline sensuous desire"22 are, for one reason or another, absent. The result is described by James Collins:

When passion is admitted only at the sensuous level, and apart from the moral will, it inevitably turns into selfish and abstract lust. The individual loses power over himself and is made prisoner of the search for the pleasurable moment, a moment which can never be realized to complete satisfaction.23

S.K. has made use of the figure of Don Juan so that we might recognize that sensuousness is a component (perhaps the component) of the aesthetic life. The solution to the 'problem' of sensuousness is not to be found in doing away with or repressing this elemental force of nature but in integrating it with "higher principles". Judge William
(S.K.'s pseudonymous representative of the ethical sphere of existence) shows us how this is done in Chapter Two.

Faust

The figures of Don Juan and the Seducer (prefigured in the "ethically determined" or reflective seducer) are important male figures in Either/Or I. A third male figure in that volume is that of Faust. Faust, like Don Juan, was also a Medieval creation and the subject of many literary and musical works. According to the legend, he sold his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power. He is characterized by spiritual dissatisfaction and doubt.24

In Either/Or I, a discussion of Faust and Margaret (his unfortunate lover) follows discussions of Marie Beaumarchais and Clavigo (of Goethe's Clavigo) and Elvira and Don Juan. Margaret, Marie Beaumarchais and Elvira have this in common: they have all been deceived by their lovers. Thus it is obvious that S.K. made use of the three couples mentioned above to discuss his apparent deception of Regina Olsen with her. Many of S.K.'s works were, among other things, public letters to Regina but were disguised in such a way that only she would know it.

S.K. has included the figures of Don Juan, the Seducer, and Faust in one of his books depicting the aesthetic mode of existence. How is Faust a representative of the aesthetic mode of existence, and what is the relationship between him and the other male figures just mentioned? To begin, we are told that Don Juan seduced 1,003 women in Spain alone, whereas both Faust and the Seducer seduced only one woman. We have also been told that Don Juan is not to be regarded as an individual but is to be interpreted "ideally, as force, as passion".
As such he cannot be brought under ethical categories. The Seducer and Faust are both individuals and therefore can be judged ethically.

We are told that there is a definite relationship between the figures of Don Juan and Faust.

Faust is indeed a reproduction of Don Juan; but precisely because he is a reproduction, it makes him, even at that stage of his life in which one might call him a Don Juan, essentially different from the other; for to reproduce another stage does not mean merely to become this stage, but to become it with all of the elements of the preceding stage within one's self. Even if he desires the same thing as a Don Juan, he still desires it in a different manner.25

The above passage tells us that Faust desires "the same thing" as a Don Juan even if he desires it "in a different manner". We will recall that what Don Juan desires "is the sensuous, and that alone". So then Faust desires the sensuous but not exactly as Don Juan desires it. Faust's desire contains within it "all of the elements of the preceding stage within (him)self." In other words, Faust's desire, for the sensuous is particular to him and reflects his personality and background. The likeness between Faust and Don Juan consists in the fact that both desire what the author refers to as "immediacy". The difference is that Don Juan desires physical immediacy, whereas Faust desires emotional and spiritual immediacy. "What he (Faust) seeks is not merely the pleasure of the sensuous, but what he desires is the immediacy of the spirit."26

In a biographical sketch of Faust (or perhaps more accurately, an autobiographical sketch of S.K.), the author explains how and why the desire for "the immediacy of the spirit" comes about in a man like Faust.
The sensuous first becomes significant for him only after he has lost an entire preceding world, but the consciousness of this loss is not erased, it is constantly present, and he seeks therefore in the sensuous not so much enjoyment as diversion of mind...he reaches after love, not because he believes in it, but because it has a present element in which there is rest for a moment,...

Don Juan desires physical immediacy but Faust desires the immediacy of the spirit, not so much for the enjoyment to be found there but for "diversion" and "rest" from his doubt. The doubting Faust is like one who is sick or dead. He turns for relief to one who seems to possess life abundantly.

His sick soul needs what I might call a young heart's first green shoots; and with what else shall I compare an innocent feminine soul's first youth?

As the shades of the underworld, when they got hold of a living being, sucked his blood, and lived as long as this blood warmed and nourished them, so Faust seeks an immediate [unreflective] life by which he can be renewed and strengthened. And where can this be found better than in a young woman,...

Once again the connection is made between Don Juan (sensuousness personified) and Faust (one who is sensuous, though not in the sense we usually think of. We are much more accustomed to thinking of the Seducer as sensuous.)

What he [Faust] desires is the pure, rich, untroubled, immediate happiness of a woman's soul, but he desires it not spiritually, but sensually. Hence he desires in a certain sense like Don Juan, but yet quite otherwise.

There is a suggestion elsewhere that a man is not like a woman, not as happy as she is when she is happy, not as unhappy as she is when she is infinitely unhappy, because her happiness had no bounds.
But how does one (like Faust) desire the immediacy of the spirit "not spiritually, but sensually"? This is the point at which Faust resembles Don Juan. This is what makes him an inhabitant of the aesthetic sphere. The immediacy of the spirit that a woman possesses is sought after and used as one would seek out and use an object. The relief that her immediacy affords is only momentary, like the immediacy that Don Juan and the Seducer enjoy. The young woman in all of these instances is the means rather than the end. She is not the end; the pleasure, or in Faust's case, the "rest" is.

Let us look at the immediacy of the spirit that a young woman possesses more closely. The following is a description of "an innocent feminine soul's first youth" (what the Seducer will call the 'dreaming' phase of a young woman's development).

If I were to call it a blossom, I should say too little, for it is more, it is a flowering: the soundness of hope and faith and trust shoots forth and blossoms in rich variety, and dreams shade their fruitfulness.32

We are told later that "Only the fullness of innocence and childlikeness can for a moment refresh [Faust]."33

If we turn our attention to the person of Margaret, we find that she is "an ordinary little maiden, a girl one is almost tempted to call insignificant."34 She undoubtedly possesses the traits that Faust seeks in a young woman. Her natural characteristics and pattern of development have not been disturbed or altered "by what men call development."35 The author says, "What we especially love in this girl is the charming simplicity and humility of her pure soul."36 The message that we get here and elsewhere is that a young woman's natural characteristics and pattern of development are wonderful (from the point of view of the
male speakers), and that they cannot be improved upon but only harmed by "what men call development". Again, some of the aesthetes (the Seducer and even Faust) want to take advantage of woman's natural characteristics for their own selfish and ultimately destructive purposes. They want to use the young women. (The Seducer is more obviously guilty of this than Faust is.) Despite the aesthetes' use and misuse of a young woman's characteristics and pattern of development, they (the characteristics) are wonderful and valuable in themselves.

As Don Juan desires in Zerlina that which she "has in common with every woman" (namely, her womanhood), so Faust desires in Margaret that which (according to the aesthetes) she has by virtue of being a woman (namely, spiritual immediacy). Thus Faust decries 'culture' in a woman because this threatens or does away with what he needs and desires most (namely, spiritual immediacy).

Here perhaps one or another privatdocent, who is convinced of having been a Faust, since otherwise he could not possibly have become a privatdocent, will remark that Faust requires intellectual culture and breeding in the woman who shall attract him. Perhaps a large number of privatdocents would consider this an excellent remark, and their respective wives and sweethearts nod assent. However, it is completely beside the point; for Faust would desire nothing less. A so-called cultured woman would belong within the same relativity as himself, and would have no significance for him, would be simply nothing. By her crumb of culture she might perhaps tempt this old Magister of doubt to take her out on the stream, where she would soon despair. An innocent young girl, however, belongs within another relativity, and is therefore, in a certain sense, nothing over against Faust, and yet, in another sense, tremendously much, since she is immediacy. Only in this immediacy is she the goal of his desire, and therefore I said that he desires immediacy, not spiritually but sensually.37

"Development" seems to involve being educated or molded according to what 'the age demands'.

37
In the passage quoted above and in the statement about Margaret being "an ordinary little maiden", we find a contrast between Margaret and the "so-called cultured woman". There is also a contrast between the ordinary little maiden and the wives and sweethearts of the privatdocents. The wives and sweethearts are the female counterparts of the privatdocents and the judgement levelled at both groups appears to be that of stupidity. (The privatdocents had to sell their souls to get where they are, and their wives and sweethearts agree with them.) We can also link the wives and sweethearts with the "so-called" cultured women that they admire. The author's judgement of stupidity and false appearances is extended to the cultured woman as well, as her culture is but a "crumb" and is not real but only "so-called". Such women are not truly cultured but only think they are. (The privatdocents think they are too.)

The "so-called cultured woman" is contrasted with "an innocent young girl", the "ordinary little maiden". The so-called cultured woman would be too much like Faust himself and therefore would not be able to help or save him. Indeed, she would cause him more trouble as she would "tempt" him, to her own and his destruction. The innocent young girl, by contrast, is completely unlike Faust. She has that which he does not have, namely, innocence, a certain childlike faith, and immediacy. Therefore, she has the ability to save him, and he needs and wants her to do that.

The long passage quoted above is autobiographical but its significance does not end there. Regina was "an ordinary little maiden", an innocent young girl in many ways, and this it was that S.K. loved. Perhaps in this passage and in passages like this he is trying to assure
her that he did not leave her because she wasn't "cultured" enough. But
the statement about the "crumb of culture" may apply to Regina too.
Apparently she desired some form of "world historical significance".
Moreover, S.K. was very concerned about "taking her out on the stream,
where she would soon despair". It was not her crumb of culture that
attracted S.K. but rather her innocence, her childlike faith, and her
immediacy.

Certain phrases contained in the passage under discussion are echoed
elsewhere in the works depicting the aesthetic mode of existence. "An
innocent young girl...belongs within another relativity" than Faust "and
is therefore, in a certain sense, nothing over against Faust, and yet, in
another sense, tremendously much, since she is immediacy." The Seducer
writes, "In a certain sense man is more than woman, in another sense he
is infinitely less." 38

It is also important to note that the final sentence of the passage
quoted above confirms what was said about Faust, his resemblance to
Don Quixote, and his participation in the aesthetic sphere of existence.
Faust desires Margaret's "immediacy of the spirit" in much the same
way that Don Juan desires physical immediacy. Margaret in her entirety
is not the "goal" of Faust's desire but rather, her immediacy is.

We are told that a "so-called cultured woman...would have no
significance for [Faust], would be simply nothing". The word "nothing"
is used in this context even more emphatically a few pages later:

Faust readily perceives that Margaret's entire
significance depends on her innocent simplicity;
if this is taken away, then she is nothing in
herself, nothing to him. 39

The Seducer will repeat the phrase 'nothing in herself, nothing for
him' in his discussion of woman as a being for another. "Experience...teaches that it is a rare thing to find a woman who is in truth a being for another, since a great many are in general absolutely nothing, either for themselves or for others." 40 Victor Eremita, another psuedonymous representative of the aesthetic sphere of existence, blames Romanticism for the meaninglessness of woman's existence. "Owing to the romantic way in which [woman] is regarded, her life has become meaningless" and she is "nothing whatever." 41

How are we to understand the phrase 'nothing in herself, nothing for him'? Does a woman's significance depend upon or consist of her having significance for another? According to the passages quoted above, woman's life may have meaning in itself, but its meaningfulness is largely (if not solely) a function of its having meaning for another (especially man). In other words, there is a strong suggestion that woman's life is meaningful if it is meaningful for another (since the "so-called cultured woman...would have no significance for [Faust];" she "would be simply nothing.") The aesthetic authors also seem to be saying this: woman has natural characteristics and capabilities that, if destroyed or subverted by "intellectual culture and breeding", "the romantic way in which she is regarded", etc., will render her life meaningless and make her incapable of supplying what aesthetic men, at least, want and/or need.

The word 'nothing' is used with regard to woman in a slightly different context in the discussion of Faust and elsewhere. Now the focus is upon woman's devotion and her tendency to idolize the one she is in love with. (There is evidence that S.K. observed this tendency in Regina and was horrified by it.) Of Margaret and Faust, 'A' writes
The source of Faust's fascination for Margaret... is not the seductiveness of a Don Juan, but his tremendous superiority. Hence she simply cannot understand, as she herself says so lovably, what it is that Faust sees in her to love.42

The first impression she receives of him is altogether overwhelming; she becomes an absolute nothing over against him...Margaret vanishes altogether in him...unnoticeably, without the slightest reflection, he becomes her all. But just as from the beginning she is nothing, so, if I may venture to say so, she becomes less and less the more she is convinced of his almost divine superiority; she is nothing, and exists only in him.43

The author regards it as 'lovable' that Margaret should regard herself as unworthy of Faust's love. The situation becomes more critical, however, as he becomes a god to her.

She does not really understand him; as a child she clings to him, for what is doubt to him is for her irrefragable truth. But while he thus builds up her faith, he at the same time undermines it, for he becomes at last an object of faith to her, a god and not a man.44

Both Margaret and Elvira regard themselves as nothing and the men who have deceived them, as gods. (Elvira vacillates between hatred of Don Juan and continued devotion to him.) Margaret asks herself,

Can I then curse him? What am I, that I should thus dare? Can the earthen vessel presume against the potter? What was I? Nothing! the clay in his hand, a rib in his side from which he made me!45 (She continues on in similar fashion. Some of Elvira's ruminations are also in this vein.)

'A' has some explanation for Margaret's "feeling that she was absolutely nothing".

...that she was nothing is merely an expression for the fact that all the finite differences of love are negated, and is therefore the exact expression for the absolute validity of her love, wherein again lies her absolute justification. His conduct is then not merely a deception, but an absolute deception, because her love was absolute.46
Margaret prays to God about her relationship with Faust, asking at the same time God's forgiveness for her having loved a human being as she ought to love Him (i.e., absolutely).

Other aesthetic writers and speakers remark in their own way upon woman's capacity for absolute devotion. Constantine writes, "Great is the fidelity of women, especially when it is declined; unfathomable and inconceivable it is at all times." 47

The Seducer, as always, takes advantage of woman's natural capacities and tendencies for his own purposes.

So I place myself everywhere before Cordelia, she sees me constantly. It seems to her sheer attentiveness on my part; personally I know, however, that her soul is losing interest in everything else, that there is developing within her a spiritual concupiscence which sees me everywhere. 48

The Seducer is on his way to becoming a god for Cordelia.

Before concluding this section on Faust, we need to make some mention of Margaret's faith. Part of Margaret's attractiveness for Faust ("this old Magister of doubt") is her faith. But what is the nature of Margaret's faith?

We are told conflicting things about Margaret's faith. On the one hand, it is stated or implied that Margaret has genuine faith. "...Faust feels that it is only through her faith that she is the great person she is." 49

And

[Faust] is a doubter; but as such he has all the moments of the positive within himself, for otherwise he is a poor doubter. He lacks the final conclusion; herewith all the moments become negative moments. She, on the contrary, has the conclusion; she has childlikeness and innocence. 50

*The greater significance of this quotation is discussed in the section entitled 'Woman and the religious'.
On the other hand, it is suggested that Margaret's faith is childlike in the worse sense of that word. 'A' says of Margaret:

She was a little girl from the middle class, not, like Elvira, destined for a convent; but yet brought up in the fear of the Lord, although her soul was too childlike to feel the earnestness of it...51

With regard to Margaret's faith, 'A' writes, "with half a glance [Faust] surveys the whole glory she thinks she possesses, and perceives that it cannot stand against his doubt..."52

Faust is impressed by Margaret's "childlike" and immediate faith. He perceives that true faith has these characteristics. But is Margaret's faith true faith? We have seen that, according to 'A', Margaret's faith is untried and without solid foundation. "She thinks she possesses" the whole glory" but in fact she does not. In one sense, Margaret is further ahead than Faust by virtue of her "childishness and innocence". In another sense, she is 'behind' Faust because Faust perceives (though she does not) the essential weakness of her faith.

Summary

James Collins writes of Faust that he is "a rebirth of Don Juan, a second phase in the aesthetic dialectic."53 He (Collins) writes further that

(Kierkegaard) had witnessed, in his own case, that passage from confident buoyance to skepticism which he expresses imaginatively as a transition from Don Juan to Faust.54

We can see the link between Faust and Don Juan in 'A' 's assertion that
"Only in this immediacy is (Margaret) the goal of (Faust's) desire, and therefore I said that he desires immediacy, not spiritually but sensually." Both Don Juan and Faust desire immediacy "not spiritually but sensually", though in Don Juan's case, that which is desired is physical immediacy while in Faust's, "the immediacy of the spirit" is the goal of his desire.* In neither case are the individual women involved the ultimate goal of desire. They are but a means to physical and spiritual immediacy. 'A' writes that "Sensuous love...can lump everything together. The essential for it is a woman in the abstract..." Both Don Juan and Faust love or desire in Elvira, Zerlina, Margaret, etc. that which they have in common with every woman. In Elvira's and Zerlina's case, that is their sexuality or womanhood; in Margaret's, it is her spiritual immediacy. (It is being asserted that the immediacy of the spirit belongs not just to Margaret but to all women.)

*Judge William, S.K.'s pseudonymous representative of the ethical sphere of existence, writes that "to a man it applies as truly as to a woman that he ought to abide in the pure and innocent peace of immediacy." When one strives for such immediacy "not spiritually but sensually", one does not approach it in the right way. Desiring spiritual immediacy sensuously may lead one to use another human being, as Faust uses Margaret.

**(Either/Or II, p. 211)**
THE AESTHETIC MAN'S RELATION TO WOMAN

Two questions are asked in this chapter. The first is, 'How does man relate to woman when he resides in the aesthetic sphere of existence?' The second is, 'How does man regard women and conceive of the nature of woman when he resides in the aesthetic sphere?' There are many answers to the second question contained in Either/Or I, Repetition, and 'In Vino Veritas' (the three works depicting the aesthetic mode of existence.) There are few answers to the first question, and so we will start with them. An examination of the works depicting the aesthetic mode of existence will reveal that (1) all of the aesthetes denounce and avoid marriage for a variety of reasons, (2) some of the aesthetes (notably the Seducer) advocate romantic involvement with women, and (3) other aesthetes denounce and avoid such involvement with women. Let us begin with an examination of the aesthetes' denunciations of marriage.

'A' writes:

The lassies do not please me. Their beauty vanishes like a dream, and like yesterday when it is past. Their constancy — yes, their constancy! Either they are faithless, which no longer concerns me, or they are faithful. If I found such a one, she might please me because of her rarity but she would not please me in the long run; for she would either always remain constant, and then I should become a victim of my own experimental zeal, since I should have to keep up with her; or she would sometime cease to be faithful, and so I would have the same old story over again.55

A number of themes central to the aesthetic are cleverly interwoven in this one short passage. We are told that a woman's beauty is genuine but lasts but a short time. In the aesthete's unending quest for the new and the interesting, the author concludes that faithfulness
in a woman would be satisfying in just those respects. According to him, faithfulness in a woman is a rare thing but for that reason, valuable and desirable ('interesting'). Ironically, a faithful woman would cease to be novel and interesting after a while by virtue of her faithfulness. Moreover, faithfulness would be exacted from the aesthete "since (he) should have to keep up with her." In short, a woman's beauty (the thing the aesthete would like to have last) is fleeting. A woman's faithfulness (attractive and desirable because of its rarity) is ultimately confining.

It should be noted that faithlessness in a woman does not interest the above speaker. This is not only because (according to him) it is all too common, but because he himself is faithless. (We can recall from our discussion of Don Juan that sensuous love is essentially faithless. Because the aesthete is devoted to the values of sensuous love, we can conclude that he is also faithless.) Presumably the aesthete's opposite is needed to interest him.

It would seem that avoidance of commitment is an essential component of the aesthetic life. The following passage appears in a section of Either/Or I that is devoted almost exclusively to the values of "freedom" and noncommitment. Marriage poses a threat to freedom, and so must be avoided.

The essential thing is never to stick fast... One must never enter into the relation of marriage... One must always take care not to enter into any relationship in which there is a possibility of many members. For this reason friendship is dangerous, to say nothing of marriage. Husband and wife are indeed said to become one, but this is a very dark and mystic saying. When you are one of several, then you have lost your freedom; you cannot send for your travelling boots whenever you
wish, you cannot move aimlessly about in the world. If you have a wife it is difficult; if you have a wife and perhaps a child, it is troublesome; if you have a wife and children, it is impossible...Marriage brings one into fatal connection with customs and tradition, and traditions and customs are like the wind and weather, altogether incalculable.56

The following passage gives us some insight into the aesthetic view in general and toward marriage in particular.

When two beings fall in love with one another and begin to suspect that they were made for each other, it is time to have the courage to break it off; for by going on they have everything to lose and nothing to gain. This seems a paradox, and it is so for the feeling, but not for the understanding.57

This passage explains some of the other paradoxes that have appeared in passages cited thus far. We have seen that the faithless man is not interested in the faithless woman, but when he encounters and is united with a faithful woman (who is attractive at least partly because of her rarity), the new and the interesting and his freedom are threatened. "This seems a paradox, and it is so for the feeling, but not for the understanding."

It has also been stated that "Marriage brings one into fatal connection with custom and tradition, and traditions and customs are like the wind and weather, altogether incalculable." This may seem a surprising statement, for most of us probably do not regard customs and traditions as incalculable (uncertain or unpredictable). However, regarded strictly from the perspective of reflection and the understanding (with no reference to what the author refers to as "feeling"), customs and traditions may indeed seem mysterious or beyond calculation. The statement "This seems a paradox, and it is so for the feeling,
but not for the understanding" will explain many paradoxes or apparent paradoxes in the works describing the aesthetic. It tells us that the point of view or perspective here is that of pure reason or reflection divorced from any kind of feeling, imagination, intuition, or faith. This perspective, then, is a component of the aesthetic sphere as it has been conceived of and indeed experienced by S.K.

We have said that while all aesthetes denounce and avoid marriage there are some aesthetes who advocate romantic involvement with women. Again, the romantically inclined aesthete has his own reasons for avoiding a lasting commitment to a woman. One such aesthete explains:

Because a man does not marry, it does not follow that his life need be wholly deprived of the erotic element. And the erotic ought also to have infinitude; but poetic infinitude, which can just as well be limited to an hour as to a month. 58

This aesthete is prepared to forego marriage but he is not prepared to forego romantic love and "the erotic" on that account. Indeed, romantic love and the erotic rank high on the aesthete's list of priorities. He prides himself on being a champion of romantic love and the erotic. He is convinced that these are matters of particularity and 'the moment'. In the tradition of romantic love he regards each couple's relationship as individual and unique. The lovers themselves are convinced that there is no other love like theirs. The aesthete argues that to impose some sort of universal expression (like marriage) upon their particular love would damage and dampen that love. Indeed, marriage sounds the death knell for romantic love.
When people are in love, they do not follow the public highway. It is only marriage which plods along the middle of the king's highway...love prefers to blaze its own way.  

So in the interests of romantic love (the particular), the aesthete eschews marriage (the universal).

The erotic or the sexual is interwoven with romantic love and for the aesthete, marks the culmination of romantic love. The consequences of sexual love, however, remain incomprehensible to the logic bound aesthete.

The moment is everything, and in the moment, woman is everything; the consequences I do not understand. Among these consequences is the begetting of children. Now I fancy that I am a fairly consistent thinker, but if I were to think until I became crazy, I am not a man who could think this consequence. I simply do not understand it; to understand it requires a husband.

The consequences of sexual love (namely, the begetting of children) are incomprehensible from the point of view of the overly-rational aesthete. We have seen that the perspective of the aesthete is that of reason and logic divorced from "feeling", imagination, intuition, and other modes of knowledge. The final part of the passage quoted above ("I simply do not understand it; to understand it requires a husband") contains the by-now-familiar barb at the husband but also indicates that another perspective and another kind of understanding are required to make sense of sex and its consequences. Indeed, by the statement "Now I fancy that I am a fairly consistent thinker, but if I were to think until I became crazy, I am not a man who could think this consequence", we are steered away from approaching the consideration of sexual activity and its consequences armed only with logic. Here we have the example of one who is well versed in the
ways of reason and logic and he can make no progress in understanding these matters by viewing them solely with the eye of logic. We have seen another aesthete come to the same conclusion as the Seducer quoted above. He was equally baffled by these matters when he wrote, "Husband and wife are indeed said to become one, but this is a very dark and mystic saying." 61

The Seducer (who figures in both Either/Or I and 'In Vino Veritas') is the representative of those aesthetes who advocate romantic love but avoid marriage. He has his own reasons for acting as he does. In describing his philosophy, he makes reference to Hesiod's myth of the creation of woman. "Originally there was one sex, that of the man..." 62 So "gloriously endowed was he" that the gods soon became envious of him and fearful "lest he might bow unwillingly to their yoke". In order to maintain their control over him, the gods created woman. Through woman, man would be "taken captive and compelled by a power which was weaker than his own and yet stronger, strong enough to compel." Of the creation of woman, the Seducer (Hesiod) says:

Cunningly the enchantress was fashioned; the very instant she had enchanted man she transformed herself and held his captive in all the prolixities of finiteness. This is what the gods wanted. 62

At a certain stage in her life, woman is capable of enchanting man. Once the enchantment has taken place, however, woman is "transformed" and man is held captive "in all the prolixities of finiteness". To put the matter plainly, "By means of marriage...the gods conquer." 63

The Seducer explains his theory more fully:
She is a deception, but that she is only in her second phase [when she marries] and for him who is deceived. She is finiteness, but in her first phase [adolescence] she is finiteness raised to the highest power in the delusive infinity of all divine and human illusions. Not yet is the deception — but one more instant and a man is deceived.64

The seducer writes elsewhere that it is not easy to be a good judge of "the instant" and that "he who misjudges it is in for boredom for the rest of his life."65

Marriage is regarded by the Seducer as a deception and a means of entrapment. The truly lovely young woman draws a young man to herself and in an instant he is chained to finiteness. She too is changed for the worse. "With a husband she becomes temporal, and he through her."66 What is the ideal of romantic involvement with a woman, according to the Seducer? He contends that erotics or seducers "are the fortunate ones...They dine upon bait - and are never caught."67

In 'Vino Veritas' we find descriptions of aesthetic men who not only denounce and avoid marriage but denounce and avoid all romantic involvement with woman. Before discussing their ideas about the relation of man to woman, some discussion of the work itself is in order.

In 'Stages on Life's Way' there are three sections depicting the three spheres of existence. The first section, entitled 'In Vino Veritas', depicts the aesthetic mode of existence. In this and other works, S.K. was not content with describing a particular sphere but strove to depict it through the use of fictional representatives of the sphere under discussion. Thus we discover what the aesthetic
is like, for example, through the actions and utterances of the aesthetes.

The setting for 'In Vino Veritas' is a banquet or symposium in which five men take part. Each participant in the banquet is instructed by the organizer, Constantine Constantius, to make a speech. Constantine stipulates, however, that no one might speak until he had drunk so much that he could perceive the power of the wine... As for the content of the speeches, they should deal with love, or with the relationship between man and woman.

The five aesthetic speakers are: the Young Man, Constantine Constantius, Victor Eremita, the Ladies' Tailor, and Johannes the Seducer.

The Young Man (the first of the five speakers) is characterized by over-reflectiveness. Of himself he says, "my resolution [is] to reflect about everything I do." He has not had experience of romantic love but will approach the subject of love reflectively, from the vantage point of pure thought. In approaching love in this way, the Young Man argues that love appears to involve contradictions and is therefore comic. The various contradictions are pointed out in the Young Man's speech and explained singly.

In looking at a man one would surely think that he was a whole all by himself, and that indeed is what one thinks, until one sees that under the obsession of love he is only a half which runs after its other half... If people took seriously the saying that woman is only man's half, she would not be comic in love. The man, however, who has enjoyed civic prestige as a whole man becomes comic when he begins to run about and thereby betrays that he is only half a man. The more one thinks of it, the more laughable it becomes; for if the man actually is a whole, he does not become a whole in love, but he and the woman make one and a half. What wonder then that the gods laugh, and that they laugh especially at man!
The Young Man notes that man is generally regarded as "a whole", self-contained and complete in himself. Woman, by contrast, is relative and is not complete until joined to another. That is why man looks comic when he chases after his "other half" but woman does not. It is a contradiction and therefore comic that a complete being should seek another as though he needed completion.

The Young Man maintains that love involves yet another contradiction.

Now when the lovers have found one another, one would surely suppose that they were a whole, and herein should be manifested the truth that they desire to live for one another to all eternity. But, behold, instead of living for one another, they begin to live for the race, and they have no suspicion of it! - What is a consequence? In case a consequence when once it has resulted cannot be traced back into that out of which it resulted, it is a ludicrous sort of consequence, and to whom it occurred are ridiculous. Now in case those separated halves have found one another, this surely should mean perfect satisfaction and repose, and yet there ensues upon this a new existence. That the finding of one another should constitute a new existence for the lovers is comprehensible, but not that from them there dates also a new existence for another being. And yet this resulting consequence is greater than that whereof it is a consequence, and yet the conclusion such as this the lovers attained in finding one another must surely be an indication that no further consequence was thinkable.

Again we see that the consequence of children is an unthinkable one for the overly-reflective aesthete. (Recall the Seducer's difficulty with this.) From the point of view of logic it is unreasonable (and therefore unthinkable) that, just when the two halves become one, they should begin to bring forth entirely new existences.

The Young Man also alludes to the fact that romantic love is highly particular. When the two individuals are finally joined in
a celebration of their particular love, they think that they are "living for one another" but are really in the service of "the race". They are compelled by instinct to come together, as they do. Their particular love becomes secondary, in a sense, to the continuation of the race.

Not only do the consequences of sexual love involve a contradiction but sexual love itself is contradictory. The Young Man finds it odd that "the loftiest experience in one sphere" should "find its expression", not in its own sphere, "but in the polar opposite of another sphere." In other words, it is a contradiction and therefore comic that "the loftiest psychic experience [namely, romantic love] expresses itself in the most sensuous terms." The Young Man observes:

The lovers want to belong to one another, for all eternity. They give expression to this in that strange way they have of embracing one another with the intensity of the instant...

The contradiction lies in the fact that the psychic is expressed sensuously and the eternal, temporally.

We have said that the perspective of the Young Man is that of thought and thought alone. Consequently when the Young Man looks at love, he admits frankly that "I see only enigmas, I am unable to see, or rather I see nothing." From the perspective of reason, seeing only enigmas is tantamount to seeing nothing. The assertion that love appears enigmatic when viewed only with the eye of logic is a signal to us that love ought not to be viewed in this way.

Not surprisingly, the Young Man is inexperienced in love. This is because he will not commit himself to or involve himself in what
he cannot understand and explain rationally. "I will not love anybody
before I have fathomed the thought of love, and that I am not able
to do..." More simply still, he says:

When I cannot explain to myself what I am doing,
I don't want to do it; when I cannot understand
the power to whose sway I am about to commit
myself, I don't want to commit myself to its
sway."

The Young Man fears what he cannot understand rationally and therefore,
to some extent, control. He fears looking ridiculous himself for
"to be a marionette in the service of some inexplicable power is
comic." The Young Man, like the Seducer, regards woman as a
temptation, but a temptation "which is meant to entice men to be
ridiculous." Therefore the Young Man does not get as far as marriage
in his discussion of woman because he cannot get as far as romantic
love in reality or in thought. He does, however, denounce the woman
who regards love as comic and is therefore like a man.

"Such a woman would betray a suspicious amount
of antecedent knowledge and would understand me
least of all, but a woman who comprehended the
dreadfulness would have lost her loveliness and
still would not understand me, she would be
annihilated, as I by no means am as long as my
thought preserves me."

Again, it is asserted that a woman is and ought to be unlike a man.

If she is like the aesthetic man, she is denounced by him. Paradoxi-
cally, it is stated that the woman who is fundamentally like the
aesthete wouldn't understand him. Presumably, his opposite is needed
for that.

Another participant in the banquet also eschews romantic love,
to say nothing of marriage. His advice is short and direct: "seek
no swoonheart, forego love as you would shun the most dangerous
neighbourhood.\textsuperscript{81} The Ladies' Tailor's ideas on matters relating to women will be discussed at greater length below.

Victor Eremita is the last speaker at the banquet to offer a reasoned defense of the single state. His contention is that "a negative relationship to a woman may exalt a man to infinity" whereas "a positive relationship to a woman reduces man to finiteness in the greatest conceivable degree."\textsuperscript{82} Both Victor Eremita and Constantine Constantius (the pseudonymous author of Repetition) argues that woman can be man's muse if he retains a negative relationship to her. Victor begins his speech with a description of woman as muse. "The beautiful, the sublime, man's noblest exploits, are due to woman, for she inspires him, woman is the inspirer."\textsuperscript{83} In a passage with autobiographical overtones, Victor (S.K.) explains himself more fully.

(1)through woman ideality came into the world - what would man be without her. Many a man became a genius through a girl, many a man became a hero through a girl, many a man became a saint through a girl - but he didn't become a genius through the girl he got, for through her he only became Privy-Councillor; he didn't become a hero through the girl he got, for through her he only became a general; he didn't become a poet through the girl he got, for through her he only became a father; he didn't become a saint through the girl he got, for he didn't get any, and he wanted only the one he didn't get. If the ideality of woman were itself inspiring, then surely the inspiration must be the woman to whom a man is united for life. But actual existence gives a different account of it. That is to say, in a negative relationship woman makes a man idealistically productive....Or who has ever heard of anyone becoming a poet through his wife? So long as the man does not have her she is an inspiration.\textsuperscript{84}
S.K. frequently asserted that he became a poet through Regina, "the girl he didn't get". We can also recognize S.K. in the description of the candidate for sainthood. "He didn't become a saint through the girl he got, for he didn't get any, and he wanted only the one he didn't get."

It is important to note in the above passage and in the passage that follows that it is not because of woman's intrinsic qualities that man is inspired by her. Woman's ability to inspire man is dependent upon man's not "getting" her. Consequently, Víctor feels justified in arguing that "The highest thing... a woman can do for a man is to come within his range of vision at the right instant" and then disappear from view through death or unfaithfulness.

A negative relationship to a woman may exalt a man to infinity. Let that always be said in honour of woman, and it may be said without any qualification; for essentially it does not depend upon any particular quality of the woman, upon her loveliness, or upon the lasting quality of her loveliness; it depends upon the fact that she appears at the right instant, when ideality is acquiring the power of vision. It is a brief instant, and then she would do well to vanish again. For a positive relationship to woman reduces a man to finiteness in the greatest conceivable degree.85

Summary
We have seen that all of the aesthetes denounce and avoid marriage for a variety of reasons. Some aesthetes (like the Seducer) advocate romantic involvement with women while other aesthetes avoid such involvement. A discussion of the aesthetes' conceptions of women will further illuminate the aesthetic point of view.
THE AESTHETIC MAN'S CONCEPTION OF WOMAN

Thus far we have seen how man relates (or does not relate) to woman when he resides in the aesthetic sphere. We can now turn our attention to the second question that this chapter poses, namely, how does man regard women and conceive of the nature of woman when he resides in the aesthetic sphere?

The model "young girl" versus other girls and women

A reading of the three works depicting the aesthetic mode of existence will reveal that the authors communicate their ideas about women and the nature of woman indirectly as well as directly. One way in which the authors communicate these ideas indirectly is by using illustrations in which a model or ideal young woman is contrasted with a woman who possesses a trait or traits that are not deemed desirable by the aesthetes. The description of the model young girl is consistent throughout the written illustrations. She possesses the same kind of traits in every example given. The descriptions of the other girls and women are more various, and reveal a number of traits or behaviours that the aesthetes regard as undesirable. In our discussion of the aesthetes' statements about women and woman, let us begin with an examination of the aesthetes' indirect assertions.

In our discussion of Faust, we saw that there was a contrast made between Margaret ("an ordinary little maiden") and the "so-called cultured woman". Margaret possesses "immediacy" and is "tremendously much" over against Faust. The "so-called cultured woman" possesses but "a crumb of culture" and is "simply nothing".

Most of the contrasts between the model young girl and other girls
and women appear in Repetition. There the model young girl is described in numerous places. Constantine Constantius (the pseudonymous author of Repetition) tells the story of his encounter with such a young girl on his way to Copenhagen.

The modest and yet genuinely feminine dignity with which she made the request [to share his carriage to Copenhagen] was enough to make me instantly lose sight of the interesting and piquant. And yet to ride forty miles with her in one's own carriage, with coachman and valet, having her entirely in my power, is in fact far more interesting than meeting a girl in a garden. Nevertheless it is my conviction that even a more frivolous man than I would not have felt tempted. The confidence with which she entrusted herself to my keeping is a better defense than all a girl's shrewdness and cunning...She could not have been safer if she were riding with a father or a brother...A girl who craves the interesting becomes the trap in which she herself is caught."

The contrast is made in the above passage between the young woman who possesses "modesty" and "genuinely feminine dignity" and the girl who "craves the interesting" (the novel and the unique). Both the young woman of the carriage ride and the girl who craves the interesting are at least somewhat responsible for the behavior of Constantine and other aesthetes. (The traits exhibited by the young woman in her request were "enough to make [Constantine] instantly lose sight of the interesting" and the girl who "craves the interesting becomes the trap in which she herself is caught.")

Constantine's assertion that the woman of the carriage ride was safe with him echoes Faust's remark about the young girl and her faith. Ordinarily Faust finds satisfaction in depriving others "of that which they regard as sure" but he cannot do this with a young girl. "He feels himself humbled, for there is in her a natural demand that he
should protect her, in so far as she has become uncertain.  

Finally, it should be noted that the girl who is like Constantine (a devotee of the interesting) is denounced by him, while the woman who is other than or unlike him is praised. She saves both herself and Constantine from his desire for the interesting (from himself).

The girl who craves the interesting is reproached yet again in Repetition:

He who has some opportunity to observe young girls and to give ear to their conversation has likely often heard this formula: "N.N. is a good man, but he is tiresome; on the other hand, F.F. is so interesting and piquant." Whenever I hear these words in the mouth of a little maiden I always think "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Is it not pitiful that a young girl should talk in this fashion?" If a man has run wild in the interesting, who might save him, unless it were precisely a young girl? Is she not culpable if she does not do it? Either the person in question is not capable of playing the role of the interesting, and then it would be indecent to require it of him; or he can do it, and then...for a young girl ought to be prudent enough never to elicit the interesting; the girl who does that always loses, as seen from the vantage point of the idea, for the interesting does not lend itself to repetition; she who does not do it is always victorious.

In this passage it is stated explicitly that a young girl can and ought to save the man who has "run wild in the interesting". Constantine is such a man, and so he denounces the young girl who is herself caught in the interesting. In the second part of this passage it is suggested again that a young girl gets what she deserves when she "elicits the interesting". She is responsible for both her and the aesthete's behavior.

In the following illustration, the natural "young girl" is contrasted with the elegantly dressed woman who goes to the theatre in
order to be seen.

The young girl evidently was not in the theatre in order to be seen— as in fact in this theatre one is in a great measure dispensed from the sight of these disgusting feminine exhibitions...her dress was simple and plain, almost a house dress. She was not wrapped in sable and marten but was enveloped in a big cloak, and projecting from its folds her head was graciously bowed, as the topmost bell of the lily-of-the-valley is bowed above the great enveloping leaves...my eyes sought her, and the sight of her refreshed by whole being by its friendly mildness. And when in the farce itself a more pathetic mood cropped up, then I looked at her, and her nature bestowed upon me resignation to bear the pathos, for through it all she sat with perfect self-repose, with a quiet smile of childlike wonder.

The young girl is likened to a flower and in further description is described as "gracious", "a happy child", "a primitive soul of retirement". She possesses "perfect self-repose", a "quiet smile of childlike wonder", and "an innocence, and unconsciousness, which even the purest thought may embarrass." She too is able to affect the behavior of the aesthete, for the sight of her "refreshes" Constantine and "her nature bestow(s) upon [him] resignation to bear the pathos". It is suggested, however, that the young girl ought not to know her effect upon men like Constantine. "If she had felt merely a presentiment of my mute gladness, half fallen in love with her, all would have been spoilt..." The Seducer explains this with reference to Hesiod's myth:

When the gods had thus forecast her form they were fearful lest even they might not be able to express it. But what they feared most was woman herself. They did not dare to let her know how beautiful she was, fearing that she might spoil their ruse if she were cognizant of it...The gods made her perfect, but then they hid all this from her in the ignorance of innocence and hid it from her once more in the impenetrable mystery of modesty.
Part of the young girl's charm consists in the fact that she is unaware of possessing charm. If she were aware of it, she would cease to be charming. For this reason, various aesthetes denounce a young girl's reflection upon herself. ("A young girl should never try to be interesting, for the interesting always implies a reflection upon itself.")

In a description that is reminiscent of S.K.'s first meeting with Regina "several leagues from Copenhagen", Constantine recalls his observation of a young girl in a country setting. This young girl (like the other model young girls or women) is characterized by innocence, childlikeness, and immediacy (a lack of reflection).

Then the young girl comes forth, then she walks about wonderingly (which wonders most, the girl or the trees?), then she stoops down and plucks fruit from the bushes, then she skips about lightly, then she stands still in thought. What marvelous eloquence there is in all this! Then my soul at last finds rest. Happy girl! If ever a man should win thy love, would that thou mightest make him as happy by doing everything for him as thou hast made me by doing nothing for me.

Constantine's ability to "find rest" in this girl is reminiscent of Faust's ability to find rest in a young girl like Margaret. ("(A)n innocent feminine soul's first youth...beckons to his restless soul like a peaceful isle in the quiet sea.")

It is clear from S.K.'s journal entries that Regina possessed many, if not all, of the traits exhibited by the model young girl referred to in these pages and elsewhere. She was the model of the young girl whom S.K. and his pseudonyms describe as possessing childlikeness, innocence, a natural and youthful beauty, and immediacy. Given the way in which S.K. and his pseudonyms make generalizations about the
young girls they describe, we can safely assume that S.K. found these traits attractive, not only in Regina, but in all young women. Based upon S.K.'s pseudonymous and direct assertions, we can conclude that, according to S.K. women (especially young women) possess inherently certain traits. The traits are good because they are ordained by God and therefore good (beneficial) for both woman and man.

Let us focus our attention now on the descriptions of those girls and women who possess traits and exhibit behaviour that the aesthetes do not like. One of the things that the aesthetes denounce in young girls and women is 'too much' involvement with members of their own sex. The Seducer writes:

I have often wondered how it happens that there is nothing more demoralizing for a young girl than constant association with other young girls...Woman's most profound destiny is to be a companion to man, but through association with her own sex her reflection becomes centered on this association, and instead of becoming a companion, she becomes a lady's companion...If I were to imagine my ideal girl, she would always be alone in the world, and thereby be self-contained, and especially she would not have girlfriends. 

The Ladies' Tailor denounces the involvement of females with other females when he refers to fashion as "that phantom which is formed by the unnatural intercourse of feminine reflection with feminine reflection." He also makes reference to "a girl, contented and humble, who is not yet depraved by indecent intercourse with women ..." In the conversation between girls described by Constantine in footnote 88, we see the unfortunate results of a young girl's involvement with other young girls.

We have already heard Constantine's denunciation of the girl who "craves the interesting". The Seducer echoes this sentiment
when he warns that

(a) young girl who wishes to please by being interesting usually succeeds only in pleasing herself... It may indeed happen that an interesting girl is also pleasing, but just as she herself has renounced her femininity, so also the men she pleases are usually the effeminate ones. 97

The aesthetes' attitudes toward girls or women who do not fit the description of the model young girl may be explained in part by Constantine. He writes:

I can forgive a girl everything, but I can never forgive her for mistaking the task of love. When a girl's love is not sacrificial, she is no woman but a masculine figure, and so I shall always take delight in suffering her to fall a victim to revenge or to laughter. 98

Constantine has been maintaining that a woman possesses certain traits by virtue of being a woman. If she fails to recognize, accept, and utilize these traits, she fails to be a woman. We have seen that Constantine and other aesthetes are concerned that a woman may not do what they need and want her to do (that is, be their opposite, supply their lack, save them from the interesting). In an effort to prevent this, Constantine subjects the offending woman "to revenge or to laughter".

One final contrast remains to be discussed. The aesthetes (or at least those who speak of it) are opposed to emancipation. Constantine expresses his opinion on the subject:

In this life one must take woman as she is. What this is will soon appear, for she too is not satisfied with the aesthetic, she 'goes further', she would be emancipated - that she is man enough to say. Let that come to pass, and the jest will be beyond all bounds. 99

Apparently it is not humourous that man is not satisfied with the
aesthetic sphere. His 'going further' is not humourous, but woman's is. Woman's efforts at emancipation are humourous precisely because they are so unnatural. They represent a refusal on her part to recognize and accept her innate abilities and shortcomings. In her attempt to be other than she is, she will look ridiculous.

Students of S.K. will recognize and understand the phrase 'go further'. The woman who would be other than (what S.K. and his pseudonyms understand as) a woman is like the Hegelian who would "go further" than faith. By this phrase we are given some clue as to S.K.'s opinion of emancipation.

A "young girl's" development

The pseudonymous authors' direct assertions about woman and women are many and various. We can approach an examination of these assertions in two ways. Since one pseudonymous author has a theory of female moral development, we can examine his statements about woman as she progresses through what he regards as the stages of her life. When this approach has been exhausted, we can then consider the aesthetes' statements about women and the nature of woman thematically.

Johannes the Seducer has a theory of female psychological, emotional and moral development. He maintains that female moral development differs from male moral development in marked ways.
A young girl does not develop in the sense that a boy does; she does not grow, she is born. A boy begins to develop at once, and takes a long time for the process; a young girl takes a long time in being born, and is born full-grown. Therein lies her infinite richness; at the moment she is born she is full-grown, but this moment of birth comes late. Hence she is twice born, the second time when she marries, or, rather, at this moment she ceases being born, at that moment she is born. It is not only Minerva who sprang full-grown from the head of Jupiter, not only Venus who rose in all her beauty from the depths of the sea; every young girl is like this if her womanliness has not been destroyed by what men call development. She does not awaken by degrees, but all at once; meantime she dreams all the longer, provided that people are not so inconsiderate as to arouse her too early. But her dream has infinite richness.

First, it is necessary to determine what Johannes means, exactly, by a "young girl". How old is the young girl he is describing here? A careful reading of Either/Or I reveals that eight females between the ages of sixteen and twenty are described as "young girls". The reader may have noticed that the pseudonymous authors often refer to 'young girls' rather than 'young women'. The explanation for this may lie in the fact that Regina was the model for many of these assertions about young girls. She was fourteen when she and S.K. met and eighteen at the time of their engagement. Nine years her senior, he often declared that he was immeasurably older than she was. By virtue of his intellectual and spiritual maturity, his seriousness and greater experience of life, he likened himself to an old man in comparison to her. To state it another way, Regina seemed especially young to a man like Kierkegaard.

The Seducer maintains that there are two phases in a young woman's moral development. The first phase (that of "being born") takes a "long time" and is characterized by dreaming. The second phase begins
"all at once" when a young woman marries or makes a love commitment. Johannes regards this pattern of development as natural and good, for he decries the effects of "what men call development" and the "inconsiderateness" of others. The pattern (and the dreaming "girl") ought not to be interfered with. Let us consider the two phases of female moral development as conceived of and described by the Seducer in greater detail.

Johannes argues that "(Woman) awakens first at the touch of love; before that time she is a dream." Man not only dreams about her but, more importantly, she dreams while in this phase. Johannes describes a young woman's 'dream life' in a number of places.

She was alone, preoccupied, manifestly not with herself but with her thoughts. She was not thinking, but the quiet play of her thoughts wove a picture of longing before her soul... She was preoccupied not with herself, but in herself, and this preoccupation afforded infinite rest and peace to her soul. Thus is a young girl rich;

Several things are of note in the above passages. It is stated explicitly that the young girl is not thinking. This same point is made indirectly in another description of this phase of a young girl's life. (The speaker is the Seducer and he is referring to the next victim of his designs, Cordelia.)

The more I see of her the more I am convinced that she is a very isolated figure. A man ought never to be so, not even a young man; for since his development essentially depends upon reflection, he must therefore be in touch with others. Man's development "depends upon reflection" but woman's does not and so she need not be involved with others the way he is.
Some stress has been placed upon the solitariness of the young girl during this phase of her life. The girl is first described as "alone" and then as "a very isolated figure". We can recall what Johannes says of the young girl in the discussion of the model young girl. "If I were to imagine my ideal girl, she would always be alone in the world, and thereby be self-contained,..."

The Seducer has made a point of telling us that the young girl is preoccupied in herself rather than with herself. The girl who is preoccupied with herself is involved in what the aesthetes have referred to as "self-reflection". She is on the way to becoming self-conscious, artificial, vain, and coquettish. This is the very opposite of the innocence, artlessness, and modesty that the model young girl possesses. According to the Seducer's version of Hesiod's myth, woman is perfect but she ought not to know it. Self-reflection would threaten woman's modesty (which is an element of her beauty).

Finally, it should be noted that the image that is being evoked in the above two passages is one of "quiet", "rest and peace". "Thus is a young girl rich; to encompass this richness makes one rich." This same image of rest and peace is evoked in yet another reference to this stage of a young woman's life in the discussion of Faust and Margaret. Following a description of "an innocent feminine soul's first youth", the-author writes, "Thus it affects a Faust, it beckons to his restless soul like a peaceful isle in the quiet sea. That it is transient no one knows better than Faust;..." It would seem that an aura of peace surrounds the dreaming girl. The aesthete is anxious to appropriate this peacefulness and so denounces attempts to alter this natural state "by what men call development."
We may assume that, to some extent, the aesthetes praise and seek to preserve in woman certain traits that they regard as valuable in themselves. Johannes gives us some clues, however, as to ulterior motives that he possesses with regard to woman's natural abilities and pattern of development. It would seem that he decries "what men call development" and the "inconsiderateness" of others at least partly because they interfere with his making use of a young girl's natural characteristics and pattern of development for his own enjoyment.

Her beauty was a gift of Nature. I give thee thanks, O wonderful Nature! Like a mother hast thou watched over her. Accept my gratitude for thy care. Unsophisticated was she. I thank you, you human beings, to whom she was indebted for this. Her development was my handiwork - soon I shall enjoy my reward.107

We are given another clue as to the Seducer's interest in preserving a young girl as she is. He tells the other participants in the banquet, "you are unfortunate lovers, and hence you want to remodel woman." God forbid it. I like her as she is, exactly as she is."108 The Seducer observes that woman possesses certain characteristics. His intention is to exploit these characteristics for his own advantage.

According to the Seducer, woman is "twice born, the second time when she marries". Her marriage (or at least her commitment to another in a love relationship) marks the end of the first phase of her development and the beginning of the second.

Despite their own aversion to marriage, the aesthetes are convinced that woman ought to marry. 'A' writes that "As a bride, woman achieves her destiny..."109 The Seducer repeats this:

Woman's most profound destiny is to be a companion to man...Man is called master, but woman is not called maid-servant or the like; no, the category of the essential is usually she is companion, not "companionship".110
The word 'master' indicates that man is self-contained or absolute. Woman, by contrast, is essentially relative. This is a theme that is discussed at some length by the aesthetic writers and speakers.

**Man is self-contained; woman is relative**

Several of the aesthetic writers and speakers give voice to the opinion that man is by nature absolute, self-contained, and complete in himself while woman is by nature a relative being (not absolute or independent but dependent upon relationships to others for her being. According to this theory, she is especially dependent upon her relationship to man for her being. Or, to put it another way, she has her being in this relationship.) The various writers and speakers make this claim and defend it in a variety of ways.

Constantine states the case clearly:

> It is man's part to be absolute, to act absolutely, to give expression to the absolute; woman has her being in relationships.\[1]\[1\]

Constantine believes that this is a natural and good state of affairs, and warns against any corruption of it.

> It follows, however, as a matter of course that man must know how to keep himself under the category of the absolute; for otherwise nothing comes of it, that is to say, there comes of it something only too universal, that man and woman tally with one another, he as a half-man and she as a half-woman.\[1]\[2\]

Constantine defends his contention that man is absolute and woman relative by asking us to imagine the opposite of what he asserts. "Let one regard her [woman] as a fixed quantity and make a relative quantity of oneself [man]." He assures us that "(t)he entertainment is phlegmless."
Just because [woman] is unable to set limits to herself, she shows off to the best advantage, seriously speaking, when one contradicts her a bit... It requires no proof that a woman can talk, i.e., verba facere. Unfortunately, she does not possess sufficient power of reflection to insure her against self-contradiction for any considerable time, say a week at the maximum, if the male does help her regulatively by contradicting her...\footnote{113}

If the two sexes regard man as a relative quantity and woman as a fixed quantity, the result is comical. Ordinarily, a woman requires contradicting to prompt her into reflection. If this is not forthcoming from a man, a woman will sooner or later contradict herself and confusion will reign.

If one had not done what she told one to do, the confusion would have passed unnoticed, for she forgets again as promptly as she is prompt to talk. But since her adorer has done everything she wanted and been entirely at her service, the confusion is palpable.\footnote{114}

The Ladies' Tailor has his own proof for the claim under discussion. He plays a game with the women who frequent his salon. He conspires to make them look ridiculous by, in part, treating them as "queens" or absolutes. He then plays the part of the fawning and obsequious male who is dependent upon a relationship with them for his significance. The game, he tells us, is successful. The women look ridiculous when they pretend to be that which they are not (namely, absolutes).}

Before leaving the more general discussion of man's absoluteness and woman's relativity to focus upon woman as relational being, we can refer to the Young Man's defense of the claim under discussion. In telling us why he eschews romantic involvement of any kind, the Young Man claims that man looks ridiculous when he falls in love. Man is regarded by himself and others as "a whole, all by himself".
He therefore looks ridiculous when he runs after another as though he needed completion (were not a whole). Woman, by contrast, does not look ridiculous when in love. This is because she is truly "man's half".

Several of the aesthetic writers and speakers assert or imply that love is woman's special domain. 'A' writes:

But what can with greater truth be called woman's entire life than her love?...Unhappy love is indeed of itself one of the most profound sorrows a woman can experience..."115

Relationships play a more central role in woman's life than in man's and so "unhappy love" is indeed a tragedy for woman.

We have seen that Constantine regards feminine love as characteristically self-sacrificing. ("I can forgive a girl everything but I can never forgive her for mistaking the task of love. When a girl's love is not sacrificial, she is no woman but a masculine figure..."

It is thought to be woman's 'task' and ability to love sacrifically.

Another aesthete tells us something of woman's love in an indirect way.

(T)hough otherwise I always thank the gods that I was born a man and not a woman, still Mozart's music has taught me that it is beautiful and refreshing and rich to love like a woman.116

How does a woman love, according to the author in question? If he could answer us he might say: whole-heartedly, unreservedly, faithfully, and instinctively. Another aesthetic writer sees a contrast between "womanly devotion and humility, and...manly pride and self-sufficiency." This is another way of saying that woman is dependent upon relationships in an essential way while man is not.
The Seducer has the most systematic discussion of the relative nature of woman. He contends that woman is "a being for another". "I shall attempt to think of woman in terms of her category. Under what category must she be conceived? Under the category of being for another." He explains further that

(w)oman shares this category with Nature, and, in general, with everything feminine. Nature as a whole exists only for another; not in the teleological sense, so that one part of Nature exists for another part, but so that the whole of Nature is for an Other - for the Spirit.117

Woman is a being for another and that other is man, who is a being for himself. Thus we can say that man is but we cannot say that woman is in the same sense. ("(T)he being which is for another is not,...whoever thinks illogically will imagine that whatever is a being for another is,..."118. Johannes explains further:

This being of woman (for the word existence is too rich in meaning, since woman does not participate in and through herself 58) is rightly described as charm, an expression which suggests plant life; she is a flower,...119

footnote 58 - S.K. is playing on the original meaning of ex-sistō, "appear, come forth". Woman does not come forth of herself but of man, from whose rib she was formed.

Just as Eve was dependent upon Adam for her being, so woman is dependent upon others and her relationship to others for her being. She is derived from man and so she is not complete unless she has a relationship to him.

It was stated above that the Seducer takes advantage of a young girl's natural characteristics and pattern of development and therefore does not want them interfered with or altered by others. This applies
to her nature as a being for another as well. He writes, "But what enjoyment can there be in love if there is not the most absolute self-surrender, at least on one side?" He is counting upon her devotional nature for his enjoyment.

In the chapters that follow, it will be shown that man's absoluteness and woman's relativity are assumed and asserted by representatives of the ethical and religious spheres of existence and by S.K. himself.

**Woman and the religious**

In books and journal entries dealing with the ethical and religious spheres of existence, there are many statements made about woman and the religious. In the words depicting the aesthetic sphere of existence, there is only one discussion of the subject by one of the speakers. That discussion is important, however, and is a precursor of the discussions that will follow in the ethical and religious works. In this and other discussions of woman and the religious, it will be said that woman "leaps" directly from the aesthetic to the religious. Man, by contrast, must make his way to the religious through the intermediary of the ethical (the second of S.K.'s three spheres of existence).

Johannes the Seducer says of Cordelia:

She must discover the infinite, experience what it is that lies nearest to man. This must she discover, not by the way of thought, which for her is the wrong way, but in imagination, which is the real mode of communication between her and men; for what is but a part with man, is the whole with woman. Not by the toilsome labour of thought should she work toward the infinite, for woman is not born for intellectual work, but she should grasp it
through imagination and the easy way of the heart. The infinite is just as naturally a part of a young girl as is the conception she holds that all love must be happy. A young girl has above all, wherever she turns, the infinite about her, and the transition is a leap, but, it is well to note, a feminine not a masculine leap. When a man would leap, he first takes a run, makes lengthy preparations, measures the distance with his eye, takes several running starts, becomes afraid, and turns back again. At last he jumps and falls in. A young girl leaps in a different fashion. In mountainous regions one often sees twin peaks towering above the mountain range. A yawning chasm separates them, terrible to gaze down into. No man would dare this leap. A young girl, however, so the mountain folk say, did venture it, and for this reason it is called the Maiden’s Leap. I can readily believe it, as I believe everything remarkable about a young girl... And yet, such a leap is for a young girl only a hop, while a man’s leap always becomes ridiculous, because however far he straddles, his exertion at once becomes nothing, compared with the distance between the peaks, and yet it acts as a sort of measuring stick.

But who could be so foolish as to imagine a young girl’s taking a running start? One can indeed imagine her running; but then the running is itself a game, a pleasure, an unfolding of charm, whereas the conception of a preliminary run separates those things which belong together in a woman. A run, in fact, has its own dialectic, which is contrary to woman’s nature. And now the leap; who here dares again to be so ungracious as to separate what there belongs together? Her leap is a floating through the air. And when she has reached the other side, she stands there, not exhausted by the exertion, but more beautiful than ever, instinct with feeling, she wafts a kiss over to us, who stand on this side. Young, new-born like a flower which has shot up from the root of the mountain, she swings out over the abyss so that it almost turns us dizzy.

Several things are of note in the above passage. It is said that both man and woman can and ought to make the transition to the infinite. Man is to do this "by the toilsome labour of thought" whereas woman (who "is not born for intellectual work") ought to
"grasp" the infinite "through imagination and the easy way of the heart." The Seducer expresses this another way by saying that, while the transition to the infinite is a "leap" for both woman and man, there is a feminine and a masculine leap. The "abyss" is the same for both man and woman (the same "yawning chasm" must be leapt over) but the woman's leap gives one the impression that it is easy to accomplish, while the man's always becomes ridiculous, because however far he straddles, his exertion at once becomes nothing, compared with the distance between the peaks, and yet it acts as a sort of measuring stick.

The feminine leap consists of one graceful and apparently effortless movement while the masculine leap consists of a series of steps. This idea is echoed in the discussion of Faust.

He [Faust] is a doubter; but as such has all the moments of the positive within himself, for otherwise he is a poor doubter. He lacks the final conclusion; herewith all the moments become negative moments. She, on the contrary, has the conclusion; she has childlikeness and innocence.

This passage is consistent with the long passage quoted above. Faust's movement to faith consists of a series of steps. He has made many of these steps or is capable of making them, but has gone no further. "He lacks the conclusion." Margaret, by contrast, "has the conclusion", and has apparently bypassed the steps that Faust is involved in.

We have said that representatives of the ethical and religious spheres will argue that the ethical is not a task for woman. Her transition to the religious consists of a leap from the aesthetic, whereas man must pass through the ethical if he is to reach the religious. These ideas were alluded to in the long passage quoted
above. Another formulation of the idea that the ethical is not a task for woman is found in Constantine's speech in 'In Vino Veritas'. He contends that ethical categories do not apply to woman. She (like Don Juan) cannot be subjected to them. Constantine writes:

One aims at her with the ethical category, one shuts one's eyes, one thinks of the absolute in the way of requirements, one thinks the thought of man, one opens one's eyes, one fixes one's glance upon the demure little miss upon whom one is experimenting to see if she meets the specifications; one becomes uneasy and says to oneself, 'Ah, surely this is jest.' For the jest consists in applying the category, in subsuming her under it, because with her the serious never can become serious. 123

He explains further:

There is nothing more dreadful for a man than to catch himself in the act of twaddling...for to have been a knave is a thing one can repent of, not having meant one word of all one said one can regret, but to have meant all one said, and so, it turned out to be twaddle - even repentence turns away from that in disgust. It is different with woman. She has a prescriptive right to be transformed in less than twenty-four hours into the most innocent and pardonable galimatias; far be it from her candid soul to want to deceive anyone, she meant all she said, now she says the contrary, but with the same lovable frankness, for she is ready to die for the contrary....If in this fashion a man fizzes out in nonsense, I despise him; if he dupes me by his shrewdness, I have merely to apply to him the ethical category and the danger is very insignificant; if the thing is carried too far - well, then I put a bullet through his head. But to challenge a woman to a duel - what is that? Who does not know? It is jest - as when Xerxes gave orders to have the sea scourged. 124

We will recall that Don Juan cannot be subjected to ethical categories because he is the personification of a force of nature. He is not a human being possessing reason, moral freedom, and other distinctly human attributes. Why is it that woman cannot be subjected
to ethical categories? According to Constantine, it is because "with her the serious never can be serious." He explains more fully:

Fair is [woman] and lovely when regarded aesthetically - that no one can deny...regard her ethically, and the thing becomes a jest. Even Plato and Aristotle 49 take it that woman is an incomplete form, that is, an irrational quantity, which perhaps sometime in a better-existence might be brought back to male form.125

footnote 49 - Aristotle ascribes to woman "incomplete reflection".

It would seem that woman's lack of reflection or serious thought precludes her involvement in the ethical sphere. This is a conclusion that will be justified more fully in our discussion of the ethical in Chapter Two. Let us turn our attention now to the aesthetes' comments about woman's lack of reflection. Woman's reflectiveness (or lack thereof) will be discussed in works depicting all three spheres of existence. It will also be a subject for comment in S.K.'s Journals.

In all three works depicting the aesthetic sphere of existence, woman's power of reflection is regarded as not as great as that of man's. Some of the aesthetic statements are matter-of-fact; others are derisive. We are told two things with regard to woman's reflection: (1) woman is not as reflective as man, and (2) she ought not to be as reflective as man. This is suggested by 'A' in his discussion of Antigone: "...she does not even know the idea which inspires her, for that would be unwomanly..."126 The Seducer demonstrates the two points made above in a statement about Cordelia.

Still, how beautiful she is...Her head is a perfect oval, and she bends it a little forward, which makes her forehead seem higher, as it rises pure and proud, with no external evidence of intellectual faculties.127
It is intimated that a woman does not have and ought not have "intellectual faculties". (This is not meant literally. The Seducer surely knows that women have intellectual faculties.) He means by this statement that woman is not characterized by intellectuality and that this is a component of her beauty. The Seducer speaks more directly on the subject of woman's reflection later in his Diary.

Woman chooses, it is true, but if this choice is thought of as the result of a long deliberation, then this choice is unfeminine. Woman is, namely, substance, man is reflection. She does not therefore choose independently; man sues, she chooses. 128

In 'In Vino Veritas', we find more derisive comments about women generally. The Young Man speaks matter-of-factly about woman's unreflectiveness ("For I comprehend very well that a woman cannot be so thoroughly reflective,...") 129 The Ladies' Tailor is characteristically caustic.

You think perhaps it is only at particular instants that she wishes to be in the fashion; far from it, that is what she wants all the time, and that is her one and only thought. For woman has spirit, but it is about as well employed as the fortune of the Prudigal Son; and woman possesses reflection in an indescribably high degree, for there is nothing so sacred but in the same breath she finds it commensurable with finery is fashion. 130

There is another stream of comments in the aesthetes' remarks about woman and reflection. This 'stream' intimates that woman is incomprehensible or that her way of thinking differs from the speaker's so greatly that he is not able to follow it. 'A' writes in a discussion of Elvira:

For a woman's dialectic [logic] is remarkable, and only he who has had opportunity to observe, only he can imitate it, whereas even the greatest dialectician who ever lived could speculate himself mad trying to produce it. 131
The Ladies' Tailor repeats this idea and makes more disparaging remarks about woman's reflection and the use to which she puts it. "I am a madman, and one must be mad in order to understand her, and if one was not mad before, he must be so when he has understood her."  

It requires such prodigious reflection to keep track of a woman's reflection that only a man who sacrifices himself to that task is sufficient for it, and then only in case he has a native gift ..., a woman ought always to swear by fashion, and then her oath would have some force, for fashion after all is the one thing she is able to think together with and in everything else.

The aesthetes' assertions that man must be mad in order to understand woman and her logic amounts to the claim that woman's logic or way of thinking differs from man's so markedly that it appears incomprehensible when viewed from the vantage point of male logic.

Constantine also makes the claim that woman appears incomprehensible to him. He also argues that it is woman's lack of "logical consistency" that precludes her involvement in the ethical sphere of existence.

So far as the other sex is concerned, I have my own opinion, or rather: I have none at all, since I have very seldom seen a girl whose life could be construed in terms of a category. Generally a woman lacks the logical consistency which is necessary if one is to hold a human being in admiration or in contempt.

To hold a person in admiration or contempt is to subject that person to ethical categories. The person who meets the ethical requirements is held in admiration; the person who fails to do so is held in contempt.

It was argued above that because the aesthetes' perspectives were so overwhelmingly and exclusively rational, many things appeared incomprehensible or ridiculous to them. Among these 'things' were
sexual love and its consequences and romantic love in general. Now we see that woman's way of thinking and sometimes woman in her entirety are incomprehensible when viewed only with the eye of logic. Through the aesthetes' assertions that these and other phenomena are incomprehensible, we are warned away from approaching them as they do (armed only with reason and logic). We are told (indirectly) that other modes of knowledge may be necessary to make sense of these and other phenomena. "Other modes of knowledge" may include intuition, imagination and faith. In demonstrating through his pseudonyms that reason and logic are limited, S.K. opens the way for other modes of knowledge.
Footnotes


4. Either/Or, I 93.
5. Either/Or, I 119.
7. Either/Or, I 97.
8. Either/Or, I 96.
12. Either/Or, I 111.
15. Either/Or, I 117.
16. Either/Or, I 100.
17. Either/Or, I 98.

Faust

25. Either/Or, I 204.
27. Either/Or, I 204.
29. Either/Or, I 205.
30. Either/Or, I 205.
31. Either/Or, I 201.
32. Either/Or, I 205.
33. Either/Or, I 205.
34. Either/Or, I 206.
35. Either/Or, I 327.
36. Either/Or, I 203.
38. Either/Or, I 426.
40. Either/Or, I 424.
41. Stages, p. 68.
42. Either/Or, I 208.
44. Either/Or, I 208.


49. Either/Or, I 207.

50. Either/Or, I 207.

51. Either/Or, I 203.

52. Either/Or, I 208.


54. Collins, p. 56.

The aesthetic man and marriage

55. Either/Or, I 29.


57. Either/Or, I 294.

58. Either/Or, I 294.

59. Either/Or, I 400.

60. Either/Or, I 428.

61. Either/Or, I 293.


63. Stages, p. 86.

64. Stages, p. 85.

65. Either/Or, I 427.


67. Stages, p. 83.

The aesthetic men of 'In Vino Veritas'

68. Stages, p. 45.

69. Stages, p. 52.
70. Stages, pp. 56-7.
71. Stages, p. 57.
72. Stages, p. 55.
73. Stages, p. 53.
74. Stages, p. 56.
75. Stages, pp. 55-6.
76. Stages, p. 52.
77. Stages, p. 54.
78. Stages, p. 54.
80. Stages, pp. 59-60.
81. Stages, p. 80.
82. Stages, p. 73.
83. Stages, p. 70.
84. Stages, pp. 70-1.
85. Stages, p. 73.

The model "young girl" versus other girls and women
86. Repetition, pp. 32-3.
87. Either/Or, I 207.
88. Repetition, pp. 30-1.
89. Repetition, pp. 64-6.
90. Stages, p. 86.
91. Either/Or, I 335.
92. Repetition, p. 67.
93. Either/Or, I 205.
94. Either/Or, I 335-6.
95. Stages, p. 79.
96. Stages, p. 80.
97. Either/Or, I 335.
98. Repetition, pp. 24-5.

A "young girl's" development

100. Either/Or, I 327.
101. Either/Or, I 416.
102. Either/Or, I 425.
103. Either/Or, I 327.
104. Either/Or, I 327-8.
105. Either/Or, I 335.
106. Either/Or, I 205.
108. Stages, p. 81.
110. Either/Or, I 335.

Man is self-contained; woman is relative

111. Stages, p. 61.
112. Stages, p. 61.
114. Stages, p. 64.
115. Either/Or, I 170.
117. Either/Or, I 424-5.
119. Either/Or, I 428.
120. Either/Or, I 331.

Woman and the religious
121. Either/Or, I 386-7.
122. Either/Or, I 207.
123. Stages, p. 61.
125. Stages, p. 67.
126. Either/Or, I 156.
128. Either/Or, I 426.
130. Stages, p. 77.
131. Either/Or, I 197.
132. Stages, p. 76.
133. Stages, p. 79.
134. Repetition, p. 141.
CHAPTER TWO

As Chapter One dealt with the first of S.K.'s three spheres of existence (namely, the aesthetic), so Chapter Two deals with the second (the ethical). S.K. discusses the ethical in at least four pseudonymous works but for our purposes, two of these works are of especial value. Either/Or volume II and 'Observations Upon Marriage' (the second part of Stages on Life's Way) will be the focus of our attention. In these works as in those representing the aesthetic sphere of existence, S.K. strove to depict rather than simply describe the sphere under discussion. To this end, he made use of a pseudonym and various other minor characters. The ethical represents an orientation to life that people can and do embrace. S.K. shows us what the ethical life looks like so that we might recognize ourselves and/or others as ethicists. In the course of our discussion of woman, women, and the ethical man, many of the salient features of the ethical will be brought to light.

In Chapter One we asked and answered two questions: (1) How does man relate to woman when he resides in the aesthetic sphere of existence? and (2) how does man regard women and conceive of the nature of woman when he resides in the aesthetic? We began our investigation with the first question (the question of the aesthetic man's relation to woman) because the answer to it was simple rather than complex. (The answer to the second question was a many-faceted one.) In this Chapter, we need to ask and answer the above two questions substituting 'the ethical' for 'the aesthetic'. (How does man relate to and regard woman when he resides in the ethical sphere of existence?) In keeping with our format in Chapter One, we will consider the ethical man's relation to woman
In Chapter Two, our task is significantly easier than it was in Chapter One. In the last chapter we saw that there were at least six writers and speakers describing for us the aesthetic sphere of existence. Thus there were a variety of viewpoints and, even if a course of action were agreed upon (the aesthetic man would not marry), there were a variety of reasons given for this.

In Chapter Two, there is but one perspective and one speaker. Judge William or 'B' is S.K.'s representative of the ethical sphere of existence. He develops and defends the point of view of the ethical by, in part, responding to statements made in *Either/Or* I and 'In Vino Veritas'. To begin our discussion of woman and the ethical, let us consider how a man residing in the ethical sphere of existence (Judge William) relates to women, and why.

THE ETHICAL MAN'S RELATION TO WOMAN

The Judge thinks it both natural and right that man and woman marry:

> Just because marriage is the central thing, woman must be viewed in relation to that, as man also ought to be, and all talk and reflection about each sex for itself is confused and profane, for what God has joined together, what existence has designed the one for the other, thought also should think together. When a man takes it into his head to keep them apart, it doubtless seems to him to recoil upon woman, whereas in fact he himself becomes quite as ludicrous, a male who with a superior air would ignore a relationship to which existence has bound him: no less than woman.

The Judge is unequivocal in his praise of marriage. According to him "it clearly shows its superiority, not only over the single life but over every merely erotic union."² Marriage is "the only adequate form
love can take." Judge William defends and elaborates upon these positions by, in part, responding to statements made by 'A' and other aesthetes.

It is the aesthetes' conviction that marriage sounds the death knell for romantic love and the erotic. Indeed, even 'good Christians' may regard romantic love, the erotic, and marriage as not entirely compatible with one another. Judge William endeavours to correct this misconception by arguing that in marriage "the sensuous is by no means renounced but is ennobled." Perhaps it is to 'Christians', in particular that he directs the following: "And how beautiful it is that the God who is spirit loves also the love which is earthly."

...how beautiful it would be if the Christian might venture to call his God the God of love, in such a way as to think therewith of that unspeakably blissful feeling, the eternal force in the world - earthly love.

It is difficult to say who would find the above statements more surprising - the aesthetic figures of Chapter One or the pious 'Christians' who populated the Denmark of S.K.'s time. The Judge is contending that the erotic is not the exclusive property of the aesthetic and that, indeed, it only reaches its fulfillment in the ethical (i.e., in marriage). To those Christians who would remind Judge William of the battle between the spirit and the flesh described in the New Testament, the Judge writes:

Yes, certainly, the God of the Christians is spirit, and Christianity is spirit, and discord is posited between flesh and spirit; but 'the flesh' is not sensuousness, it is selfishness, and in this sense even the intellectual which you call "spiritual" may be sensual; for example, if a man takes in vain his intellectual gifts he is carnal.
This interpretation of "sensuality" vindicates what was said in Chapter One about it. We will recall that 'A' spoke rather favourably of Don Juan (sensuousness personified) but that he did not speak so of the "ethically determined seducer". In the popular mind, sensuousness is often regarded as bad in itself and so the seducer who partakes of the sensuous liberally is regarded as bad on that account. 'A' contends that the force that is Don Juan cannot be judged ethically because it is a force rather than a human being. Sensuousness per se does not account for 'A' s censure of the seducer. Rather, we (and 'A') judge the seducer to be wrong or bad because of the way in which he partakes of the sensuous. He uses cunning and deceit to satisfy his desire for the sensuous and treats another person as a means to that end rather than as an end in herself. The word "selfish" (used in the passage quoted above) can indeed be used to describe the seducer.

The Judge continues with his discussion of the sensuous and its place in Christianity. (He is directing his remarks to 'A'.)

...it by no means follows that the sensuous is abolished by Christianity. First love has in it the factor of beauty, and the joy and fullness which is found in the sensuous when it is innocent can well be admitted into Christianity. But let us beware of one thing, namely, of a false path which is more dangerous than that which you would avoid - let us not be too spiritual. One cannot, of course, leave it to your whim how you will conceive of Christianity. If your conception were correct, the best thing for us would be to begin as soon as possible with all the self-inflicted torments and annihilation of the body which we learn about in the excesses of mysticism. Even health would be a suspicious circumstance. I doubt very much, however, if any pious Christian would deny that he may well pray to God to preserve his health, to the God who went about healing the sick.
It would seem that the aesthete to whom the Judge addresses himself has an erroneous view of Christianity. If Christianity were in fact as opposed to the physical as the aesthete thinks it is, then his remaining in the aesthetic would be more understandable and defensible. The Judge reminds him (and us) of the true nature of Christianity. It not only does not denounce the physical but positively affirms it. The Judge makes the same point in a statement about woman: "It would be very difficult to convince a woman that earthly love in general might be sin, since by this affirmation her whole existence is destroyed in its deepest root."9

It is the Judge's conviction that "love is no marriage, neither is a resolution alone a marriage."10 Rather, "there must be a resolution superadded to love."11 To those who think that a resolution is sufficient for marriage (that one can marry for a purely practical reason or reasons and not for love), the Judge writes:

Sensuous love has only one transfiguration in which it is equally aesthetic, religious and moral - and that is love. Common-sense calculation makes it just as unaesthetic as it is irreligious, because the sensuous element does not receive its due in immediacy.12

The Judge addresses most of his comments, however, to those who would do without the resolution and just have love (in other words, to the aesthetes). To them he writes, "It is an insult to love not to let marriage join in, as though love were something so "immediate" that it could not be made taut by a resolution."13

You would have it that either obscure powers or caprice are the constituent factors of love. As soon as consciousness comes forward to join them this enchantment vanishes. But this consciousness is conjugal love.14
Despite the fact that some of the aesthetes regard themselves as connoisseurs of romantic love, the Judge questions the aesthetic interpretation of love.

...all this slenderness and plumpness, and the eyebrow and the flash of the eye, do not constitute love, still less a marriage and only in marriage does love find its true expression, apart from this it is seduction and coquetry. 13

The following constitutes the Judge's perception of the seducer and of those men who exalt romantic love but avoid marriage:

There has always been a great run on love, and as little as "the nannygoat grows weary of nibbling the green shoots" do certain people grow weary of seeking and wishing for the miracle of love...Even the seducer allows love to stand as a thing he cannot bestow upon himself...but the demoniacal spirit within him causes him with demoniacal resolution to resolve to make the enjoyment as short, and in this way, so he thinks, as intense as possible. By reason of this demoniacal resolution the seducer is actually great in an evil sense, and without this resolution he is not actually a seducer. 16

Again we see that the sensuous itself does not constitute the problem or evil of seduction but, rather, the seducer's resolution about the sensuous is the problem.

The Judge not only addresses the seducer and men like him but those who scorn women and avoid romantic involvement with them.

...there is one thing marriage does not understand, even though, as was observed, it is mitigated by jest; marriage does not understand jest, and in addition to the bad resolution of the seducer there is also another opposite to the good resolution, namely, flight and evasion. 17

To summarize, the Judge's stance on marriage is directly opposite to that of the aesthetes. He asserts that "it is the duty of every man to marry." 18 He argues that "existence has designed" the sexes "the one
for the other" and so it is natural and good that men and women enter into the relation of marriage.

The Judge argues further that romantic love and the erotic are by no means annulled in marriage but brought to fulfillment. Indeed, marriage is a synthesis of love and immediacy and resolution (a free act of the will). A union lacking one of these components is no marriage.

Despite the Judge's strong commendation of marriage, he maintains that there is such a thing as a "justified exception to the universal." Now marriage is the universal in that it is what men and women generally do. (We have seen that, according to the Judge, human beings are constituted in such a way that it is natural and good (i.e., beneficial) that they marry.) Marriage involves subjecting the particular to the universal, (expressing the particular love in a universal way.) This constitutes a challenge for the individual, a challenge that the aesthete is reluctant to meet. (Recall the aesthete's assertion that marriage "follows the public highway" while "love prefers to blaze its own way".)

The subjecting of the particular to the universal involves nothing less than a leap, but a leap that makes one free. The Judge maintains that in doing one's duty, in expressing the universal rather than the particular, one becomes conscious of "the eternal validity of (one's) being."

Marriage is not the only universal, of course. "Laws, norms, and social expectations" that extend to all people are universals, and it is the point of view of the ethical that one ought to bring one's life into conformity with these norms. The ethical person doesn't express the universal arbitrarily, half-heartedly, or by chance, but embraces the challenge to express the universal with eyes wide open. To quote Regis Jolivet, "The ethicist...has morality as the chief principle of
his conduct and the ultimate end of his activity, (and) aims above all at obedience to duty.20 The Judge is sensible of having several duties (several areas in his life where he is called upon to express the universal rather than the particular) but he is especially enthusiastic about his fulfillment of the duty of marriage. In the works depicting the ethical sphere of existence, marriage is used as an example of an ethical act.

We said above that the Judge thinks there is a "justified exception to the universal." It is clear that he regards the aesthetes as "unjustified" exceptions to the universal. Both the "bad resolution" of the seducer and the "flight and evasion" of those aesthetes who avoid romantic involvement with women are the "opposite of the good resolution" of marriage. How does one distinguish, then, between the justified, and unjustified exception to the universal?

The Judge asserts that "Every human existence which would not be twaddle (and no man should wish to be that) dare not forego the universal, except by virtue of a resolution..."21 To will to marry can be termed a positive resolution. To will not to marry can be termed a negative resolution. "What the Judge expressly condemns is the failure to realize the universal with no resolution at all. "Everyone who not only remains unmarried but remains so without a resolution - his course through life it is not worth while to follow."22

The Judge says of the justified exception that after the breach with the universal has been brought about (in other words, after a person has resolved not to realize the universal),
...he shall love life; if he became hostile to life, then he is unjustified, for the fact that he is an exception does not render less beautiful that from which he is excepted. 23

...he must not feel himself higher than the universal, but more slowly, he must a tout prix want to remain within the universal, because he is really in love. 24

Despite the "justified exception's" positive attitude toward that "from which he is excepted" his resolution not to realize the universal is in fact a difficult one. "A negative resolution is always much more labourious than a positive one, it cannot become habitual, and yet it must always be maintained." 25 It would seem that the one who resolves not to marry is condemned to walk a fine line between excessive spirituality and physical excesses. Of the justified exception, the Judge writes:

...he must so comprehend the breach as to understand that he...is now cast out into new perils and the most awful of mortal dangers...where the sword of Damocles hangs above his head if he looks toward heaven, where the traps of temptation try to catch his feet if he looks toward the earth...He is a rebel against the earthly; and the physical, which when it is on good terms with the spiritual is a staff of support, as time is also, has become his enemy; for the physical has become a serpent to him, and time has become the instant of the bad conscience. He supposes that it is so easy to triumph over the physical; yes, that is so when one does not incite it by wanting to destroy it...one constructs with psychological accuracy the catastrophe of Faust, who precisely by wanting to be sheer spirit succumbs to the wild rebellion of the physical. Woe to him who is thus solitary! He is deserted by the whole of existence...and every minute the sudden can overwhelm him with its terrors. 26

The justified exception must struggle to maintain a proper attitude toward that which he has renounced. This is especially difficult in light of the fact that he is to live without its comfort and support. By his
resolution not to realize the universal, "the individual has declared war upon human existence, hence there is no instant when he is through with it. . . ." The mystic also has an uncomfortable relationship with the world in which he lives. Judge William confesses to "an aversion to mysticism", for he sees in the mystic a tendency to "disdain the reality of existence to which God has assigned him." 

In Chapter Three it will be shown that S.K. was aware of himself as the exception to the universal. Throughout most of his life, he strove to fulfill the requirements of the justified exception. During the last two years of his life, however, S.K.'s opinions on the universal and the exception to the universal of marriage changed dramatically. We will see that, throughout S.K.'s authorship, his opinions on marriage and religious celibacy were decisive for his opinions on woman.

THE ETHICAL MAN'S CONCEPTION OF WOMAN

We have seen that, according to Judge William, man relates to woman through marriage when he resides in the ethical sphere of existence. There are undoubtedly other kinds of ethical relationships (relationships characterized by love, duty, and resolution), but the Judge focuses upon this one. The ethical relationship is both "immediate" and free.

We can now turn our attention toward the second question that this chapter poses, namely, how does man regard woman when he resides in the ethical sphere? The answer to this question is a many-faceted one. We will begin with a discussion of woman's beauty.
"Woman's beauty increases with the years"

Judge William responds to the aesthetes' statements about a 'young girl's beauty. It will be recalled that the aesthetes regarded a 'young girl's' adolescence (the period before she marries) as the most beautiful period of her life. The Judge makes reference to the aesthetes' ideas on the subject before presenting his own:

Alas, even honest men have helped to give currency to the tragic mistake which reckless young girls accept, unfortunately, with only too much eagerness, without reflecting that it means despair: that woman's only beauty is the first beauty of youth, that she blooms but once, that this instant is the season of love...39

Judge William too regards a woman in her youth as beautiful but he has a different understanding of woman's beauty and her development. Of the 'young girl' whose beauty is extolled by the aesthetes, the Judge writes, "...a young girl is a phantom, one scarcely known whether she belongs to reality or is a vision. And is this to be the loftiest attainment? Yes, let phantoms believe it."30

The Judge's opinion of woman's beauty is summarized by him in the following way:

But fair as the first beauty is, it is nevertheless not the truth, it is a husk, a mantle, out of which, only in the course of years, the true beauty develops before the husband's grateful eyes...my assumption is that woman becomes more beautiful with the years.31

The Judge intimates that a woman's "true" beauty may not be apparent to those who do not know her or to those who fail to observe her carefully. A woman's first beauty, though genuine, is superficial. It is not as deep, as true, as enduring as the beauty that reveals itself in the actions of the wife and mother. Despite the fact that the "true"
beauty does not resemble to any great extent the "first beauty" (the beauty that the aesthetes regard as 'real'), it is, nevertheless, genuine beauty. The Judge writes:

Woman as a bride is more beautiful than as a young girl, as a mother she is more beautiful than as a bride, as a wife and mother she is a good word spoken in due season, and with the years she becomes more beautiful. The beauty of the young girl is evident to many, it is more abstract, more extensive. Hence they flock around her, the pure and the impure. Then the deity brings him who is her lover. He sees indeed her beauty, for one loves the beautiful, and that is to be understood as identical with this, that loving is seeing the beautiful. Thus it is that the beautiful passes unnoticed under the nose of reflection. From now on her beauty becomes more intensive and concrete. The wife has no flock of adorers, she is not even beautiful, she is only beautiful in her husband's eyes. In the degree that this beauty becomes more and more concrete, she becomes less and less easy to appraise by ordinary standards of gauging and sorting. Is she for this reason less beautiful?...Is it an imperfection in the flowers of the field, as in all of the works of God, that for microscopic observation it becomes finer and finer, more and more delicate, more and more charming?32

In another passage describing the "old woman", we are told that she is more beautiful than the mother "who brings to birth by the force of nature". The

...decrepit old woman...brings thee to birth again by her solicitous care...she has attained the solution of life which is called dissolution, yea, she herself is the solution, audibly and visibly.33

It would seem that the old woman "by her solicitous care" is the model for both men and women. "[S]he has attained the solution of life."

The Judge attacks the aesthetic conception of feminine beauty on yet another front. In this discussion of 'the beautiful', we again encounter the idea that woman is a being for another. 'B' writes to 'A':
In case you were present here with me I would beg you to give me a definition of the beautiful in order that I might make a beginning. Since you are not present I will take the liberty of attaching my argument to the definition you are accustomed to give: "The beautiful is that which has its teleology in itself." You take as illustration a young girl, you say, "She is beautiful, joyful, carefree, perfect harmony complete in itself; and it is stupid to ask why she exists, for she has her teleology in herself." I shall not annoy you by questioning whether the young girl is really profited by having her teleology only in herself, or whether you, being granted the opportunity of expounding to her your view of the divine character of her existence, would not flatter yourself that she might at last make a mistake and believe that she existed for the sake of listening to your insinuations. You regard nature and find it equally beautiful and are ready to anathematize—every finite view of it. Nor shall I torment you here by inquiring whether it is not essentially characteristic of nature to exist for something else.34

'A' defines the beautiful as that which has its teleology in itself.

He offers art, nature, and 'young girls' as examples of 'things' that have their teleology in themselves. The Judge refers to the notion that a 'young girl' has her teleology in herself as an "illusion."35 We find, however, that 'B' is in agreement with the Seducer on at least one point. Recall that, according to the Seducer, woman's "category" is that of "being for another." "Woman shares this category with Nature, and, in general, with everything feminine." The Judge inquires in the passage above "whether it is not essentially characteristic of nature to exist for something else."

The Judge argues that, in a sense not meant by 'A', a woman really does have her teleology in herself.
The individual has his teleology in himself, has inner teleology, is himself his teleology. His self is thus the goal towards which he strives... the individual is seen to be higher than every relationship in which he stands. But from this it by no means follows that he is not in this relationship, nor can anything tyrannical be discerned in this, inasmuch as the same thing is true of every individual. I am a married man, and you know that I have the profoundest respect for this relationship, and I know that I humble myself under it lovingly; and I know that in another sense I am higher than this relationship; but I know also that in exactly the same sense this is the case with my wife - ... 36

A woman has her teleology in herself in so far as she is an individual human being. This is the point of view of the ethical.

Before leaving the subject of beauty and the various phases in a woman's life, we can again bring up the subject of motherhood. The Judge regards children as a blessing (as the aesthete does not). He also maintains that through children, man becomes a relativity. (The aesthetic writers and speakers regarded man as an absolute and woman as a relativity.)

If a married man were to say that the perfect marriage is one where there are no children, he would be guilty of the same misunderstanding as the philosophers. He makes himself the absolute, and yet every married man will feel that this is untrue and unbecoming, and that the fact that he himself becomes a relativity, as he does by means of the child, is far more true. 37

The Judge also extends mothers, motherhood, and mother-love through illustrations and descriptions. The following is but one of the Judge's odes to motherhood.*

*Other significant references to motherhood in the ethical works include Either/Or II 75; Stages on Life's Way, pp. 136, 137, 139.
...it is only the married man who has the open eye for the beautiful achievements of motherliness; he has at the same time the genuine sympathy which is fashioned out of seriousness in appreciating the infinite significance of the task, and of joy in existence which prompts him to make discoveries, though the joy does not on this account break out exactly in words and jubilation.38

To conclude our discussion of the ethical man's conception of woman's beauty, we can quote another representative of the ethical sphere of existence. Johannes Climacus, the pseudonymous author of Concluding Unscientific Postscript, notes that "Where Johannes the Seducer ends, there the Judge begins: that woman's beauty increases with the years."39 The aesthete extols the beauty of a 'young girl'. He regards her beauty as the highest that a woman possesses. The Judge, by contrast, regards the 'young girl' as a "phantom". She becomes more beautiful as she becomes more concrete (as she realizes or actualizes some of the possibilities in her life.) Thus it is that "Woman as a bride is more beautiful than as a young girl, as a mother she is more beautiful than as a bride,..." As woman brings her life into conformity with the universal (becomes a bride, becomes a mother), she becomes more beautiful. This is the point of view of the ethical.

"Woman explains finiteness"

Judge William, as S.K.'s spokesperson for the ethical sphere of existence, makes a number of statements about women and the nature of woman. One of his most important contributions to the subject under discussion is the idea that "woman explains finiteness".
In general woman has an innate talent, a primitive gift and an absolute virtuosity for explaining finiteness. When man was created he stood there as the master and lord of all nature; nature's pomp and spendour, the entire wealth of finiteness awaited only his beck and call, but he did not comprehend what he was to do with it all. He looked at it, but it was as though at the glance of the spirit everything vanished; he felt as though if he were to move he would with one step be beyond it all. Thus he stood, an imposing figure, thoughtfully absorbed in himself, and yet comical, for one must indeed smile at this rich man who did not know how to use his wealth - but also tragic, for he could not use it. Then was woman created. She was in no embarrassment, she knew at once how one had to handle this affair; without fuss, without preparation, she was ready at once to begin. This was the first comfort bestowed upon man. 40

In the above passage, the word 'finiteness' is used to designate the material world. It is this world (the world that we see and hear and touch) that woman is said to 'explain'. The Judge elaborates on this theme in the following two passages.

A woman comprehends finiteness, she understands it from the bottom up, therefore she is beauteous (essentially regarded, every woman is beauteous), therefore she is charming (and that no man is), therefore she is happy (happy as no man is or should be), therefore she is in harmony with existence (as no man is or should be). Therefore one may say that her life is happier than that of man; for finiteness can perhaps make a human being happy, infinitude as such can never do so. She is more perfect than man, for surely one who can explain something is more perfect than one who is in pursuit of an explanation. Woman explains finiteness, man is in chase of infinitude. 41
The Judge continues:

Let man give up the claim to be the lord and master of nature, let him yield this place to woman, she is its mistress, it understands her, and she understands it, every hint of hers it follows. For this reason she is everything to man, for she bestows upon him finiteness, without her he is an unstable spirit, an unhappy creature who cannot find rest, has no abiding place...Hence it is, as I have already remarked, that the Scripture does not say that a maiden shall leave father and mother and cleave unto her husband (as might be expected, since the woman is in fact the weaker who seeks refuge in man); no, it says, "A man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife for in so far as she gives him finiteness she is stronger than he."

Several phrases contained in the above passage put us in mind of what was said in Chapter One. The statement "(woman) is everything to man" reminds us of the many times that a woman is denounced by an aesthete for being 'nothing in herself, nothing for him'. The implication is that woman can and ought to be everything to man. This she apparently is by 'explaining' or 'giving him' finiteness. This point is again made in a statement following the Judge's description of the creation of woman: "(Woman) wanted only to be a comfort to (man), to make up for his lack (a lack which she did not comprehend, having no suspicion that she was supplying it)..." Woman 'supplies' man's lack by bestowing upon him finiteness.

It should also be noted that the Judge's description of the "unstable spirit", the "unhappy creature who cannot find rest" is reminiscent of 'A' s description of Faust. The Judge would say that at least part of Margaret's attractiveness for Faust consisted in her ability to "explain finiteness."

We can make some general comments about the Judge's statements on
this subject thus far. The Judge is convinced that the sexes are complementary in the following important way: "woman explains finiteness" while "man is in chase of infinitude". Because man is oriented to or in search of infinitude, he is not as at home in the world as woman is. If we were to draw a picture of man based upon the Judge's description of him, we might portray him standing in the world but gazing far out into space. With his eyes fixed on "infinitude", we might say that he is characterized by 'farsightedness'.* A consequence of this is that he has difficulty with objects 'up close', that is, with "finitude". Woman, by contrast, is at home in the world. She is more characterized by 'nearsightedness' than man is and so functions well in "finitude". She 'supplies man's lack' by 'bestowing upon him finiteness'.

The Judge would undoubtedly assert that woman is dependent upon man and his special qualities. It is important to note, however, that he hardly bothers to do this. He expends most of his energies trying to convince his (male) readers (and especially the aesthetes) that man is dependent upon woman and her 'genius'. Indeed, he regards the aesthetes' failure to acknowledge this as part of their problem. (The Judge repeatedly urges his aesthetic friend to "have a little more reverence for woman".)

In the same way that woman "explains finiteness", Judge William asserts that she explains time. To his aesthetic friend, the Judge writes:

*I am indebted to Prof. H.A. Nielsen for the imagery of vision used in this context.
One may be as intelligent as you please, one may be industrious, one may be enthusiastic for an idea, there come moments, nevertheless, when time becomes a bit long. You so often deride the other sex. I have often admonished you to desist. Regard, if you will, a young girl as an incomplete being; I should like to say to you, however, "My good wise man, go to the ant and become wise, learn from a girl how to make time pass, for in this she has an innate virtuosity." Perhaps she has no conception such as man has of severe and persistent labour, but she is never idle, is always occupied, time is never long for her.45

Woman's "innate virtuosity" for making time pass is a function of her "absolute virtuosity for explaining finiteness." Woman "stands on good terms with time"46 because she is so at home in finitude. Man, by contrast, is at odds with time and finitude. This is to be explained by the 'fact' that he is "in chase of infinitude."

We can recall what was said of the justified exception to the universal:

He is a rebel against the earthly; and the physical, which when it is on good terms with the spiritual is a staff of support, as time is also, has become an enemy; for the physical has become a serpent to him, and time has become the instant of the bad conscience. (See footnote 26)

Man is not ordinarily on "good terms" with time or conversant in the ways of the finite but through an association with woman, man is reconciled with time and has finiteness bestowed upon him. Given all that Judge William has said about man and woman thus far, we can see that marriage brings about a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, the physical and the spiritual, the temporal and the eternal, and love (immediacy) and resolution (freedom). Both man and woman benefit from the relation of marriage.

Woman has traditionally been associated with the finite, the
physical, and love or immediacy. Man has traditionally been associated with the opposites or complements of this triad. The Judge more or less upholds this tradition but notes that woman has often been associated with both halves of the word pairs. He writes:

If one would indicate the purest and most perfect quality, one says, "a woman"; if one would indicate the weakest, the most feeble thing, one says "a woman"; if one would give a notion of the sensuous, one says "a woman"; if one would indicate innocence in all its lofty greatness, one says "a woman"; if one would point to the depressing feeling of guilt, one says "a woman". 47

In the pages that follow it will be shown that, despite the Judge's traditional association of woman with the finite and immediacy, he frequently points to woman as a model of spirituality.

"Woman is humble"

In our discussion of marriage and the ethical, we saw the Judge express the opinion that "Just because marriage is the central thing, woman must be viewed in relation to that, as man also ought to be...." Thus we find that many of the Judge's statements about woman appear in the context of discussions about marriage. In the following discussion between 'A' and 'B' about marriage and the Christian marriage ceremony, the aesthetic and ethical views of woman are further elucidated. Our focus now is not so much on the assertions made about marriage, but on those made about women and the nature of woman.

The Judge maintains that 'A' objects to marriage and the Christian marriage ceremony on a number of grounds. Firstly, the aesthete is offended by the Church's declaration that woman is a sinner and, indeed, the source of sin. 'A' feels (or at least asserts) that his beloved's
soul is "as pure as the light of day, sublime as the vault of heaven,..." He maintains that she is worthy of his adoration and capable of plucking him "out of all aberration." 48.

The aesthete is also offended by the Church's injunction that the couple be faithful to one another. He is sure that he and his beloved are in no need of such an injunction. "Does she then need to be commanded? And would she be true to me only because a third party, which then she would love more than me, commanded it?" 49 The aesthete is correct in realizing that a "third party" rather than he himself would claim his wife's first allegiance.

The aesthete is further offended by the way in which the Church "defines (the couple's) relationship to one another." He is to be the master and she is to submit. But the aesthete asserts that he has no inclination to be the master, for he feels "too lowly for that!" He continues: "No, her I will obey, her hint is my commandment, but to a foreign power I will not submit." 50

Finally, the aesthete is convinced that marriage will somehow destroy his beloved's beauty.

(The Church) already stretches out its arms to embrace her, but this embrace will cause all her beauty to fade, and then it will pass her over to me saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' 51

The Judge answers 'A' point by point. With regard to the Church's declaration that woman is a sinner and that it is through her that sin came into the world, the Judge writes:
But woman is humble, and it certainly has never occurred to a woman to be truly scandalized by the fact that the earnest word of the Church was addressed to her...If, then, any change were to be wrought in her by the solemn declaration of the Church that sin has entered into the world, it must be that she only the more strongly would hold fast to her love.52

The Judge also challenges the aesthete's assertion that she should be his master rather than vice versa.

The first thing then that scandalized you was that you should be solemnly instated as her lord and master - as if you were not that (and perhaps all too much so), as if your words did not clearly enough bear the stamp of it. But you will not give up this idolatry, this coquetry, of pretending to want to be her slave, although you thoroughly feel yourself her master.53

The Judge asserts here and elsewhere that both man and woman naturally regard man as the master. The ethical argument appears to be that the mastery of man is and ought to be so. (We encountered this argument 'from nature' in some of the aesthetic assertions. For example, Constantine maintained that the absolute character of man and the relative character of woman is and ought to be so.) In responding to the aesthete's objections to marriage and the wedding ceremony, the Judge asserts that 'A's' beloved probably does not feel as he does. Of woman, the Judge writes:

...she will certainly not disdain the blessing and confirmation which God is ready to bestow upon her. It has never occurred to a woman to object to marriage, and it would not occur to her in all eternity if men themselves do not corrupt her....The fact is, moreover, that she has not come to God's altar to deliberate whether or not she shall love the man who stands beside her; she loves him, her very life is in it, and woe unto him who awakens doubt in her and would teach her to revolt against her nature and not to be willing to kneel before God but to stand erect.54
That humility and devotion 'belong' to woman is asserted or implied in Judge William's statements quoted above. He maintains that "woman is humble." It is her "nature" (but not man's) "to be willing to kneel before God." It is also the case that "her very life" is in her relationship to her beloved. (This is reminiscent of 'A' s question quoted in Chapter One: "But what can with greater truth be called a woman's entire life than her love?")

We can conclude from the above dialogue between 'A' and 'B' that, according to 'B', the aesthetic or natural man is more offended by the traditional Christian interpretation of marriage and woman than woman is. The aesthete would have us believe that he objects to the Christian marriage ceremony at least partly on woman's behalf but the Judge claims that woman shares none of the aesthete's reservations. It would seem that woman is more naturally religious and ready to worship God by virtue of her devotion and humility.

The suggestion that woman is characterized by devotion and humility is made in another discussion of marriage. The Judge maintains that marriage makes both participants in first love free. The freedom that marriage bestows effects woman and man differently, however. It frees them from their characteristic bonds.

In a certain sense a change has been brought about, and it is this which I will now consider as the metamorphosis...of the lovers into bride and bridegroom. When first love is referred to God, this comes to pass for the fact that the lovers thank God for it. With this an ennobling transformation is effected. The weakness to which the male is most prone is to imagine that he has made a conquest of the girl he loves. In this he is sensible of his superiority - but there is nothing aesthetic in that....For the other sex it is rather natural to feel the predominance of
man and to submit to it; and yet, even though the woman feels joyful and happy in being nothing, she is in the way of becoming more or less disingenuous. Then, when she thanks God for the beloved her soul is secured against suffering; by the fact that she thanks God she removes the man she loves just so far from her that she is able to draw breath; and this does not come to pass in consequence of an alarming doubt (for such she does not know) but by immediacy.

It would seem that man has difficulty recognizing and admitting that his loved one is a gift from God. He needs to do this, however, and finds liberation when he does. The ethical man acknowledges God and 'humbles himself under his love'. Woman, by contrast, is all too ready to assert her inferiority, not only to God but to the man she loves. Her recognition that God is the ultimate source of her love frees her from a 'natural' though unhealthy tendency to regard her lover as a god. This contrast between man and woman is expressed by Constantine in Chapter One: man possesses "pride and self-sufficiency" while woman exercises "devotion and humility". Man and woman are saved from natural excesses by acknowledging God as the source of their love.

The Judge repeats what was said above in yet another passage.

Still speaking of marriage, he asserts that

...the more freedom, the more complete the abandonment of devotion, and only he can be lavish of himself who possesses himself. In the religious the individuals become free - he from false pride, she from false humility - and between the lovers who hold one another in such a close embrace the religious presses in, not to separate them, but in order that she might surrender herself with a richer devotion than she had before dreamt of, and that he might surrender himself, and she receive the devotion.

Again, it is asserted that woman and man are characterized by humility and pride respectively. "The religious" frees man and woman from their
characteristic bonds (false pride and false humility) and enables them to devote themselves more fully. (Woman's devotion is already assumed for the passage makes reference to "a richer devotion than she had before dreamt of".)

It is also clear that the Judge sees a connection between woman's humility and her natural religiosity. He tells 'A': "woman is weak...no, she is humble, she is much closer to God than man is. Hence it is that love is everything to her,..." By contrast, "man is proud, he would be everything, would have nothing above him."57 In another place the Judge writes, "Woman is humble and trustful - who like a woman can cast the eyes down, but who like her can lift them up?"58

Woman saves man

We have seen that the Judge regards woman as more naturally religious than man by virtue of her devotion and humility. The Judge also asserts that woman has religious significance for man. He states in a number of ways and places that woman can and does "save" man from his characteristic weaknesses. We will begin with the most important and direct of these assertions.

...respect every honest effort, every unassuming endeavour which modestly hides itself, and above all have a little more reverence for woman; believe me, it is from her comes salvation, as surely as depravity comes from man. I am a married man and to that extent I am partial, but it is my conviction that if it was a woman that ruined man, it was a woman also that has fairly and honestly made reparation and still does so; out of a hundred men who go astray in the world ninety and nine are saved by women and one by immediate divine grace. And as I am also of the opinion that it is the
nature of man to go astray in one way or another, that to a man it applies as truly as to a woman that he ought to abide in the pure and innocent peace of immediacy: you can easily see that in my opinion woman (when she restores man to this state) makes due requital for the harm she has done.

We can be fairly certain that S.K. is the exception to the 'rule' described above. He is the one who is saved by "immediate divine grace".

The Judge remarks that both man and woman "ought to abide in the pure and innocent peace of immediacy." He implies that woman habitually does "abide" in this state, and that through her, man is able to share at least somewhat in "the pure and innocent peace of immediacy." In another description of this phenomenon (by means of his wife, the Judge maintains that he "imbibe(s) peace and contentment"), the woman is said to cure the sickness of despair with the "tenderness" that belongs to her innately.

...as the lover believes that his lady is life to him, so in a spiritual sense I believe, ...that, as scientists teach, the mother's milk is a saving remedy for one who is sick unto death... I believe that this tenderness which was her rich dowry as a bride...I believe that this tender glance, if I were sick, sick unto death, in case it rested upon me - ah, as if she herself, not I, were the dying warrior - I believe that it would recall me to life...I believe that by means of her I imbibe peace and contentment in my life and many a time am saved from the death of despondence and the sore travail of vexation of spirit.

Woman is said to 'save' man in ways that have already been discussed. She "bestows upon him finiteness" and thereby supplies his lack. Through her (or perhaps more accurately, through marriage to her), the "problem of time" is also solved. The Judge says of his "hero" (who is also a married man):
In case he had got that nymph from the forest and had not married, he then would have been apprehensive that their love would flare up in particular moments of singular beauty, which would leave behind them vapid intervals... On the other hand, the humble marriage which made it a duty to see one another daily, for richer for poorer, had spread over the whole relationship an equality and evenness which made it so delicious to him.61

That the problem of time is solved through the married man's relationship with his wife is stated clearly in another description of the Judge's "hero".

...time passes swiftly for him, he cannot comprehend how time might be a burden to a man or be an enemy of his happiness; on the contrary, time appears to him a true blessing. He admits that in this respect he owes a great deal to his wife.62

His wife not only supplies an example of one who is "on good terms with time"63 but marriage itself enables the Judge's hero to be reconciled with time (as the man who got the nymph in the forest is not).

We can also note that in advocating marriage, the Judge describes woman as "the conscience of man".

[Marriage] ennobles the whole man by the blush of bashfulness which belongs to woman but is the corrector of man; for woman is the conscience of man.64

Finally, we can refer to the old woman discussed above as an example of the way in which woman saves man. It will be remembered that she "brings thee [the aesthete] to birth again by her solicitous care."
Summary

Generally speaking, the Judge maintains that a relationship to woman is necessary to save man. The exception is the man who is saved by "immediate divine grace". Man characteristically has certain deficiencies that can be and are made right through a relation to woman (she supplies his lack and provides the solution to the problem of time, etc.).

The Judge's assertions about the complementariness of the sexes are closely allied with his recommendations of marriage. The Judge asserts that the sexes are complementary and that marriage is necessary if the two 'halves' are to become 'whole'. Both the characteristics of the sexes and marriage are ordained by God and therefore good. The aesthete's problem (from the point of view of the Judge) is his refusal to recognize his inherent limitations and his need of 'salvation'. The enthusiasm with which the Judge praises woman parallels the vehemence with which the aesthetes denounce her. (It may be argued that some of the aesthetes' pronouncements about woman were flattering in the extreme. The Seducer was especially capable of rhapsodic descriptions of woman. He declared that the 'young girl' in particular was virtually divine.) But Johannes Climacus, the pseudonymous author of Concluding Unscientific Postscript, provides us with some explanation of the aesthetic mind.

Johannes the Seducer ends with the proposition that woman is only the moment. This is in its generality the essential esthetic principle, namely, that the moment is everything, and in so far again, essentially nothing; just as the sophistic proposition that everything is true means that nothing is true.
In the aesthetic descriptions of woman, she is alternately described as both 'everything' and 'nothing'. The Judge has attempted to counter these assertions (especially the assertion that woman is nothing) with a more balanced appraisal of woman and her characteristics. S.K. explains in his Journal that "The purpose of the five speakers in 'In Vino Veritas'... is to show up woman thoroughly, but falsely." 66 Each speaker represents an aspect of the personality that S.K. saw in himself and/or others.

The Young Man... is essentially melancholy of thought. Constantine Constantius is case-hardened understanding. Victor Eremita is sympathetic irony. The Fashion Tailor is demonic despair in passion. Johannes the Seducer is perdition in cold blood, a "marked" individuality in whom life is extinct. All are consistent to the point of despair. 67

Because each speaker looked at woman from a particular point of view, each saw her "falsely" rather than accurately. The picture that each aesthete 'painted' of woman clearly bore the stamp of the perspective of the aesthete. S.K. suggests in his Journal entry that despite the distorted picture of woman painted by each aesthete, each picture contained some element(s) of truth (woman is shown up "thoroughly, but falsely").

Woman and the religious

We have seen in the Judge's references to woman's devotion and humility that he regards her as more naturally religious than man. In a passage that is reminiscent of the long passage quoted in our discussion of woman and the religious in Chapter One, the Judge describes woman's leap from the aesthetic to the religious sphere.
And now as to her - for (it is true of her also that) without a resolution there is no marriage. A feminine soul has not and should not have the sort of reflection man has. It is not in this wise therefore she is able to attain the resolution. But starting with aesthetic immediacy, with the swiftness of a bird she attains the religious, and one can say of a woman, as one hardly could say of a man, that it must be a depraved woman who is not made God-fearing by love. As a married couple both are on the common ground of religious immediacy. But man reaches this through an ethical development. A wise Greek has said that daughters ought to get married when they are girls in years but women in understanding. This is very prettily-said, but one must remember that a woman in understanding is not a man in understanding. The loftiest understanding a woman possesses - and possesses with honour and consistently with beauty - is religious immediacy.... Woman because of her immediacy is essentially aesthetic, but just because she is essentially this, the transition to the religious is also direct. Feminine romanticism is the very next instant religion. If it is not that, then it is only a sensuous enthusiasm, a demoniacal inspiration of sensuality, the holy purity of modesty is transformed into a dark quality which tempts and incites.

So in woman love is immediate. This is common ground. But the transition in her case comes about without reflection. It comes about in this way: at the moment when at the border of her consciousness there passes her by the thought which man's reflection ideally exhausts, she falls into a faint, her husband hastens to her aid, and although equally moved, but through reflection, he is not overwhelmed, he stands fast, the loved one supported upon his breast, until again she opens her eyes. In this swooning state she is translated from the immediacy of love into the religious sphere, and here again the two meet. Now she is ready for the marriage ceremony - for without a resolution no marriage.68

Several things are of note in the above passage. Firstly, it is said that woman "has not and should not have the sort of reflection man has". This is stated or implied elsewhere in the passage and in the two
works under consideration.* Thus woman is not able to attain the
resolution necessary for marriage as man does (through the use of
reflection). The category of the resolution as it applies to both
woman and man will be discussed below.

It would seem that Judge William is in agreement with the Seducer
on yet another point. Woman makes the transition to the religious when
she falls in love and makes (or is ready to make) a love commitment.
Woman is "essentially aesthetic" but when she falls in love (if she is
not a "depraved" woman), the experience becomes a religious one and she
"leaps" from the aesthetic to the religious immediacy. The Judge has
said elsewhere that "the other sex...is both the more religious and the
more aesthetic." 69

The direct leap of woman from the aesthetic to the religious is-
described poetically by the Judge in another place. Woman's direct,
apparently effortless and graceful leap is contrasted with man's, which
requires a series of steps. Using the imagery of flight to denote the
movement of faith, the Judge writes, "in the male flight one hears the
beat of the wings, whereas the female flight is like a dreamy stroke
with the oars." 70

We mentioned above that, according to the Judge, woman is not as
reflective as man. This has implications for the way in which she will
"attain the resolution" (see above). The Judge also tells us that be-
cause woman is not reflective, she is not capable of doubt.

*See Either/Or, II 82-3; Stages, p. 99.
...for woman bears children with pain, but man conceives ideas with pain, and woman does not have to know the anguish of doubt or the torment of despair, she is not obliged to stand outside the idea, but she has it at secondhand.

The Judge has more to say on the subject of doubt:

Talent is requisite for doubting, but no talent at all is requisite for despair...The lowliest, the least talented man, can despair, a young girl who is anything but a thinker can despair, whereas everyone readily feels the foolishness of saying of them that they are doubting souls.72

Precisely because "doubt is a despair of thought"73, woman is not able to doubt. The Judge describes doubt as a particularly masculine phenomenon. He writes: "in doubting I behave as impersonally as possible".74 Woman, because she is a relative being, does not typically behave in an impersonal way.

Despite the Judge's conflicting statements about woman's ability to doubt (see the above two passages), he does appear to be genuinely convinced that despair (which he defines as "a doubt of the personality"75 is possible and actual for women. The following is a portrait of feminine despair.

We encounter views of life which teach that one must enjoy life but which place the condition for it outside the individual. This is the case with every view of life where wealth, glory, high station, etc., are accounted life's task and its content. In this connection I would also speak of a certain kind of love. If I picture to myself a young girl heart and soul in love, whose eye knew no pleasure but in seeing her lover, whose soul had no thought but him, whose heart had no desire but to belong to him, for whom nothing in heaven or on earth had any significance except him, then here we have again an aesthetic view of life where the condition is located outside the individual. You, of course, regard it as foolish-
ness to be in love in this fashion, you think of it as something which occurs only in romances. Nevertheless, it is a thing that can be thought, and it is certain, at least, that in the eyes of many people such a love would be regarded as something admirable. I shall explain to you later why I cannot approve of it.}

The Judge does not approve of a woman's tendency or ability to idolize the one she is in love with. This tendency is made much of by romantics ("in the eyes of many people such a love would be regarded as something admirable"). Woman is characterized by devotion but this characteristic can lead to despair as well as to faith. (She can devote herself to another human being in a way that ought to be reserved for God. She can also devote herself to God without hesitation or reserve.)

The aesthetic "view of life" is defined in the above passage. It is that "one must enjoy life" but that the condition for enjoyment lies outside of the individual. The Judge regards this attitude as the recipe for despair. Indeed, it is despair. Thus it is that the Judge can say that "the young girl was equally in despair whether she got the loved one or not". This echoes what was said of Elvira in Either/Or I. 'A' writes, "her love is even from the beginning a kind of despair; nothing has any significance for her, either in heaven or on earth, except Don Juan." Elvira's despair is not the result of Don Juan's deception for her love is "even from the beginning a kind of despair." Both Elvira and the 'young girl' spoken of by the Judge regard their loved one as a god and place the condition for their happiness outside themselves (in another).

We have already seen that the aesthetic conviction that "woman's only beauty is the first beauty of youth" means despair for her who be-
believes it. This is because the condition for her happiness lies outside of herself (is beyond her control. She cannot will to be beautiful.)

The Judge continues:

Suppose, then...that I have become the object of such a love. It would not make me happy, and I would never accept it...for her own sake I would not permit it. So far as in me lieth, I desire to be loved by everybody, by my wife I desire to be loved as dearly as one person can love another and it would pain me if I were not so loved, but I do not desire more, I will not permit anyone to take harm to her soul by loving me; I should love her too truly to permit her to abase herself. To a proud mind there is something seductive in being loved thus, and there are men who understand the art of infatuating a girl so that she forgets everything else but them - let them look to it how they justify this. Such a girl is for the most part punished severely enough, but the despicable thing is to let this occur. Observe that it is for this reason that I said and still say that the young girl was equally in despair whether she got the loved one or not, for in fact it was an accidental circumstance if the man she loved was so upright that he could help her out of her heart's delusion...79

The Judge concludes elsewhere that the young girl described above ("whose eye knew no pleasure but in seeing her lover") was no individual. (We will recall what was said of the teleology of the individual.

The individual has his teleology in himself, has inner teleology, is himself his teleology. His self is thus the goal towards which he strives...the individual is seen to be higher than every relationship in which he stands.)

The Judge writes that he "would not love the young girl we spoke about, because she did not share this view."80 In other words, the Judge would not love her because she was not an individual.
The Judge also passes judgement upon the aesthete who encourages a 'girl' in such a way that he becomes a god for her ("to a proud mind there is something seductive in being loved thus.")

Before leaving the subject of woman and the religious, we need to make some mention of the Judge's thoughts concerning prayer. The Judge contends that feminine prayer is typically for another whereas masculine prayer is typically for the self. (This supports the Seducer's contention that woman is a being for another while man is a being for himself.)

...to woman it belongs essentially to pray for others. Think of her in whatever position of life you will, at whatever age, think of her in prayer, and as a rule you will find her praying for others, for her parents, for her loved one, for her husband, for her children, always for others. To man it belongs essentially to pray for himself.81

Again we are reminded of Constantine's assertion that woman is characterized by "devotion and humility" whereas man is characterized by "pride and self-sufficiency". Judge William argues further that woman more typically prays for the fulfillment of her wish ("she is resigned to the thought that she can do nothing about it") whereas man "relinquishes the fulfillment of his wish" and prays for the "strength to renounce it."

In a certain sense, therefore, woman is more believing than man, for woman believes that with God all things are possible; man believes that for God there is something impossible. Woman becomes more and more intense in her humble craving; man gives up more and more, until he finds the immovable point from which he cannot be expelled. This is due to the fact that it belongs essentially to man to have doubted, and all his wisdom will bear an impress of this.82
Woman's tendency to pray for others and her tendency to pray for the fulfillment of her wish testify to her devotion and humility. Because woman is humble she is more easily convinced that her wish cannot be fulfilled through her own efforts. Moreover, her humility enables her to believe more readily than man that "with God all things are possible." In short, she is more ready to take the "leap" than man is. Man avoids the leap "until he finds the immovable point from which he cannot be expelled."

We can conclude here, as we have elsewhere, that woman's 'natural' characteristics determine her way to the religious. They can also constitute her downfall. (Through her devotion, she can regard the loved one as a god. She is also capable of "false humility").

Emancipation

The Judge shares the aesthetes' conviction that emancipation is an evil. He has much more to say on the subject than the aesthetes did, however. His attack upon emancipation is a sustained and consistent one.

The Judge sees the drive for emancipation as an understandable (though regrettable) response to the way in which love is regarded in "the present age". Romanticism has distorted or misconstrued love, and so it is no wonder that woman (whose special domain love is - "love is everything to her") is responding to this with the cry for emancipation.

What wonder then that women want emancipation - one of the many ugly phenomena of our age for which men are responsible. The eternal element in love becomes an object of derision, the temporal element alone is left, but this temporal again is refined into the sensuous eternity, into the eternal instant of the embrace.
The Judge blames the drive for emancipation of woman upon men in a number of places. Of the Christian interpretation of marriage and the Christian marriage ceremony, the Judge asserts that it is man who has difficulty with the declarations of the Church. Man would communicate these difficulties to woman and thereby convince her of the need for emancipation. The Judge is convinced that emancipation would involve woman taking on the (worst) traits of man.

It has never occurred to a woman to object to marriage, and it would not occur to her in all eternity if men themselves do not corrupt her. To be sure, to an emancipated woman this notion might occur. The offense always comes from man's side, for man is proud; he would be everything, would have nothing above him.89

The Judge maintains that the natural woman is not offended by marriage and the Christian marriage ceremony. The natural man is. Emancipation would involve women becoming like men in this and other unfortunate ways. The Judge ends his speech to 'A' (quoted in part above) in the following way:

The fact is, moreover, that she has not come to God's altar to deliberate whether or no she shall love the man who stands beside her; she loves him, her very life is in it, and woe unto him who awakens doubt in her and would teach her to revolt against her nature and not to be willing to kneel before God but to stand erect. (see footnote 54)

Woman is 'naturally' willing to "kneel before God" by virtue of her humility. This she and man both ought to do, but man is unwilling or at least reluctant to do so by virtue of his "manly pride and self-sufficiency".
In Chapter One we saw that some of the aesthetes are opposed to emancipation. They regard a 'young girl's' characteristics and pattern of development as natural. Any alteration of those characteristics and that pattern would therefore have adverse effects.* The aesthetes are especially (if not solely) concerned about the adverse effects of emancipation for themselves. They need and desire what the natural 'young girl' has to offer and so they oppose any attempts to alter her characteristics and pattern of development. Some of the aesthetes want to take advantage of or exploit woman's natural characteristics for their own enjoyment and benefit. The Judge opposes emancipation partly because he regards it as harmful to women but also because he needs and depends upon woman to 'supply his lack'. This, he fears, she could not or would not do if she were emancipated.

*At this point, we refer the reader to an article written by Kierkegaard on the subject of the emancipation of woman (see Appendix). Entitled "Another Defense of the Exceptional Talents of Women", the article first appeared in the Dec. 17, 1834 edition of the Copenhagen Flying Post. It was written in response to an article that appeared in an earlier edition of the Post entitled "The Higher Origin of Woman is Defended". Kierkegaard's article is reported to be the first published by him. "It was written in his ironic period of early youth"86 and the tone and content of the article clearly bear the stamp of this.

It is interesting to note how other authors have responded to this early article of Kierkegaard's. Gregor Malantschuk refers to it as "an amusing and naiveering on the emancipation of women."87 George B. Arbaugh writes that the article objected to the romantic exaltation of woman and insisted that she be honoured with an appreciation of her special function and role in society. The article was clever but was of no serious consequence.88

It might be safely argued that in other works Kierkegaard "objected to the romantic exaltation of woman etc." but it is difficult to see where he does this here. The article is certainly clever but the sentiments expressed in it, we would submit, are disturbing and even vicious. They are certainly in keeping with the sentiments expressed by the aesthetes.
...because woman thus explains finiteness she is man's deepest life, but a life which should always be concealed and hidden as the root of life always is. For this reason I hate all talk about the emancipation of woman... It is my comfort that those who proclaim such wisdom are not as wise as serpents but are for the most part blockheads whose nonsense can do no harm. Yea, in case the serpent were able to make her believe this, able to tempt her with the apparently delectable fruit, in case this contagion were to spread, in case it were to penetrate also to her whom I love, my wife, my joy, my refuge, my life's very root, then indeed would my courage be broken, then the passion of freedom in my soul would be quenched,... Might there be one single woman simple and vain and pitiable enough to believe that in man's category she might be more perfect than man, and not to perceive that her loss would be irreparable? No base seducer could think out a more dangerous doctrine for woman, for once he has made her believe this she is entirely in his power, at the mercy of his will, she can be nothing for man except a prey to his whims, whereas as woman she can be everything for him. But the poor wretches know not what they do, they are not able to be men, and instead of learning to be that they would ruin woman and would be united with her on terms of remaining what they were, half-men, women being promoted to the same paltry condition.89

We see in this passage familiar phrases and ideas. Because of emancipation, woman would be "nothing" for man whereas "as woman she can be everything for him". Emancipation would involve both women and men becoming "half-men". (The phrase 'half-man' is used by Constantine in the same context in 'In Vino Veritas'.)90

In another argument against emancipation, Judge William refers to his conviction that woman explains finiteness and man is in pursuit of infinitude. (This, he argues, is the way it is and ought to be.)
What is more beautiful than a woman's plentiful hair, than her abundant tresses? And yet the Scripture says that this is a token of her imperfection and adduces several reasons for this. And is it not so? Look at her when she bows her head toward the earth, when the luxuriant braids almost touch the ground, and it looks as though they were tendrils of a flowering plant, by which she was firmly attached to the earth. Does she not stand there as a more imperfect being than man who looks up to heaven and barely touches the earth? And yet this hair is her beauty, yea, it is her power too, for it is indeed by this, as the poet says, she catches man, by this she takes man prisoner and binds him to the earth. I should like to say to such blockheads as preach emancipation, "Behold, there she stands in all her imperfection, a lowlier being than man; if you have the courage, clip the rich tresses, sheer asunder these heavy chains - and let her run like a crazy woman, like a criminal, a horror to men."

Woman is "everything" to man in that she gives him finiteness. But this gift of finiteness is also a trap (she "catches man", takes him prisoner and "binds him to the earth"). Woman is seen as both a blessing and a curse in so far as she gives man finiteness. As Judge William advocates the married state, it is obvious that he regards woman's ability to 'bind man to earth' as more a blessing than a curse. He sees this as necessary and ultimately good for both man and woman.

The Judge William of the Stages has but a single response to give to the aesthetic banqueters on the subject of female emancipation. It is in keeping with his arguments in Either/or II.

I was differently brought up in the Christian religion, and far as I am from being able to approve of the indecent attempts to emancipate woman, all pagan reminiscences seem to me equally foolish. My short and simple opinion is that woman is quite as good as man - and with that enough has been said. Every more prolix performance upon the theme of the difference between the sexes, and every deliberation as to which sex has the preeminence, is an idle intellectual occupation for the unemployed and for bachelors.
The Judge opposed the "pagan reminiscences" found in Romanticism as well as "the indecent attempts to emancipate woman". He (and S.K.) recognize that intensive deliberation upon the theme of the sexes "is an idle occupation for the unemployed and for bachelors" (despite the fact that he - Judge William - has so deliberated.)

Before leaving the subject of the emancipation of women, we can make reference to a single comparison between a model young girl and a woman who knows that love is an illusion. Through the use of this device (a device that was used more extensively in the works depicting the aesthetic mode of existence), we are told what a 'young girl' ought to be like.

...it is truly disgusting to see in modern comedy these experienced, intriguing, dissolute women who know that love is an illusion. I know no creature so abominable as such a woman. No debauchery is so loathsome to me, and nothing is so revolting as to see a lovable young girl in the hands of such a woman. Truly this is more terrible than to imagine her in the hands of a club of seducers. It is sad to see a man who has learned to discount every substantial value in life, but to see a woman on this false path is horrible. 93

This passage also tells us what man ought to be like. He ought not to "discount every substantial value in life" (love, etc.). But if woman is so corrupted, who will save man who is more liable to corruption on this point?
The categories of the ethical: Do they apply to woman?

In the works depicting the ethical sphere of existence, there are categories discussed that belong especially to that sphere. Important ethical categories include freedom and resolution. Let us consider these categories to determine whether and how they apply to both man and woman.

The Judge maintains that marriage involves immediacy (love) and "a resolution of the freest kind". It is, therefore, a synthesis of the immediate and the instinctive (the necessary), and the free. The Judge is careful to stress both elements. (Marriage for reasons other than love is "unaesthetic", "immoral", and "irreligious" "because the sensuous does not receive its due in immediacy." Likewise, he states that "without a resolution there is no marriage".)

The Judge maintains that a resolution of the will is necessary for both bride and groom. (He focuses upon marriage as an ethical act but there are, of course, other ethical acts.) It is the act of resolution that makes one free. "The act of resolution is the ethical act, it is freedom." And again, "resolution is universally the beginning of freedom." But what is involved in the making of a resolution?

The Judge maintains that for man, the resolution involves and is preceded by reflection. For woman this is not the case. Let us again consider the Judge's description of woman's leap from the aesthetic to the religious. (See footnote 68) The Judge states at the outset that it is not through reflection that woman is able to attain the resolution. He avoids telling us how she does attain the resolution until later in the passage, where he does so poetically. It would seem that woman attains the resolution and accomplishes the leap to the religious through fainting! How are we to understand the Judge's rather vague and
poetic description of her leap? What is "the thought which man's reflection ideally exhausts" but which causes woman to faint when it passes her by on the border of her consciousness? Again, the Judge's descriptions of male resolution are clear and complete. This is how reflection leads man to the point at which a leap is necessary:

Precisely because the reflection which comes before the resolution is entirely ideal, one single imagined danger will be enough to make the resolver resolve religiously. Let him think of any danger whatsoever, though it were merely that he cannot by thinking anticipate the future. Owing to the fact that he employs the whole power of his thought and the deep concern of his love to think this danger, he eo ipso thinks it in so dreadful an aspect that by himself he cannot overcome it. He has run aground; he must either let go of love...or believe in God. Thus the miracle of love is elevated to the purely religious miracle, the absurdity of love to a divine understanding with the absurdity of religion.98

If woman thinks of "any danger whatsoever" with regard to her relationship, she is overcome. By virtue of her humility she is convinced that "she can do nothing about it." She is further aided in her leap to the religious by her conviction that "with God all things are possible." Man, conversely, "employs the whole power of his thought and the deep concern of his love to think this danger". Nevertheless, he "run(s) around." At this point, "he must either let go of love...or believe in God." The leap that both woman and man make (they arrive at the point at which a leap is necessary in different ways) transfers them both from the aesthetic immediacy (love) to the religious immediacy (that which follows upon a resolution).
The immediacy of love recognizes only one other immediacy as of equally noble birth, that is the immediacy of religion...But religion is a new immediacy, it has reflection betwixt it and the first immediacy - otherwise paganism would be really religious and Christianity not. 99

The Judge maintains that aesthetic and religious immediacy are not the same thing and that a resolution is necessary if one is to make the transition from the one to the other. The resolution is a "leap". But the above passage is an example of the way in which a statement is made that seems to apply to both woman and man but upon closer inspection (i.e., examination of the author's views about man and woman), is seen to apply only to man. According to the Judge's statements, reflection lies "betwixt" the aesthetic and religious immediacies for man but not for woman.

Earlier in this Chapter we referred to the Judge's conviction that marriage makes both participants in first love free. In the Judge's description of woman's leap to the religious, it is suggested that woman "attains the resolution" necessary for marriage through intuition or what S.K. will refer to in a late journal entry as "instinctive sagacity." 100 Man, by contrast, employs his reason until he reaches the point at which a resolution or leap is necessary. "[H]e must either let go of love...or believe in God." It is the resolution, made through intuition or preceded by reflection, that frees ("resolution is universally the beginning of freedom"). There is some suggestion, however, that while man is made free through a resolution of the will, woman is made free through man. The following is a description of the engagement period, the time during which the resolution necessary for marriage must be made.
I must now admit that I have never had much liking for the spoozy sweetmeats of the engagement period, and the more ones makes of this period, the more it appears to me to resemble the time many men take before jumping into the water, first walking back and forth on the float, sticking now one hand, now one foot into the water, finding it now too cold, now too warm... If worse comes to worst, I am for those rash men who alone take pleasure in springing out into the water, even though the emotion in this case is never so great, the shudder of consciousness never so refreshing, the reaction of the will never so energetic, as when a strong manly arm embraces the loved one tightly but tenderly, powerfully and yet in such a way that precisely in this embrace she feels free before the face of God to plunge into the sea of existence. [0]

In another description of his wife and his marriage, the Judge writes:

for I have liberated her, also, whom I love with the youthful enthusiasm of first love. Not as though she had previously been bound, but she has rejoiced with me in our freedom. (emphasis mine)
APPENDIX

The following article was translated into English by Mrs. Birte Bird (B.A., B.Ed.). It appears in the original Danish in Samlede Værker, eds., A.B. Drachmann, J.L. Heiberg and H.O. Lange (Copenhagen: Gylden-salske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag, 1906), pp. 5-8.

Another Defense of the Exceptional Talents of Women

Many objections have been made against women trying to become educated not only in practical, but also in theoretical areas. Yes, even in this journal number 33¹, it is presented as something of an irony, chiefly with regard to the scientific education which, at present, is offered to them through lectures, but how unjust! History shows that women's high talents were always acknowledged to a certain extent. No sooner had man been created than Eve was already listening to philosophical lectures given by the snake; and it is noticeable that she understood them so well that she could utilize the conclusions of those lectures in her domestic affairs. In the East an endeavor was made to take advantage of this aptitude for contemplation and the subsequent need for deeper insights, which had already been demonstrated thus. For this reason women were confined to seraglios; and when a lone wanderer ventured into these sanctuaries he was probably driven only by an inquiring mind. It was also for this reason that they wore veils so that their meditations would not be disturbed. Of course not all women were thus torn from life to ponder abstracts, a great many attempted to make their abilities felt. As orators women have such an exceptional talent that they are responsible for a particular trend during an epoch in history, namely the so-called curtain-lectures; and Xanthippe² is still accepted as the model of female
eloquence and the founder of a school which has been preserved until today
while the Socratic school has long since vanished. Even though
Christianity was hard on women by prohibiting them to speak at assemblies,
they were still allowed a playground for their eloquence at home. When the
rabbis denied them the right to join in discussions it was just because
they were afraid that the women might do them out of a job or unveil their
weaknesses. In the Middle Ages the numerous witch hunts indicate the deep
insights women possessed regarding the secrets of nature.

But many centuries passed before the exceptional talents of women were
truly recognized. This recognition initially belonged to France, two
phenomena prove this: the first that Reason during the French Revolution
was represented by a woman, and the second that the Saint-Simonists placed
them on an equal footing with men. Add to this the fact that until now it
has not been possible to get the better of a lady in an argument and that
the dialectic skill of women has silenced many an opponent. All this
proves her superiority in spiritual matters, a superiority which extends to
all branches of psychical gifts. This is probably why the anterooms teem
with ladies who are married exactly because their shrewdness, ingenuity,
ext. far exceed those of their male counterparts.

Examples of the great talents of women are not lacking in these days.
We owe the ladies several theatrical works one of which has created quite
a stir since it has enriched casuistry with new areas of contact. In the
later years only one particular lady has been able to prove the immortality
of the soul: a book which in combination with Christiane Rosen's Cookbook
has kept many people alive. The ladies hasten toward their elevated objectives: Ladies deliver critiques of aesthetics; in medicine the College of Health extends a hand to them in their effort to allow people to escape the tar-cap; in art they concern themselves with the most lofty subjects: they conjure up supernatural creatures on the canvas, and they co-operate with men in the dissemination of art. In manufacturing they are the inventors of a method to sew gloves out of stockings; in history they keep up-to-date and many magazines and journals, which men consider trivial, do not escape their sharp eyes: in fashion journals they study the spirit of the times. Thanks to you, big men, who helped them to rise to these heights of acknowledgement, but who still did not forget the other sex. For this reason it is so wonderful to see that the man, who especially wants to affect women, does not forget the men, but at last extends his joyful love of mankind to everyone. I foresee with pleasure the time when the ladies will be able to clarify what love really is, will have a clear understanding of the nature of warmth, will surpass men in the accuracy of historical research since they will even know what Hagbart and Signe had for dinner or if, indeed, they ate anything at all. They will also be able to see far into the secrets of The Holy Trinity (though this may be particularly difficult for them, since they up to now have found it hard to comprehend that two could agree). Thus returns The Age of Chivalry from The Middle Ages to another sphere! In the same way that the ladies were then acknowledged as judges of tournaments so they can now judge debates, plays, philosophical works; as each knight carried his lady's colour no longer will we mention the followers of Kant or Hegel, etc. No, in future "The Blue" or "The Red" will be the name; from Eve's hand we were to receive the apply of knowledge. Thus you elevate yourselves above the
earth. Up above you are already transformed to winged birds\textsuperscript{11}, you just fill your large sleeves with air and disappear in front of our eyes, in front of the eyes of the great multitudes which will be present at the ascension of the ladies. So fly from this ungrateful earth, raise yourselves on the wings of philosophy and view with contempt those whose cowardly servile spirit would prefer to remain at the fleshpots with the Jews of the past\textsuperscript{12}. And when men during this cold winter have repented their sins then spring will smile at your return when woman will again extend her hand to man: summer fool and winter buffoon!
FOOTNOTES

1. Number 33 Interim Journal for December 4, 1834, column 5-7; The Higher Origin of Women is Defended. (Marked P.E.).

2. Xanthippe: the wife of Socrates; in Antiquity many stories circulated about her shrewishness (cf. Zenophon's memoirs II, 2).


5. We owe the ladies several theatrical works: in 1834 plays by the author of "An Everyday Story" were published with a preface in which J.L. Heiberg denies authorship. This publication contains among other plays "The Frigate: The Swan", the conflict of which rests on an attempt at bigamy, for this reason it was rejected by the theatre (see the edition quoted page XI and "Letters to and from J.L. Heiberg" pp. 145).

6. ...only one particular lady: probably Hanna Irgens. Orfania, Copenhagen 1822, pp. 113. (Promise fulfilled after death, contribution to the belief in a spiritual world); cf. P.M. Møller, Posthumous Works, Copenhagen 1849, VI, page 14.


8. ...to escape the tar-cap: an earlier cure for scabies of the scalp in which the patient's head was covered with tar. Permission to practice this cure was occasionally given to a wise woman. (Annual

9. ...they conjure up supernatural creatures: may refer to Mariane Frederikke Stub who exhibited several paintings of angels, cherubs, idealized female heads, etc. at Charlottenborg between 1822 and 1829.

10. ...the man: apparently referring to J.L. Heiberg's "Invitation to a Series of Philosophical Lectures" (which did not materialize). "On the Importance of Philosophy to the Present Time" (1823) see Prosaic Works 1861, I, page 435: "...so that he in a series of lectures could present an introduction to philosophy comprehensible to all educated people. Yes, this hope is still so alive for him that he does not even assume that these lectures be limited to men, but dares to believe that also educated ladies, since they beautify the gathering by their presence, could take part in the more serious expositions of the lecture. Even if men usually have a more incisive and consistent intellect as well as a greater dialectic aptitude, then the female sex usually have a more certain, more infallible ability to grasp the truth in a spontaneous manner....and the author considers one of these qualities just as important to understanding as any one of the others."

11. Up above you are already transformed to winged birds: cf. Horace, Odes II 20, 10: "I am transformed to a white bird above."

12. ...the Jews of the past: Second Book of Moses, 16, 3.
Footnotes

The ethical man's relation to woman

4. Either/Or, II 62.
5. Either/Or, II 21.
7. Either/Or, II 50.
8. Either/Or, II 50-1.
10. Stages, p. 146.
15. Stages, p. 128.
18. Either/Or, II 249.
22. Stages, p. 112.
27. Stages, p. 113.

"Woman's beauty increases with the years"
32. Stages, p. 141.
33. Stages, p. 135.
34. Either/Or, II 277.
35. Either/Or, II 278.
36. Either/Or, II 279.
37. Either/Or, II 176.
38. Stages, p. 140.

"Woman explains finiteness"
40. Either/Or, II 315.
41. Either/Or, II 316.
42. Either/Or, II 318.
43. *Either/Or*, II 316.
44. *Either/Or*, II 211.

"Woman is humble"
55. *Either/Or*, II 58.
57. *Either/Or*, II 54.

*Woman Saves Man*
59. *Either/Or*, II 211.
60. *Stages*, p. 132.
63. *Either/Or*, II 312.
64. *Either/Or*, II 68.

**Woman and the Religious**

68. *Stages*, p. 163.
70. *Either/Or*, II 88.
77. *Either/Or*, II 198.
82. *Either/Or*, II 320.

**Emancipation**

83. *Either/Or*, II 54.
84. *Either/Or*, II 52.
85. Either/Or, II 22.
87. Malantschuk, p. 38.
89. Either/Or, II 316-7.
90. Stages, p. 61.
92. Stages, p. 127.
95. Stages, p. 163.
96. Stages, p. 115.
97. Stages, p. 158.
98. Stages, p. 160.
99. Stages, p. 159.
100. Hong and Hong, IV, 579.
101. Either/Or, II 34.
102. Either/Or, II 156.
103. Either/Or, I 426.
CHAPTER THREE

We have seen how man relates to and regards woman when he resides in the aesthetic and ethical spheres of existence. Let us now consider how man relates to and regards woman when he resides in the religious sphere of existence. In describing this sphere, S.K. makes use of pseudonyms (notably, Frater Taciturnus, the author of 'Quidan's Diary' in Stages on Life's Way) and writes in his own name. We will refer to the pseudonyms when necessary and to S.K. when indicated.

THE RELIGIOUS MAN'S RELATION TO WOMAN

Let us begin with the question, 'How does man relate to woman when he resides in the religious sphere of existence?' Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms question the advisability of marriage for the man who is above all concerned with matters of the spirit. Quidam in his Diary asks, "ought a soldier of the advanced guard to be married? Dare a soldier on the frontier (spiritually understood) take a wife,...?" Quidam answers his own question later in his Diary.

This too I perceive, that the unmarried man can make greater ventures in the world of spirit than the married man, he can stake everything, being concerned only with the idea,...

S.K. shares this practical concern and echoes Quidam's ideas in his Journal:

Christianity has recommended poverty, the unmarried state, etc. so that by being occupied with finite things as little as possible, men could all the better serve the truth. It is clear enough that a person who can live on roots be unmarried, etc. has more time and can less calculatingly serve the truth.
We will recall what was said in Chapter Two about the "justified exception to the universal". Judge William maintains that "he who marries realizes the universal." If a man is to be a justified exception to the universal; "he must not feel himself higher than the universal, but more lowly". Furthermore, he shall love life; if he became hostile to life, then he is unjustified for the fact that he is an exception does not render less beautiful that from which he is excepted...

It is clear that S.K. regarded himself as a justified exception to the universal. At the very least, he strove to fulfill what he regarded as the requirements of the justified exception. Long after he penned the works in which Judge William appears, S.K. wrote truthfully in his Journal: "who has described marriage and all these aspects of human existence more beautifully, more charmingly than I?" Quidam also refers to "fight(ing) for the good cause of love" and "hold(ing) up the banner". It was this "banner" or ideal that Judge William held up in Either/Or II and 'Observations Upon Marriage'.

In a number of Journal entries prior to 1854, S.K. repeats the requirements of the justified exception and discusses his conception of the role of the single individual within Christianity.

The error in the Middle Ages (which has commonly repeated itself) is that someone who acts in a special way wants to make his way the norm for others. Not to marry is obviously to act in a special way. With regard to the person concerned, this may be entirely pleasing to God. But it is something else to establish this as the norm, yes, even if only to initiate others into it for the sake of the cause. The special one is the exception and ought to be conscious of himself as such, and rather than advising others to do the same, the exception should instead advise others to do the universal.
The exception to the universal is to encourage others to "do the universal." S.K. writes in his Journal of fulfilling this requirement: "My relationship to marriage is like Diana's to those giving birth; herself unmarried, she assisted."8

S.K. was convinced that as an unmarried person, he was in a unique position to perform certain tasks in the service of Christianity. He suggests that

in these times it might be beneficial for a person to refrain from marrying, expressly in order to declare that spirituality still has so much reality that it can be enough, more than enough, for a life.9

Elsewhere he asserts that, "If remaining single is only properly understood, then religion always need the unmarried, especially in our time."10

Thus far we have seen that S.K. was anxious to defend the role of the unmarried person in the service of the truth. He has not disparaged marriage in the passages quoted above but has asserted the equality of the unmarried with the married state. In the discussion of marriage that follows, we will see that S.K. and his pseudonyms do not always speak as highly of marriage as they have thus far.

S.K. discerned a problem in the way in which marriage was regarded "particularly in Protestantism, particularly in Denmark." 'Christians' had come to regard getting married as "a perfection."

Christendom is in dire need of an unmarried person to take up Christianity again - not as if there were something objectionable in marriage, but it certainly has come to be highly overrated. Getting married has finally become the highest and truest earnestness. But this is not Christian. You are permitted to marry; Christianity blesses it; but never forget, the place for the more decisively religious persons.12
S.K. summarizes his perception of Christendom's view of marriage in *Training in Christianity*. He puts the following speech in the mouth of a woman whose husband is inclined to take a more rigorous view of the requirements of Christianity:

> Why will you expose yourself to all the inconvenience and exertion, all the ingratitude and opposition? Let us two enjoy life in ease and comfort. Marriage, as the parson says, is an honourable estate, well-pleasing to God. Indeed it is the only estate of which this is expressly said; it is not said even of the ecclesiastical estate. One should marry - more than this or other than this God does not require of any man; and you have done your part, you have married - a second time even. Give up therefore these thoughts, which are nothing but vanity and madness. The doctrine which would thus drive a man out into the world is misanthropy, and therefore far removed from Christianity, which, as the parson said on Sunday, is the gentle teaching which kindly relieves all pressure.

S.K. asserts that Christendom's conception of marriage is not, strictly speaking, Christian. It is not consonant with what the New Testament teaches about marriage. S.K. 'holds up the banner' of the New Testament in an attempt to remind Christendom of the ideal.

In the *Works of Love*, S.K. speaks of marriage in much the same way that Judge William does. According to the Judge, "love is no marriage, neither is a resolution alone a marriage." Rather, "there must be a resolution superadded to love". Similarly, S.K. speaks of marriage as combining the elements of erotic love and conscience. "...Christianity through marriage has made erotic love into a matter of conscience,..."� In addressing the bride and groom individually ("have you deliberated on this with God and with your conscience?"), the pastor "makes an affair of the heart a matter of conscience."� This question is asked of the bride and groom because both belong "first and foremost to God before
[they] belong to any other relationship."16 We have seen in Judge William's treatises how acknowledging God as the source of their love frees the couple from their characteristic bonds (she, from a tendency to regard her lover as a god and he, from pride).

S.K.'s position on marriage (and, he asserts, Christianity's) is that marriage is "permitted" but not "recommended". Rather, "Christianity recommended celibacy."17 We have already noted some of S.K.'s practical concerns with marriage for the person who is concerned, first and foremost, with matters of the spirit. S.K. also has some deeper reservations about marriage. He writes: "Marriage is a physical unity, not a unity in spirit and truth; therefore it says in Genesis of man and woman that "they are to be one flesh."18 In a later Journal entry on same subject, he continues: "Marriage is not really love, and therefore it is said that the two become one flesh - but not one spirit, since two spirits cannot possibly become one spirit."19

On the subject of married love, S.K. introduces a theme that will be resurrected and repeated with even more vehemence during the last years of his life. He contends that married love is a form of self-love.

Erotic love and marriage are really only a deeper confirmation of self-love by becoming two in self-loving. For this very reason married people become so satisfied, so vegetatively prosperous - because true love does not fit into earthly existence the way self-love does. Therefore the solitary lacks self-love; married people express this by saying: He is selfish, loves himself - because married people presume that marriage is love.20

Married love is associated with self-love while the "solitary" or the celibate is capable of "true" love. For this reason and for the other reasons mentioned above, "Christianity is suspicious of marriage."21
We can summarize S.K.'s ideas on marriage and celibacy as revealed by his pseudonym Frater Taciturnus and himself (in works published under his own name) in the following way. S.K. objected to Christendom's view of marriage. According to it, "it has almost become a perfection to get married." As a corrective, he 'held up the banner' of the New Testament in an attempt to remind Christendom of Christianity's view of marriage. According to him, Christianity "permits" marriage and even "blesses it" but it does not "recommend" it. Indeed, it is somewhat "suspicious" of marriage because of its tendency to make its members "so satisfied, so vegetatively prosperous". It also hinders the person who wants to "make greater ventures in the world of the spirit" by tying him or her to the finite. Throughout most of his authorship, however, S.K. strove to be "the justified exception to the universal" and to advise others to "do the universal". He insisted that as an unmarried man he was an exception, and that the exception ought never to be made into the rule.

Both Vernard Eller and Gregor Malantschuk agree that in the religious and other signed writings prior to 1854, we can discern S.K.'s true opinions on marriage, celibacy, and other related matters. Eller contends that S.K.'s position on the subject of marriage and celibacy was "dialectical". He (S.K.) asserted that "both marriage and celibacy can be Christian."22 However, "the balance that would give marriage and celibacy equal rights, equal honour, equal emphasis...is a very difficult dialectic to hold."23 In S.K.'s varied treatment of marriage and celibacy, we find evidence of the difficulty of that dialectic.
S.K.'s AND THE RELIGIOUS MAN'S CONCEPTION OF WOMAN

The equality of man and woman

Before discussing the differences between the sexes as perceived by S.K. and his religious pseudonyms, we can discuss his notion of the equality of the sexes.

In works depicting the ethical* and religious spheres of existence and in his Journal, S.K. maintained that before God and from the point of view of Christianity, man and woman are absolutely equal and essentially alike. He asserted that this is so despite any and all more superficial differences between the sexes. He writes, "In spirit there is no difference between man and woman."24 And again, "(i)n the relationship to God...such a distinction as man/woman vanishes."25

It will be recalled that, according to the Judge, a resolution is necessary for marriage. Both man and woman must resolve individually about the step they are about to take but they will make the resolution in different ways. Similarly, the pastor addresses the bride and groom individually about a matter of conscience. It is on the level of human being that they are so addressed.

"(T)he question of conscience about a matter of conscience makes her in inwardness before God absolutely equal with the man."26

S.K. maintains that the sexes are absolutely equal and essentially alike. He credits Christianity with establishing the absolute equality of the sexes but argues that in doing so, Christianity has not abolished or done away with the differences between the sexes. Of woman, S.K. writes:

*Stages, p. 127
...she is more sensate than man; for were she more spiritual she could never have her culmination point in another. Spirit is the true independent. Of course every religious view, like every more profound philosophical view, sees women, despite this difference, as essentially identical with man; but it is not foolish enough to forget for that reason the truth of the difference, aesthetically and ethically understood.27

There are differences between the sexes "aesthetically and ethically" and these ought not to be done away with. It is clear that S.K. regards the differences between the sexes as innate and therefore not amenable to change. Thus far we have seen S.K.'s pseudonyms roundly, certainly, and positively. Some of the pseudonyms regard the attempts at equality as ridiculous and others (Judge, William, for example) in the following passage, S.K. acknowledges that women are inferior greatly because of the perceived differences between the sexes. Nevertheless, he opposes all attempts in the secular realm to attain equality with man.

What atmosphere, the world not seen in the relationships of man and woman - that she, almost "the despised" was a despised creature compared to the man, a creature of another species! What battles have been to establish women on equal terms with men in the secular world! But Christianity makes only the transformation of infinity and does it, therefore, in all stillness. Outwardly in a way the old remains - for the man shall be the woman's master and she shall be submissive to him, but in inwardness everything is transformed, transformed with the aid of this little question to the woman, whether she has deliberated with her conscience about having this man - for a master, for otherwise she does not get him. Yet the question of conscience about a matter of conscience makes her in inwardness before God absolutely equal with the man. ...Foolish men have foolishly busied themselves in the name of Christianity to make it obvious in the world that women have equal rights with men - Christianity has never demanded or desired this. It has done everything for woman if she Christianly will be satisfied.
This passage raises at least two questions. (1) It is stated that Christianity makes the "transformation of infinity" through the question of conscience addressed to the bride. Subsequently "everything is transformed". We have seen elsewhere that woman leaps into the religious sphere when she makes or is ready to make a love commitment. If woman's fate as a religious being is so tied to her fate as a sexual being or a married being, what are we to make of the unmarried woman? Does the "transformation of infinity" come about in any way other than through marriage? Is it accurate to say that woman's fate as a religious being is totally tied to and dependent upon her fate as a sexual being?

(2) Christianity may never have "demanded or desired" that it be "obvious in the world that women have equal rights with men" but does this mean that women and men ought not to desire this? S.K. has acknowledged that women have suffered horribly "in the secular world". Are women to be blamed if they seek relief from such suffering? Surely it would be odd if they did not.

In turning our attention to the differences between the sexes as perceived by S.K., we can draw a picture of woman and man as he does in his religious writings and Journal. Because woman is the subject of this thesis, we will focus more upon her portrait than upon man's. Almost all of the themes that arise in S.K.'s descriptions of woman and man in the religious writings and Journal have been heard before. We will begin with some of the most basic of these.
Woman is more sensuous than man

We have seen that in footnote 27, woman is described as "more sensate than man." Woman's sensuousness (and the implications of it) are discussed at some length in The Concept of Dread. In that work, S.K. offers two "proofs" for the sensuousness of woman.

The first proof is an aesthetic one. S.K. maintains that if we think of woman in her ideal aspect, we think of her as beautiful, "noting that the fact that this is her ideal aspect is precisely the proof that she is more sensuous than man." S.K. defines the beautiful as the "unity of the psychic and the somatic." This is a synthesis from which a third element, spirit, is excluded. But man is characterized more than woman by spirit. For this reason, man is not beautiful in the same way that woman is. S.K. notes that even in Greek art, which "conceives man and woman essentially in the same way, without consideration of spirit", there is a difference in the way masculine beauty and feminine beauty are portrayed. "(I)n manly beauty the face and its expression are more essential than in feminine beauty,..." This is because "(t)he spiritual finds expression in the countenance." S.K. argues that in the Greek representation of feminine beauty, the expression of the face is "unessential."

Essentially Venus remains equally beautiful whether she is represented sleeping or waking - indeed, she is perhaps most beautiful sleeping, and yet the sleeping state is precisely the expression for the absence of spirit.

S.K. argues that in more recent conceptions of feminine beauty, "the face has acquired a greater importance than it had in classical art." (In other words, woman is regarded as having more spirit. This, S.K. would undoubtedly say, is due to the influence of Christianity."
Indeed, it is the perspective of Christianity that woman is spirit, though man is more so.) Nevertheless, the "expression in the countenance" is still more essential to masculine than to feminine beauty. S.K. writes:

Whereas the history of spirit (and it is precisely the secret of spirit that it always has history) dares to stamp itself upon the countenance of man, so that all is forgotten if only its writing is clear and noble, woman will make her effect in another way, as a totality, even though the face has acquired a greater importance than it had in classical art. The impression now must be of a totality which has no history. Therefore silence is not only woman's highest wisdom, but also her highest beauty.

The idea of woman impressing us as "a totality which has no history" puts us in mind of her leap to the religious from the aesthetic described in Chapters One and Two. Woman is not to have a history (that is, is not to make her way to the religious by a series of steps) and therefore there is no need for her to speak. She has nothing, strictly speaking, to speak of. Her leap is certainly worthy of communication but it cannot be communicated through language. Silence (combined with action) is the most effective way for her to communicate the truth experienced in her leap.

S.K. also offers an "ethical" proof for his contention that woman is more sensuous than man. He writes:

Ethically regarded, woman culminates in procreation. Therefore the Scripture says that her desire shall be to her husband. It is true also that the husband's desire is to her, but his life does not culminate in this desire, unless it is either a sorry sort of life or a lost life. But the fact that in this woman reaches her culmination shows that she is more sensuous.
One way in which woman expresses the universal is through motherhood. Indeed, this is the highest thing that woman can do ethically. Man expresses the universal when he becomes a father and so fatherhood is an ethical act for man, as motherhood is for woman. But the 'fact' that "woman culminates in procreation...shows that she is more sensuous."

S.K. maintains that one consequence of woman's sensuousness (there may be others) is that she has more dread than man. Dread or anxiety is an expression of the individual's relationship to possibility within the finite. It is the mark of freedom on the lower level of human existence, inasmuch as the individual is drawn to possibility by anxiety and simultaneously is repelled from it...35.

The free individual experiences dread in the face of possibility. S.K. explains why it is that woman (who "essentially, like man, is qualified by spirit") experiences more dread than man.

(W)oman is more sensuous than man. Here of course it is not a question of an empirical condition or of an average but of a difference in the synthesis. If in one part of the synthesis there is a "more", the consequence will be that when the spirit posits itself the cleft in the division will be more profound, and dread will find in the possibility of freedom more ample scope.36.

Dread occurs when the spirit, as it were, has 'nothing to do'. Thus human beings experience dread in sexual activity, in pain, sickness, and in the face of death. S.K. explains the experience of dread in sexual activity.
dread is present in all erotic enjoyment (not by any means because it is sinful), and this is so even if the priest were to bless the couple ten times. But why this dread? Because in the culmination of the erotic the spirit cannot take part... The spirit indeed is present, for it is this which constitutes the synthesis, but it cannot express itself in the erotic experience; it feels itself a stranger. It says as it were to the erotic, "My dear, I cannot be a third party here, therefore I will hide myself for the time being." But this precisely is dread...

In the same way that human beings experience dread in sexual activity, they experience dread in all situations where the spirit "cannot take part". In another work, S.K. describes the actress before going on stage as, having dread precisely because while waiting to use her powers, there is nothing for them "to do." Similarly, the person who is ill or in pain experiences dread. We might expect that woman, because she routinely experiences pain in menstruation and childbirth, experiences more dread than man. There are simply more occasions when the spirit has "nothing to do." S.K. writes:

That a woman in childbirth has dread is well known. Physiology has its explanation, psychology must also have its own. In childbirth woman is again at the utmost point of one extreme of the synthesis, hence the spirit trembles, suspended. Dread, however, is an expression for the perfection of human nature, and it is therefore only among the lesser kinds one finds analogies to the easy delivery of the beast.
S.K. asserts here and elsewhere that, far from being an imperfection, the presence of dread implies a perfection.40

Woman and "homeliness"

Related to the idea that woman is more sensuous than man is the idea that domesticity is woman's special trait. We will recall that, according to Judge William, "woman has an innate talent, a primitive gift and an absolute virtuosity for explaining finiteness." In other words, "she was created to deal with the small." This idea is picked up in the religious and other signed works and is discussed by S.K., though in different language. He uses the word "homeliness" when referring to woman's ability to "deal with the small".

There is an adjective which characterizes the trait which is decisive for women...This trait is homeliness - 'wifely homeliness', in the best and most favourable sense of the word. It is woman's character, just as it is regarded as man's character to be a 'character'...Homeliness! With this word we make to woman the great concession that really it is she who creates the home.41

S.K. addresses his words to woman when he describes in more detail what 'homeliness' involves.

40 We may be able to take S.K.'s analysis of dread further than he has done. He has observed that "women are more anxious than men." If he is correct in asserting that dread occurs "when there is nothing for [the spirit] to do", may we not conclude that women experience anxiety because in S.K.'s day and to a lesser extent in our own, there is not enough for woman's 'spirit' to do? In S.K.'s time and culture, women were locked out of opportunity and enterprise. Standing on the sideline of cultural and intellectual life, woman's spirit was as suspended as though she were in pain. For a more recent description of the 'dread' experienced by women in North American society, see Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique.
(W)hen but narrow means were thy lot, thou
nevertheless didst know how to arrange thy house,
thy home, pleasantly, agreeably, invitingly, not
without fascination, in spite of its frugality;
and if more ample means were thy lot, thou didst
know how to arrange thy house, thy home, taste-
fully, cosily, invitingly, not without fascina-
tion... 42

According to S.K., the most important element in a home is silence.

Silence is not a definite something, for it does
not consist simply in not speaking. No, silence
is like the subdued light in the cozy room, like
friendliness in the humble chamber— it is not a
thing one remarks upon, but it is there, and it
exercises its beneficent influence. 43

It is this kind of silence that woman is most capable of introducing
into the home. We have already heard S.K.'s pronouncement that "silence
is not only woman's highest wisdom, but also her highest beauty."

This silence has a religious significance. S.K. maintains that to
"keep silent in the Churches" (Paul's injunction with regard to women)
"means precisely to keep silent before God, and precisely this belongs
to true godliness..." 44 S.K. writes:

From a woman, therefore, thou dost learn then
humble faith in relation to the Extraordinary
Man, the humble faith which does not incredu-
ously, doubtfully, ask, 'why?' 'wherefore?'
'how is this possible?' but humbly believes
like Mary and says, 'Behold the handmaid of the
Lord'. She says that, but observe that to say
that is, really to keep silent. From a woman
thou dost learn to hear the Word rightly; from
Mary, who, though she 'understood not the saying',
yet 'kept it in her heart', so that she did not
demand first to understand, but silently treasured
the Word in the right place; for that indeed is
the right place where the Word, the good seed, is
'kept in an honest and good heart'. From a woman
thou dost learn the hushed, profound, God-fearing
sorrow which is silent before God... 45

Woman is the model for all who would hear and read the Word rightly
(that is, without forgetting). She, by virtue of her humility,
especially able to be silent before God. We have seen that, according to the Judge, woman is more ready than man to believe that with regard to the fulfillment of her wish, she can do nothing. She is also more ready to believe that "with God all things are possible" while man believes that "for God there is something impossible." S.K. writes:

That a woman is presented as a teacher, as a pattern of piety, can astonish no one who knows that piety or godliness is by its very nature a womanly quality. 46

Thus woman, who is especially capable of silence before God, ought to introduce silence into the home for her own sake and for the sake of her family. S.K. described the age in which he lived, as especially "noisy" and man, as the creator of this noise.

(M)an, the shrewd pate, has become sleepless in the effort to find out new, ever new means for increasing the noise, for spreading abroad with the greatest possible speed, and on the greatest possible scale, the meaningless racket. 47

It is interesting to note that the very trait that S.K. says belongs to woman and makes of her "a queen" (namely, "homeliness") poses a threat to the man who would interpret Christianity more rigorously than Christendom does. S.K. writes of the "poor plain woman" that if she is "homely" in the sense described above, "I bow to her as profoundly as to a queen." 48 Conversely, the woman who "is not homely" and who "has not even a respect for this trait" is "with all her talents, beauty, and celebrity...but a mediocre wench." 49

* Here we see something of the power that man has wielded over woman through his definitions of her. The woman who possesses the desired trait (a trait that man needs and desires her to have) is regarded as a "queen". The woman who does not (and who does not want to) is condemned as "a mediocre wench."
While S.K. praises and encourages "homeliness" in a woman, he also maintains that such a rapport with finitude is the opposite of Christianity.

In her relationship to the man (erotic love - marriage) it is really true that the woman - and this is her special charm - "understands only the things of men" (Matt 16:23): sparing the beloved, taking care of him, etc., which is directly opposite to the truly divine prodigality, which is the impetuosity of martyrdom, which is to be sensitive to what belongs to God... From this it is also readily seen how right I am in my contention against Christendom, that Jewish piety is an attachment to this life and is an understanding of the things of men - Christianity is to be sensitive to the things of God.50

Just prior to the speech that is contained in footnote 13, S.K. writes:

...Christianity knows very well that with woman and love all this weakness and love of coddling arises in a man, and that in so far as the husband himself does not bethink himself of it, the wife ordinarily pleads it with an ingenuous candor which is exceedingly difficult for the husband, especially for one who is required in the strictest sense to serve Christianity.51

Christianity is "to be sensitive to the things of God." According to S.K., woman by nature "understands only the things of men." "This is her special charm", and we have seen that S.K. encourages her in this. Indeed, one would almost think that woman's salvation consists in her being "homely", but how can this be if Christianity is the very opposite of such a rapport with finitude? Now we see that man is both encouraged and discouraged from coming into a relation with woman. Woman supplies man's lack by creating the home and introducing silence into it. Elsewhere it is said that woman can make being a Christian difficult (if not impossible) for a man. But the most confusing
contradiction concerns woman's fate as a Christian. It would seem that the very traits that mark her as a woman (traits that S.K. praises and encourages in her) make it impossible for her to a Christian. She both helps man (and herself) by her silence but hinders man (and herself) by her homeliness and rapport with finitude.

**Woman is characterized by devotion**

We have seen that in works depicting the aesthetic and ethical spheres of existence, woman is said to be characterized by devotion. The Seducer speaks of woman as a "being for another". Constantine contrasts her "devotion and humility" with man's "pride and self-sufficiency". Finally, the Judge contends that woman is more apt to pray for others than man is.

S.K. repeats the theme of woman's devotion in both signed and pseudonymous religious works. Quidam speaks with disapproval of the kind of devotion his betrothed shows for him. (We can safely interpret Quidam's discussion of 'her' devotion to him as an autobiographical description of Regina's devotion to S.K.) Quidam was aware that he was being regarded as a god, and was concerned about the effects of this kind of devotion upon his beloved.

For the moment she has idealized me, and now by this little misconception she disparages herself. If only there does not succeed to this a weakness, a blind devotion towards me which I cannot and will not understand. I do not want to be worshipped. I do not believe that unfaithfulness on her part would wound me so sorely as this annihilation of herself, as it seems in my eyes to be. I am proud, and so ought everyone to be in relation to other men; let him be humble before God, and that in every respect, but not humbled under the personality of another man. Truly, there is a kind of devotion which if it holds fast to me would compel me to repel it...
In other works we saw that woman was capable of "false humility" and of becoming disingenuous in her devotion. We see the same awareness of and concern for these problems here.

And there is no limit to the expression of devotion when once it begins to express itself directly. It is as when a person first begins to complain of his sufferings: soon the true expression no longer suffices to move the hearer, and so, without being conscience of it, he stealthily interjects untruth. That misunderstanding does irreparable harm...54

S.K. discusses woman and devotion in more general and direct terms. He asserts that "woman's nature is devotion, submission, and it is un-womanly if it is not so."55 Because this is the case, nature has "equipped" her with instinct so that she might know where to direct her devotion.

For just because in her nature she carries the whole womanly devotion, nature has lovingly equipped her with an instinct, in comparison with which in point of delicacy the most eminently developed male reflection is as nothing. This devotion of woman, this (to speak as a Greek) divine dowry and riches, is too great a good to be thrown away blindly; and yet no clear-sighted manly reflection is capable of seeing sharply enough to be able to dispose of it rightly. Hence nature has taken care of her: instinctively she sees blindly with greater clarity than the most sharp-sighted reflection, instinctively she sees where it is she is to admire, what it is she ought to devote herself to. Devotion is the only thing woman has, therefore nature undertook to be her guardian.56

S.K. (through his pseudonym Anti-Climacus) maintains that both man and woman are capable of devotion but that they typically devote themselves in different ways.
By devotion (the word literally means giving away) [woman] has lost herself, and only thus is she happy, only thus is she herself; a woman who is happy without devotion, that is, without giving herself away (to whatever it may be she gives herself) is unwomanly. A man also devotes himself (gives himself away), and it is a poor sort of a man who does not do it; but his self is not devotion (this is the expression for womanly substantial devotion), nor does he acquire himself by devotion, as in another sense a woman does, he has himself; he gives himself away, but his self still remains behind as a sober consciousness of devotion, whereas woman, with genuine womanliness, plunges herself into that to which she devotes herself.57

Woman, in devoting herself to another, typically gives her whole self away. In so doing, she acquires herself. Man can and should devote himself to others but when he does, a part of himself or "his self still remains behind." (In a statement prior to the two long passages quoted above, S.K. asserts that woman does not have "the selfishly developed conception of the self" that man has.)58

It is interesting to note that in spite of all of S.K.'s pseudonymous and "direct" assertions about woman's devotion, he still does not think that she is as capable of a God-relationship as man is. He concludes his discussion of womanly and manly devotion in the following way:

In the relationship to God, where such a distinction as man/woman vanishes, it is true of man as of woman that devotion is the self, and that by devotion the self is acquired. This is true equally for man and woman, although most frequently in real life woman is related to God only through man.59

Devotion to God involves the kind of devotion that woman typically gives to others. ("...devotion is the self, and...by devotion the self is acquired.") And yet woman, who we would think, would be most capable of devotion to God by virtue of her natural propensity for 'giving herself away', "most frequently in real life...is related to God only through
man. It would seem, that woman's problem with devotion (described in Quidam's experience with his beloved) is that she is apt to regard her beloved as god-like rather than human. She is capable of devoting herself to human beings in a way that ought to be reserved for God. Why is it, then, that in relation to God her devotion somehow fails her?

Even S.K. admits (grudgingly?) in his Journal that

[t]here is really something to it that in the last resort woman are a bit more self-sacrificing...They are not as likely to acquire the market-price standard the way a man does, who from the outset is on the go in life...one still sees in [women] the traces and expressions of individuality, the boldness to grasp a single thought and to dare to hold on'to it...

S.K. suggests elsewhere that "individuality", single-mindedness and the ability to sacrifice oneself are requisites for Christianity.* Why, then, "most frequently in real life" is woman related to God "only through man"?

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*Individuality is discussed as a task in Concluding Unscientific Postscript. Also, single-mindedness when sorrowing for sin is the theme of 'The Woman that was a Sinner' in Training in Christianity.
Man is reflective; woman is instinctive or intuitive

We have heard one pseudonym after another maintain that woman is not as reflective as man. It is therefore not surprising that S.K., under his own name, maintains the same thing.

For man no doubt in comparison with woman has many thoughts (if this is to be counted an advantage, especially in the present reference, seeing that in addition to this he also has many half-thoughts)... Let it be granted that man has more seriousness with respect to thought, yet with respect to feeling, passion, decision, with respect to not creating an obstacle to oneself and the decision by thoughts, proposals, resolutions, with respect to not deceiving oneself by coming quite close to decision without coming to decision, in these respects woman has more seriousness; but, in fact, decision (especially in a godly sense, and more especially in relation to sorrow for sin) is precisely what seriousness means.

It would seem that woman, by virtue of her ability to act decisively, is especially able to become a Christian. Some of S.K.'s works about the nature of faith in the Christian God and about how one 'becomes a Christian' indicate, however, that Christianity involves the ability to think about and 'see' things in a way that (according to S.K. and his pseudonyms) is possible for man but impossible for woman. For example, Quidam writes in his Diary:

A woman may possess passion as strong or even stronger than that of a man, but contradiction in passion is not a task for her, as for example the task of giving up this wish and retaining it at the same time. If she labours in a purely religious way to give up this wish, she is transformed; and then if ever there were to come an instant for its fulfillment, she would no longer understand it.

According to the above passage, woman is not capable of "contradiction in passion". It will be shown, however, that according to S.K., "contradiction in passion" is a component of religious faith.
Johannes de silentio (the pseudonymous author of Fear and Trembling) describes for us the knight of resignation and the knight of faith. He argues that one cannot be a knight of faith unless or until one has been a knight of resignation. What does being a knight of resignation involve? To begin with, the knight of resignation will have concentrated the whole content of life and the whole significance of reality in one single wish. He will then have concluded through a process of understanding that the wish cannot be fulfilled in reality. This is the point at which infinite resignation is possible. Johannes de silentio describes the movement of infinite resignation.

In resignation I make renunciation of everything, this movement I make by myself, and if I do not make it, it is because I am cowardly and effeminate and without enthusiasm and do not feel the significance of the lofty dignity which is assigned to every man, that of being his own censor... This movement I make by myself, and what I gain is myself in my eternal consciousness...

Having renounced his dearest wish, the knight of resignation finds peace and reposes in pain knowing that he has done the noblest thing. De silentio stresses, however, that the sacrifice of the wish represents no loss of love. The renunciation of the wish must be and is in absolute contradiction to the feelings of the knight.

So the knight makes the movement - but what movement? Will he forget the whole thing? (For in this too there is indeed a kind of concentration.) No! For the knight does not contradict himself, and it is a contradiction to forget the whole content of one’s life and yet remain the same man.

The knight of faith will have made the movements of infinite resignation (will be a knight of resignation) but will go one step further. Having renounced his dearest wish (without at any time denying or relinquishing his desire for the fulfillment of the wish) he gets the
wish. "whole and uncurtailed" despite the impossibility of the wish being fulfilled. The knight of resignation may get his wish too but if he does, he does not rejoice in it in the whole-hearted way that the knight of faith does. (The following segment is from a discussion of the Abraham and Isaac story in Fear and Trembling.)

What Abraham found easiest, I would have found hard, namely to be joyful again with Isaac; for he who with all the infinity of his soul (by his own power and on his own responsibility), has performed the infinite movement (of resignation) and cannot do more, only retains Isaac with pain.

Given Frater Taciturnus's assertions about woman quoted above and Johannes de silentio's descriptions of the knight of resignation and of faith, we may conclude that woman cannot be a knight of faith and possibly not even a knight of resignation. If she gives up her wish she is "transformed", as the knight of resignation is. "If ever there were to come an instant for (the) fulfillment (of her wish), she would no longer understand it." This is in keeping with the description of the knight of resignation. "But contradiction in passion is not a task for her, as for example the task of giving up this wish and retaining it at the same time." But according to de silentio, "contradiction in passion" is an essential ingredient of faith and of the resignation that precedes it. Both knight of resignation and of faith experience "contradiction in passion", that is, the desire to have "his dearest thing in life" while at the same time desiring to do that which he thinks he ought to do. (S.K. experienced such a "collision". He passionately wished to marry Regina but at the same time, he was passionately devoted to holding up the ideal. These two ends he saw as irreconcilable.)

The contradiction in passion does not end with the renunciation of
the wish, for the wish must be and is "retained." The 'swain' in Fear
and Trembling (who is also a knight of resignation) says:

And yet it must be glorious to get the princess,
that is what I say every instant, and the knight
of resignation who does not say it is a deceiver,
he has not had only one wish, and he has not kept
the wish young by his pain. Perhaps there was one
who thought it fitting enough that the wish was no
longer vivid, that the barb of pain was dulled,
but such a man is no knight.

It is essential to both knight of resignation and of faith that the wish
be renounced and retained "at the same time".

We can quote another passage from 'Quidam's Diary'-that supports our
position.

Double illumination and double reflection a woman
cannot deal with, her reflection is only single.
If she would give up the wish, then reflection is
the conflict between the life fostered by the wish
and the death exacted by resignation; to will both
at once is impossible to her, or perhaps even so
much as to understand such a thing.68

But "willing both at once" is precisely the definition of faith offered
in Fear and Trembling. The knight of faith wills "the death exacted by
the resignation" and "the life fostered by the wish". He renounces the
finite and then gets it all back again by virtue of the absurd. Not only
is this "impossible" for woman but "perhaps even so much as to understand
such a thing."

While S.K. seems to regard his description of resignation and faith
contained in Fear and Trembling as applying to both men and women (it
should be noted that Mary the mother of Jesus is described in that work
as a knight of faith),69 he (in the guise of Judge William) acknowledges
elsewhere that giving up one's wish and retaining it at the same time may
be a form of masculine resignation. We remind the reader of what was said
in Chapter Two.

To man it belongs essentially to pray for himself. He has his definite task, his definite place. The character of his resignation is therefore different. He strives even in prayer. He relinquishes the fulfillment of his wish, and what he prays for is the strength to renounce it. Even when he wishes something this thought is constantly present. Woman's prayer is far more substantial, the character of her resignation is different. She prays for the fulfillment of her wish, she is resigned to the thought that she can do nothing about it.

Woman is encouraged in her prayer for the fulfillment of her wish by the conviction that "with God all things are possible". This is a conviction that man, apparently, does not share. "[M]an believes that for God there is something impossible." We may conclude that, according to some descriptions of faith, resignation, and woman offered by S.K. and his pseudonyms, woman is not capable of faith or even of resignation. Other descriptions (such as those offered by Judge William) suggest that woman and man resign themselves in different ways and that woman, if anything, "is more believing than man."

Concluding Remarks.

In his religious writings and journals, S.K. made a number of statements about women and the nature of woman. When taken together, some of these statements contain contradictions. To begin, let us consider S.K.'s statements about woman as a model of spirituality. In Training in Christianity, S.K. writes:

From a woman...thou dost learn then humble faith in relation to the Extraordinary Man,...From a woman thou dost learn to hear the Word rightly,...From a woman thou dost learn the hushed, profound, God-fearing sorrow which is silent before God,...
In the same work, S.K. writes: "That a woman is presented as a teacher, as a pattern of piety, can astonish no one who knows that piety or godliness is by its very nature a womanly quality." Given the above assertions, what are we to make of S.K.'s assertion in a journal entry that woman "understands only the things of men" while "Christianity is to be sensitive to the things of God?" (That woman "understands only the things of men" is another way of saying that woman is more tied to the finite than man is. We have encountered this idea in both aesthetic and ethical works.) The implication is that woman by her very nature is unsuited to the practice of Christianity. This is in stark contrast to S.K.'s assertion that "From a woman...thou dost learn...humble faith in the Extraordinary Man, etc., etc." We have seen that woman is described as more devotional than man in both aesthetic and ethical works. In The Sickness Unto Death, S.K. asserts categorically that "woman's nature is devotion." (He writes further that "devotion is the only thing woman has." ] Because this is the case, Nature has equipped her with instinct so that she might see "what it is she ought to devote herself to." Despite woman's inherent propensity for devotion, it is asserted in the same discussion that "most frequently in real life woman is related to God only through man." This is surprising and indeed incomprehensible in light of the above assertions about woman as a model of spirituality and a being characterized by devotion. We can also remind the reader of statements made about woman's seriousness with respect to decision-making, her "boldness to grasp a single thought and...dare to hold onto it", etc.
S.K.'s discussion of woman and man's relation to woman (1854-5)

We have chosen to discuss S.K.'s opinions on woman, women, and the relationship between man and woman as they are expressed in the religious and other signed works in two sections. A reading of the religious and signed works will convince one that they fall naturally into two categories - those appearing before 1854 and those appearing during 1854-5, the last two years of S.K.'s life. The tone and to some extent the content of the later writings differ markedly from the tone and content of the earlier writings. Why is this, and how can we characterize the difference between the two groups of writings?

Christina Garside makes no distinction between the earlier and later writings but Vernard Eller and Gregor Malantschuk do. Eller traces S.K.'s thoughts on marriage and celibacy and identifies five "phases" or periods. According to his schema, "the direct religious writings up until the Attack" comprise Phase IV.72 We discussed these writings (and the Journal entries prior to 1854) in the first part of this chapter. The fifth phase that Eller identifies corresponds with S.K.'s "attack" upon Christendom (1854-5). In S.K.'s thoughts on marriage and celibacy exhibited during this so-called fifth phase, Eller writes that we see something new - new and shocking. Here is no natural development out of Phase IV; Phase IV suddenly and without warning has been turned upside down; what had been insisted upon as the exception now has become the rule. ...Phase V is not merely antimarriage, nor even misogynist, but deeply and terribly misanthropic.73

How can S.K.'s opinions during this period on marriage, celibacy and related matters be explained? Kierkegaard scholars seem to agree with Eller on this point: Phase V "appeared too late and was too fleeting to provide grounds for accurate analysis.
The existence of Phase V cannot be denied, but Phase IV is the only one that qualifies as the normative Kierkegaardian position on Christian celibacy, and it is far from representing the solitariness of a total renunciation of woman and the world.4

We stated above that Gregor Malantschuk also distinguishes between S.K.'s direct and pseudonymous writings prior to 1854 and those after 1854. Having discussed those prior to 1854, he writes:

We could be tempted to conclude at this point, because the Søren Kierkegaard we meet in the last years of his life speaks of woman, and also of pastors and the Church, with a completely different accent. His statements are bitingly sarcastic and often violent. Some have tried to explain this changed attitude by maintaining that it was something pathological that asserted itself in the last period of his life. However, it must be termed a far too easy solution to make that kind of decision about someone whose opinions in one way or another begin to be disturbing. Therefore I will attempt to give a more simple and fair explanation.... My simple explanation is this: in the last period of his life, Kierkegaard looked at everything from an extreme Christian point of view, consequently as one who in his thinking and in his life earnestly tried to break with this world. Seen from what to him was the highest existential position, the whole earthly enterprise looks different than when one feels altogether bound to it, and much of what is lauded appears petty and wretched and has to be repudiated.5

Malantschuk maintains that "in the last period of his life, Kierkegaard looked at everything from an extreme Christian point of view" and that this is the explanation for the opinions of man, woman, marriage, and celibacy expressed during this period. S.K. himself asserts that he is viewing the situation from the vantage point of New Testament Christianity when he makes these statements. One may wonder upon reading his views of this period whether they do in fact represent the Christian point of view, however "extreme". It may be the case that the extremity of some of S.K.'s
statements take him outside the pale of orthodox Christianity. Let us consider how S.K.'s statements on marriage, celibacy, and woman differ from earlier statements on those subjects.

In 1854, we see a radical departure from S.K.'s long-held understanding of the universal and the exception to the universal. We will recall that formerly, S.K. and his pseudonym Judge William regarded marriage as the universal and the single state as the exception to the universal. Far from advocating celibacy for everyone, it was maintained that the celibate ought to regard himself or herself as the exception and encourage others to "do the universal". This was a position that S.K. faithfully and consistently adhered to ...until 1854. The following passage from S.K.'s *Journal* of that year indicates that during this last "phase" of his life, S.K. came to regard the matter of the universal and the exception to the universal differently.

As far as I am concerned, I will not claim to have understood everything as I later came to understand it; if I had not once and for all run aground on the exceptional, I too would have been married.

Something very exceptional held me back - and now at last I see that the exceptional for me is what Christianity would call the universal, the normal, that Christianity insists on the single state and rather makes marriage the exception.

Here again a Governance has been with me. But it really had to be done this way, for how could a man born and brought up in this Danish-Protestant eudaemonism have his eyes opened to what is essentially Christian if a Governance, through exceptional collisions, did not help him by always having him first experience the essentially Christian, even though he did not perceive this to be Christianity but believed it to be something quite uncommon - and subsequently let him see that it is in fact the essentially Christian, the truly Christian - which incidentally has come to be something very uncommon, particularly in Protestantism, particularly in Denmark.
The opinions expressed in the above passage on marriage and celibacy differ markedly from opinions expressed on the same subjects in Training in Christianity (1851). In that work, S.K. writes that "...Christianity... desires that along with the many married servants it has, it might also have an unmarried person, a single man..." Christianity was said to be "suspicious of marriage" for purely practical reasons but the possibility and actuality of Christianity having "many married servants" was acknowledged. No such acknowledgement appears in the 1854 Journal entry quoted above. It should also be mentioned that in both the Training in Christianity passage and in the Journal entry, S.K. claims that he is interpreting or speaking for Christianity.

We can find many passages from the 1854-5 period in which S.K. asserts that Christianity "require(s)" celibacy: "Christ came into the world to set it afire; therefore celibacy was required of Christians in order to maintain the fire." Christianity says: Refrain from marrying; this is pleasing to God and is a natural consequence if you are really a Christian.

The error in Catholicism is not that the priest is unmarried - no, the error is that a qualitative distinction has been introduced between laity and clergy which is directly opposed to the New Testament and is a concession of weakness in the direction of numbers. No, the error is not that the priest is unmarried - a Christian ought to be unmarried. S.K. even goes so far as to argue from scripture that Christ "does not think of the Christian as married."

How does S.K. think that the Christianity of the New Testament regards marriage? To the population of Christendom, he writes:
"But the apostle nevertheless permits marriage." Yes, he permits it. Consequently you see that he is infinitely far from the view of marriage which flourishes now in Protestantism, especially in Denmark. He permits it, and if you are honest, you cannot deny that there is a certain reluctance in the apostle when he does it. He would rather not give in; he says: It is better to marry than to suffer being burned, that is, if worst comes to worst, all right, better marriage than to burn.82

More disastrously for marriage, S.K. writes:

Luther declared that it was impossible to live chastely outside of marriage - the early Church declared that it was impossible to live chastely within marriage, which therefore was "tolerated fornication."83

How can we make sense of these pronouncements by S.K.? What was the larger perspective from which S.K. viewed marriage and celibacy?

We can begin with yet another passage from the Journal of S.K. He writes:

When a man is intending to get married, the invitation (see the Gospel) comes to him: Let it go - and become a Christian, etc.

Now Christianity has become the very opposite. It has become a divine blessing upon all the trivialities and putterings of finitude and the temporal enjoyment of life....Thus in the forward march of history - I mean of marriage - there come along with woman all the follies of finitude, this puttering around, and an egotism peculiar to woman...Woman has a dangerous rapport with finitude in a way quite different from man.84

Several things can be said in relation to the above passage. Though he never regarded "the enjoyment of life" as an end in itself, S.K.'s attitude toward "finitude" appears to have become less favourable. Compare the above statements with a statement penned in S.K.'s Journal in 1847: ". . . it was, no doubt, entirely right for Luther to marry, expressly to proclaim and establish temporality and earthly life as pleasing to God in contrast to fantastic abstraction,..."85
S.K. notes elsewhere in his Journal of 1854 that

Insofar as mention (for example, Matt 19:29) is made of forsaking "wife and children for Christ's sake," it must always be remembered that there is a great difference between married men with wife and children who want to be Christians and Christians who want to marry and have children. 86

S.K. is far from recommending divorce for those married men who want to be Christians, though he seems to regard faithful adherence to the ideals of the New Testament and marriage as virtually irreconcilable. He says pragmatically that: "[t]o marry means making the relation to the ideal so difficult for oneself that ordinarily it is synonymous with giving up the ideal." 87

S.K.'s remarks regarding marriage, celibacy, and Christianity are primarily addressed to those (men) who, like himself, desire to be Christians and are yet unmarried. It is with this type of person in mind that S.K. writes:

...I for my part cannot see how it is possible that anyone with an impression of Christ's life and what the evangelists understood it to be Christian and with an idea of Christ's demand for discipleship and imitation can think of getting married. 88

S.K. acknowledges that the person he describes above may be a woman:

(...the Church has laid more emphasis upon the preservation of the woman's virginity than upon the man's and has honoured the nun more than the monk, for the woman gives up more than the man when she renounces this life and marriage) 89

but he does not typically think of the unmarried aspiring Christian as female. Indeed, even if the aspiring Christian is assumed to be married, it is assumed by S.K. that it is the husband, not the wife, who longs to adhere to Christianity more rigorously.
...Christianity knows very well that with woman and love all this weakliness and love of coddling arises in a man, and that in so far as the husband himself does not bethink himself of it, the wife ordinarily pleads it with an ingenuous candor which is exceedingly dangerous for the husband, especially for one who is required in the strictest to serve Christianity.

In this scenario, it is the husband who desires and "who is required in the strictest to serve Christianity." The wife "ordinarily" opposes her husband's intentions and tries to talk him out of it. (See footnote 13) One wonders why only the husband "is required in the strictest to serve Christianity" and what Christianity requires of the wife.

We can see from S.K.'s many arguments against marriage that it is generally assumed that the aspiring Christian is male. Since "Heterogeneity is what God wants, heterogeneity with this world" and since "marrying and begetting children" involves "settling down as deeply as possible in this life", it is obvious that the man who wants to do "what God wants" must avoid involvement with women.

We have seen one pseudonym after another identify woman with finitude. Judge William regarded finitude as a gift that woman bestows upon man. Other pseudonyms (notably, the Seducer) regarded finitude as the web in which the luckless husband is caught. In every case, woman has been regarded as the custodian of finitude. In his Journal of 1854, S.K. echoes what the Seducer says about woman in 'In Vino Veritas'.

Woman has a dangerous rapport with finitude in a way quite different from man. She is, as the seducer says, a mystification; there is a moment in her life when she deceptively appears to be infinitude itself - and that is when marriage is captured. And as a wife she is quite simply - finitude.
Man (who is "in chase of infinitude") is drawn to woman when she "deceptively appears to be infinitude itself." Other journal entries indicate that S.K. shared Judge William's conviction that "man is in chase of infinitude" while "woman explains finiteness". Unlike the Judge, however, S.K. thinks that man ought not to be caught!

This whole business of man and woman is a very intricate plot, or a practical joke intended to destroy man qua spirit... And it follows as a matter of course that once man enters this company he is essentially lost for everything higher. This is the reason that Christianity and all more profound views of life take a dim view of the relation to the other sex, for they assume that getting involved with the other sex is the demotion of man.

We will recall that, according to Judge William, "out of a hundred men who go astray in the world ninety and nine are saved by women and one by immediate divine grace." S.K. repeats this idea but focuses (not surprisingly) upon the one who is saved "by immediate divine grace".

When a youth or young man goes astray in his passions, there are two powers alert to save him: a loving woman - and God in heaven. If he is saved by the former, he will still be finitized. If, however, he is not saved by woman's love, if he does not find a harbour here - but he is saved nevertheless, consequently by God, then his life becomes meaningful.

It is clear which mode of salvation S.K. regards as superior!

There are numerous entries in which S.K. expresses the opinion that "getting involved with the other sex is the demotion of man". We will confine ourselves to quoting one more.
Man was structured for eternity; woman leads him into a side remark. In this world man without woman is weaker; he has a weak side which woman protects, and united they have strength for this life. But Christianly this weakness, the weakness of the solitary, weakness for this life, is a part of being strong for eternity.

It would seem that woman is not structured for eternity. If she is (if S.K. would deny this interpretation of his Journal entry), how is she to 'get there'? Indeed, is it important that she 'get there'?

As an illustration of the extent to which the later S.K. rejected the world, finitude, and sexuality, we can refer to his ideas about human procreation. S.K. came to believe that Christianity opposed the propagation of the human race. On the basis of this conviction alone, the single life can be seen to be superior to (more Christian than) the married.

Generally speaking, the conception of the propagation of the race is decisive for every religion. Either the world is essentially a splendid world and it is very pleasing to God that its being is perpetuated or - and this is New Testament Christianity - God is very opposed to the existence and being of this world. Christianity has been introduced to call a halt, and therefore propagation also is immediately blockaded.

And again,

According to Christianity the world is a world of sin, the consequence of a fall. Christianity is salvation, but it is also a cessation; it wants to stop all the perpetuation which is oriented toward the prolongation of this world.

S.K. also maintains that sexuality and the propagation of the race involve an egotism that is incompatible with love for God.
As the nerve ends lie under the nails, so human egotism is concentrated in the sexual relationship, the propagation of the species, the giving of life.

According to Christian teaching, God wants only one thing of us human beings - he wants to be loved. But in order that a human being may love God he must give up all egotism, first and foremost the intensified egotism: propagation of the species, the giving of life...

Consequently God wants the single state because he wants to be loved.98

S.K. statements about women and the nature of woman (1854-5)

We have seen that, according to S.K., Christianity is at odds with finitude. God is so “opposed to the existence and being of this world” that he wants his followers to be celibate and the propagation of the human species to cease. We have also seen in this Chapter and in Chapters One and Two that woman is associated in man’s mind with finitude. She is thought to have a closer relation to finitude by virtue of her reproductive powers. Given “Christianity's” attitude toward finitude and S.K.'s conception of woman as the custodian of finitude, it is not surprising that S.K. advises the unmarried male Christian to avoid involvement with women.

S.K. summarizes his attitude toward finitude and his conception of the ideal (or Christianity) and woman in the following Journal entry:

The ideal is enmity toward the human. - Man naturally loves finitude...

But when the idea is introduced as the requirement, an ethical religious demand - it is the most terrifying agony for man. In the most agonizing way it slays for him everything in which he actually has his life...whereas finitude quiets him down in a life given over to enjoyment.

This is why Christianity has been called and is enmity toward the human.
"This is how humans respond to the ideal. Young girls become rosy with excitement when they hear of it; the young man's heart beats violently; the unmarried man respects it; the married man does not turn entirely away from it - but the farthest away from the ideal is mother, Mrs. Ordinary Woman. The real fury against the ideal proceeds from family life, from the lioness, or, to say it another way - and it is sometimes true - from the sow with her young".

We have seen that S.K. regarded "sexuality" and "the giving of life" as "the culmination of human egotism". It is therefore not surprising that he regards woman as especially egotistical. He even goes so far as to say that "Man is not originally an egotist; not until he is lucky enough to be united with woman does he become that, and then completely." Not only is the propagation of the race essentially egotistical, but woman's devotion to man and her children is really a form of self-love. Her devotion engenders self-love in the man who is its recipient.

"Woman is personified egotism. Her fervent, burning devotion to man is neither more nor less than her egotism.

But His Honour, Man, has no inkling of this; he considers himself very lucky and feels highly flattered to be the object of such fervent devotion, which always takes the form of submission perhaps because woman has a bad conscience about it, wondering if it is not really egotism; man, however, as mentioned, does not see this but feels enhanced by the devotion of this other I.

Woman herself does not know that it is egotism; she is always a riddle to herself, and by a subtlety of nature the whole mystification of egotism manifesting itself as devotion is concealed from her. If woman could understand what an enormous egotist she is, she would not be that, for in another sense she is too good to be an egotist.

S.K. refers elsewhere to woman as "a lovable egotist - but an innocent one" for "she does not know it herself". She can indeed "save" man but if she does, she egotistically enjoys doing so.
In the following Journal entries from 1854, we encounter statements about woman's intuition, her natural religiosity, and her leap to the religious that we have encountered in earlier pseudonymous works. We also encounter disturbing statements about woman's relationship (or lack thereof) to Christianity. S.K. writes:

Intellectually, in the realm of ideas, thought, etc., woman as compared to man is usually pictured as being something of a little goose. But in the realm of what could be called instinctive sagacity, man is a big clod compared to woman. ...There is something of genius about this instinctive sagacity in every woman; with a stroke of genius she takes a radical shortcut, whereas the man, who is weighed down by a thousand reflections, is also weighed down by an occasional but all too pompous idea of his own dignity in being a man.

The "radical shortcut" which woman takes by virtue of her "instinctive sagacity" is her leap from the aesthetic to the religious. According to the Journal entry quoted above, woman is also aided in her leap to the religious by her humility. (Man, by contrast, is "weighed down by an occasional but all too pompous idea of his own dignity".)

In the light of the Journal entry we are about to quote, we cannot help but wonder where it is that the woman of the above passage is taking a radical shortcut to, for S.K. asserts that only a man can fulfill the requirements of New Testament Christianity.

...the truth of the matter is that Christianity as it is found in the New Testament has such prodigious aims that, strictly speaking, it cannot be a religion for women, at most second hand, and is impossible for children. As a psychologist I maintain that no woman can endure a dialectical redoubling, and everything that is essentially Christian is intrinsically dialectical. The essentially Christian task requires a man, it takes a man's toughness and strength to be able to bear the pressure of the task.
According to S.K., it is woman's inability to "endure a dialectical redoubling" that renders her unable to meet the requirements of New Testament Christianity. S.K. explains what he means by such a redoubling later in the same journal entry.

A good which is identified by its hurting, a deliverance which is identified by its making me unhappy, a grace which is identified by suffering, etc. - all this, and everything essentially Christian is like this, no woman can bear, she will lose her mind if she is to be put under the tension of this strenuousness.

... A woman and, above all, a child relate to things directly and breathe the air of directness and immediacy. If something is a good well, then it must be recognized by its doing good; there is no use in forcing a woman (I will not even mention the child) into a good that hurts - it would break her.

...In this respect I have really taken the comprehensive philosophy examination. Try it: make a girl unhappy, and then tell her: I did it all out of love for you - and you break her, her mind snaps. Adapt yourself to her and say: I am a thoughtless scoundrel - that she will be able to bear, and she will heartily forgive you. But then she also escapes the dialectical redoubling.106

According to S.K., "everything that is essentially Christian is intrinsically dialectical" and "only man has from the hand of Government the toughness to be able to endure the dialectical." Given these two premises one must conclude (as S.K. does) that Christianity "Cannot be a religion for woman". S.K. does concede that woman can participate in religion but only at second hand, through the man; she cannot herself endure a dialectic, but by seeing how the man feels the weight of the task she gets an impression of something more than the immediate pure and simple.107

As woman is said to have ideas at second hand ("she is not obliged to stand outside the idea, but she has it at second hand"), so she is said
to have a relation to God "at second hand". (We encountered this idea in *The Sickness Unto Death*: "most frequently in real life woman is related to God only through man.")

These final statements about woman and Christianity are surprising to say the least after all that S.K. and his pseudonyms (notably Judge William) have said about woman as a model of spirituality. How is it that woman (whose nature is devotion and humility, who is "much closer to God than man is", who believes that before God she can do nothing and that everything is possible for God, etc., etc.) is, in the end, incapable of being a Christian in the fullest sense of the word? If anything, we have been told that man is drawn into a relation to the religious and the Christian through woman.

We might begin by questioning S.K.'s assertions that "everything that is essentially Christian is intrinsically dialectical" and that "having to endure the dialectical is the most intense agony there is." It may be argued that these assertions bear the stamp of S.K.'s personal experience and should be regarded as statements of subjective rather than objective truth. To put it another way, S.K. may have elevated statements of subjective truth into statements of objective truth. (i.e., Because "enduring the dialectical" was the most intense agony that S.K. experienced, it does not follow that it is the most intense agony there is.)

We can also understand S.K.'s assertion that "everything that is essentially Christian is intrinsically dialectical" in terms of his own

*We might well ask whether this description of woman's relation to the religious is consonant with her experience. Does it accurately describe the experience of many women? The onus is on S.K. to show that it does.
experience, S.K. discovered that Christianity is full of paradoxes. A paradox is that which seems self-contradictory or absurd when viewed with the eye of logic but which in reality expresses a possible truth. Since S.K. was an overly-reflective individual (the portrait of the exclusively-rational Young Man in 'In Vino Veritas' was a portrait of one aspect of S.K.), it is not surprising that he was intensely aware of the paradoxical and dialectical in Christianity. It is also not surprising that he ultimately defined faith in terms of the acceptance of paradox. Because S.K. was so aware of the paradoxical and the dialectical in Christianity and because these presented a challenge to him that could only be overcome in faith, he appears to have felt justified in stating categorically that "the essentially Christian is intrinsically dialectical" and "having to endure the dialectical is the most intense agony there is." To put it another way, S.K. appears to have succumbed to the temptation to regard himself and his experiences as the standard of truth by which reality is judged. It is as though he said, 'Unless you see Christianity the way I see it and experience it the way I experience it, you are not a Christian, for I am the definition of a Christian.'

In attempting to explain S.K.'s final assertions about woman and Christianity, we suggest the following: S.K. may have observed that many woman were unaware of and/or unconcerned about the paradoxical in Christianity. He then concluded that the problem resided in women rather than in his understanding of Christianity.* We contend that 'the problem' lies precisely in S.K.'s understanding of Christianity. To the extent

*In the same way, S.K.'s direct and pseudonymous assertions about woman's lack of reflection may have been based upon observations that women typically do not reflect in the same way that men do. The underlying assumption of such assertions is that to be reflective is to reflect as man does.
that it reflects a masculine perspective, it does not reflect the perspective, experiences and insights of women. It may be the case that in viewing Christianity and experiencing stumbling blocks to faith, women typically view and experience a somewhat different Christianity than S.K., which is Christianity just the same. S.K. (and others) have failed to acknowledge that there are two human perspectives, one masculine and one feminine. In our culture and S.K.'s, only the masculine perspective has been acknowledged. As a result, the masculine has come to be regarded as 'the human' and that which is not masculine, the sub-human. One of S.K.'s last Journal entries on the subject of woman contains the following:

Christianity is earnestness. Obviously therefore the criterion is applied to the man; the Christian requirement is related to the man, to God's very conception of what this means, the man is the human. ...No, religion, Christianity, is an ideality, a task, under which the greatest ideality of what it is to be a man must almost collapse. That is what Christianity was originally. It came out of the Orient. What was the relationship there? There the man was the human; women and children were almost a kind of domesticated animal.108

In the Works of Love, S.K. decried the way in which woman has been regarded in the world. "[S]he, almost like an animal, was a despised creature compared to the male, a creature of another species!" In the Journal entry penned seven years later, we see that S.K. rather likes the 'Oriental' point of view. The difference between the statements may be explained by the time interval that separates them, by the fact that the Works of Love was a published work and the Journal entry a private one, or by both 'explanations'. S.K. seems to have been fully aware that his journals would be published after his death. Nevertheless, his later statements about women appear to have been more calculated to please when public, more vitriolic when private. In light of the private statements,
one wonders whether the public statements should be regarded as just so much chivalry.

Finally, S.K. seems to have forgotten the words of Judge William with regard to the justified exception to the universal. Of the exception, the Judge writes:

...he shall love life; if he became hostile to life, then he is unjustified, for the fact that he is an exception does not render less beautiful that from which he is excepted...he must not feel himself higher than the universal, but more lowly, he must a tout prix want to remain within the universal, because he is really in love...
Footnotes

The religious man's relation to woman.


2. Stages, p. 245.


5. Hong and Hong, VI 514.


7. Hong and Hong, III 130-1.

8. Hong and Hong, III 126.

9. Hong and Hong, III 128.

10. Hong and Hong, III 129.

11. Hong and Hong, III 129.

12. Hong and Hong, III 128.


15. Works of Love, p. 139.


17. Hong and Hong, III 123.

18. Hong and Hong, III 124.
19. Hong and Hong, III 127.
20. Hong and Hong, III 127.

The equality of man and woman

27. Hong and Hong, IV 572.

Woman is more sensuous than man

29. Concept of Dread, p. 58.
31. Concept of Dread, p. 58.
32. Concept of Dread, p. 59.
33. Concept of Dread, p. 58.
34. Concept of Dread, p. 58.
35. Hong and Hong, I 501.
36. Concept of Dread, p. 57.
37. Concept of Dread, p. 64.
40. Hong and Hong, I 39.

**Woman "homeliness"**

42. *For Self-Examination*, p. 72.
43. *For Self-Examination*, p. 73.
48. *For Self-Examination*, p. 73.
49. *For Self-Examination*, p. 74.
50. Hong and Hong, I 159.

**Woman is characterized by devotion**

55. *Sickness Unto Death*, p. 183.
60. Hong and Hong, IV 573.
Man is reflective; woman is instinctive or intuitive

64. Fear and Trembling, p. 54.
65. Fear and Trembling, p. 46.
66. Fear and Trembling, p. 35.
67. Fear and Trembling, pp. 60-1.
68. Stages, p. 281.
69. Fear and Trembling, pp. 75-6.
70. Either/Or, II 319-20.
71. Sickness Unto Death, p. 183.

S.K.'s discussion of woman and man's relation to woman (1854-5)
72. Eller, p. 239.
73. Eller, p. 243.
76. Hong and Hong, IV 578-9.
77. Training in Christianity, p. 119.
78. Hong and Hong, III 149.
79. Hong and Hong, III 141.
80. Hong and Hong, III 141.
81. Hong and Hong, III 136.
82. Hong and Hong, III 138.
83. Hong and Hong, III 147.
84. Hong and Hong, IV 575-6.
85. Hong and Hong, III 127-8.
86. Hong and Hong, III 137.
87. Hong and Hong, II 306.
88. Hong and Hong, IV 584.
89. Hong and Hong, IV 576-7.
90. Hong and Hong, III 145.
91. Hong and Hong, III 138.
92. Hong and Hong, IV 576.
93. Hong and Hong, IV 578.
94. Hong and Hong, IV 580.
95. Hong and Hong, IC 581.
96. Hong and Hong, III 139.
97. Hong and Hong, III 137.
98. Hong and Hong, III 141-2.

S.K.'s Statements about women and the nature of woman (1854-5)

99. Hong and Hong, II 305-6.
100. Hong and Hong, III 141-2.
101. Hong and Hong, IV 578.
102. Hong and Hong, IV 577.
103. Hong and Hong, IV 580.
104. Hong and Hong, IV 579.
105. Hong and Hong, IV 582.
106. Hong and Hong, IV 582.
107. Hong and Hong, IV 583.
108. Hong and Hong, III 476-7.
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