Hedgehogs vs Foxes: The Missing Link between Jung and Kierkegaard

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Abstract

Drawing on a verse by the Greek poet Archilochus, Isaiah Berlin (1953) proposed a distinction between two types of thinkers: hedgehogs and foxes. Hedgehogs interpret the world through a single, overarching vision, whereas foxes pursue multiple interests and embrace a plurality of perspectives. This paper argues that Carl Gustav Jung and Søren Kierkegaard can be understood as foxes, in contrast to the more hedgehog-like orientations of Sigmund Freud and G.W.F. Hegel, respectively. From this starting point, the paper develops a comparative analysis of the Danish philosopher and the Swiss psychologist, uncovering overlooked affinities between them—an unexpected convergence, given Jung's apparent lack of engagement with the so-called 'Socrates of the North'.

Keywords

C.G. Jung, S. Kierkegaard, analytical psychology, individuation, psychological types

DOI

10.54432/scand/UUPL5619



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Among the great thinkers commonly classified as irrationalists of the nineteenth century, Carl Gustav Jung was strongly attracted to Schopenhauer and especially Nietzsche; Nietzschean quotations pepper the work of the Swiss psychologist, who, among other things, marked his break with Freud in a letter with a long quotation from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that began with the words 'one repays back a teacher badly if one always remains only a pupil' (McGuire 1974: 491). Jung (1988/1934-1939) ended up dedicating a private seminar to Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, which he held during the 1930s, interrupting it only at the outbreak of the Second World War, a situation that made safe international travel impossible for his students. Jung also studied Carus and Hartmann closely, philosophers who had made the unconscious the central theme of their reflections (Shamdasani 2003). Even his attraction to Kant was initially linked to an interpretation of the Königsberg philosopher by Carl du Prel, who made him almost a follower of the visionary Swedenborg, an interpretation that was quite popular at the end of the nineteenth century (La Forgia 1991). These interests date back to his late adolescence, if we can consider the testimony of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung 1963/1962) to be reliable; but they were certainly already well established during his university years, as is clear from the *Zofingia Lectures*, i.e., the speeches given to the student association of the same name between 1896 and 1899, published posthumously as a supplementary volume to the *Collected Works* (Jung 1983). On the other hand, Jung did not find Søren Kierkegaard's writings particularly interesting, even expressing contempt for his personality. Kierkegaard's name appears only twice in the *Collected Works*. On the first occasion, Jung criticizes those 'Many Europeans who began surrendering completely to the influence of the Christian symbol until they landed themselves in a Kierkegaardian neurosis' (Jung 1959/1954: 8). On the other, he merely mentions a sentence attributed to Kierkegaard without citing the source: 'Before God, man is always wrong' (Jung 1958/1954: 482). This seems to be a second-hand reference to the *Ultimatum* concluding the second part of *Either/Or* (Kierkegaard 1988b/1843). There are no traces of Kierkegaard in Jung's published lectures and seminars, not even in *History of Modern Psychology* (Jung, 2019/1933-1934), in which practically every single modern philosopher is mentioned, from Descartes to Wollf, from Condillac to Schelling. Strangely enough, Kierkegaard is never mentioned in the extensive correspondence with theologians Victor White (Lammers & Cunningham 2007) and Adolf Keller (Jehle-Wildberger 2020), although Keller does mention him in an essay written for the Festschrift for Jung's sixtieth birthday (Keller 2020/1935). In letters to other correspondents, Kierkegaard is defined as 'insupportable' (Jung to Rudolf Pannwitz,

3/27/1937, in Jung 1973b: 231) and 'neurotic' (Jung to Arnold Künzli, 3/16/1943, in Jung 1973b: 332), specifying that neurosis 'is uncreative and inimical of art' (ibid.: 333). In the end, Jung ended up writing: 'I myself, quite personally, do not find a sufficient amount of meat in [Kierkegaard]. One hears too damn much of himself, but very little of that voice, which I would prefer to hear' (Jung to Michael Bedford, 12/31/1952, in Jung 1976: 102) .

Paradoxically, however, Jung could have found many points of affinity and interest in Kierkegaard. One might therefore wonder why Jung was not a reader of Kierkegaard, or at least why he was an inattentive reader. It is plausible that Jung may not have read Kierkegaard during his younger years simply because he had not heard of his works (Rudd 2011). Until the dawn of the twentieth century, in fact, the only monograph on Kierkegaard published in the German-speaking world (Brandes 1879) did not seem to signal the discovery of a great thinker, and until the appearance of a few pages by Karl Jaspers (1955/1913), no philosopher seemed to make profitable use of Kierkegaard's work. The real Kierkegaard Renaissance took place between the two world wars (Poole 1998). It must be said that Jung cannot be considered an author perpetually tied to his youthful loves, and the presence in his library of a thesis (in fact, two copies) dedicated to the thought of Kierkegaard suggests at least some later knowledge of his thinking (Cook 2018). One circumstance that may have led him to dismiss Kierkegaard is the assimilation into Nazi thought that was determined by the enthusiastic admiration of thinkers such as Alfred Baeumler and Carl Schmitt (Yoshida 2015). But then that would make it difficult to understand Jung's attitude towards Nietzsche, who was a sort of standard-bearer for Nazism and whose image was only definitively restored thanks to the Colli/Montinari edition, which uncovered the falsifications of his thought by Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, his violently anti-Semitic sister.

That said, it should be remembered that, when faced with similar authors, figures of great cultural depth can sometimes downplay the similarities out of pure and simple opportunism: consider the assessment of Kierkegaard offered by a philosopher such as Heidegger, despite the fact that he plunders the Danish philosopher's pages, as already pointed out by his disciple Karl Löwith (1953). Heidegger for example states in *Being and Time* (1962/1927) that Kierkegaard 'seized upon the problem of existence as an existential problem […] But the existential problem was so alien to him that […] he remained completely dominated by Hegel' (1927: 494). And, in *Off the Beaten Track*, Heidegger (2002/1950) argues that Kierkegaard was not a philosopher but simply a writer on religious matters. However, opportunism cannot be the case with Jung, who was not a philosopher and

had nothing to fear from a comparison of his pages with those of Kierkegaard.

We can therefore assume that the reasons are more psychological in nature. The similarity in inspiration with another author can induce two opposite effects: on the one hand, natural appreciation, and on the other, discomfort linked to the feeling of being faced with a double. This discomfort was described by Freud (1955/1919) in his essay on *The 'Uncanny'*, who experienced it himself in relation to Schnitzler (Gay 1988). Jung, in fact, recognized an affinity and a risk in Nietzsche: Nietzsche represented what, in Jungian terms, is identified as the Shadow. The German philosopher embodied what Jung knew himself in part to be but did not want to be. The ideal of the superman, the will to power, and independence from morality, which are lauded in Nietzsche's works, represent in some ways risks of ego inflation, of which Jung was perfectly aware, and on which he worked carefully in his path to individuation. Kierkegaard embodied in some ways the opposite risk, that of lack of will, of the inability to choose in the direction of an existential turning point. Jung certainly did not lack the ability to make courageous choices throughout his career. He could have accepted a comfortable and lucrative position as an internist immediately after completing his studies, but he decided to become a psychiatrist; he could have remained Freud's protégé, but he chose to separate from him; he could have pursued a university career right away, but he chose independence. There is, however, an episode in Jung's love life that attracts attention, because more than one clue suggests a painful decision or lack of decision on his part: his relationship with his patient Sabina Spielrein. There has been much speculation about this relationship, but even if there is no certainty that Jung and Spielrein actually had sexual intercourse, there is no doubt about her desire to become his partner (she wanted him to father a child whom she would name Siegfried!) and about the fact that Jung's emotional involvement was intense and brought him to the brink of destroying his marriage (Carotenuto 1984; Kerr 1993). For reasons that were undoubtedly different, Kierkegaard gave up not once but twice on pursuing relationships with women with whom he was infatuated. In the first case, that of Bolette Rørdam, there was no real mutual commitment (Fenger 1980: 150-158). In the much better known case of Regine Olsen, however, Kierkegaard proposed marriage but soon regretted it, for reasons that remain unclear (cf. Garff 2007), eventually breaking off the engagement by letter. Before meeting Regine, Kierkegaard had certainly fantasized extensively about an inevitably solitary life (1968b: 227; II A 617). There seems to be, however, no doubt that Kierkegaard was truly in love with Regine, judging by the pages dedicated to her in his *Journal*, in which he expresses the intensity of his

love (Kierkegaard 1968c: 57; III A 133), the impossibility of it fading (Kierkegaard 1968c 66; III A 164), and his perceived inability to love another woman (Kierkegaard 1968c: 65; III A 160). Kierkegaard even goes so far as to say that he thanked God when he glimpsed at least the possibility of marriage with her (1968d: 143-146; VII1 A 221). Conversely, Kierkegaard seems rather contrived when he attempts to convince himself *ex post* that the breakup with Regine was actually her fault or even a divine prohibition (Kierkegaard 1969: 182; X5 A 149.7). Over time, various critics have speculated about Kierkegaard's possible impotence (e.g., Mesnard, 1949) or even possible venereal diseases, based on a four-week gap in the *Journal* in the spring of 1836, which would have coincided with a visit to a brothel. Examining the imaginative literature on the medical nature of the 'thorn in the flesh' that Kierkegaard attributed to himself, Henning Fenger sarcastically concluded that the proposed diagnoses lacked 'only gout and degenerative arthritis' (1980: 66).

Both Kierkegaard and Jung, therefore, had their lives thrown into crisis by relationships with women they did not want to pursue. In both cases, they lacked the will to do so. And Kierkegaard was well aware of this episode in his life, as he wrote in a letter: 'When God appeared to him in the shape of 'Regina' he took to his heels. It was too terrible for him to have to subordinate his autocratism to the love of another person' (Jung to Pastor Will Bremi, 12/26/ 1953, in Jung 1976: 145).

Perhaps Kierkegaard represented for Jung an embodiment of the part of the unconscious that he himself had difficulty confronting? Of course, this is pure speculation. What can be said with certainty is that their theories about the relationship with the feminine is perhaps the element of greatest diversity between the two thinkers (cf. Pattison 1987; Whistler 2009), despite the various similarities that will be discussed in these pages. In fact, one of the key elements of Jung's psychological theory is the existence of a counter-sexual part of the personality, the Anima for men and the Animus for women, and the split from femininity is one of the main causes of male neurosis (Jung 1953b/1934). For Kierkegaard, on the other hand, the feminine is the negation of the spiritual; indeed, Kierkegaard's first published work, *Another Defense of Woman's Great Abilities* (2009a/1834), is a satire that ironically comments on the supposed high qualities of women in general. Regardless of the reasons for not referring to Kierkegaard's writings, this paper will focus on what Jung might have perceived as close to his own mindset and themes of reflection.

Beyond Jung's lack of interest in Kierkegaard, it is also striking that few authors have thought to compare them, despite the vast number of comparisons proposed between Kierkegaard and Freud, even though

religion is the focal point of the former's thinking, while for the latter it is simply an illusion that psychoanalysis should help to erase (Freud 1961b/ 1927). For example, anticipations of Freud have been found in Kierkegaard with regard to the analysis of anxiety (Adler-Vonessen 1971); the superego (Kerrigan 1981; Larsson 2011); the compulsion to repeat (on the theme of repetition; e.g., Eschkotter 2002; Botero 2018; Sherwood 2024); on the discontents of civilization (Dip 2017); on humour (Rugenstein 2019); on the death drive (Wilshire 2012); the unconscious (Rigaux 1987), the uncanny (Rumble 2000); not to mention the writings that, in order to compare Kierkegaard and Freud, have resorted to the mediation of Jacques Lacan, who referred to Kierkegaard several times in his seminars (Adam 2005).

The comparison between Kierkegaard and Jung was probably first proposed by Jolande Jacobi (1943), who, however, limited herself to emphasizing the importance of the theme of paradox in both thinkers. Subsequently, the theme aroused little interest in general. However, the topic of Jung's 'missed connection' (Judd 2011) with Kierkegaard has already been addressed in some papers, many of which have appeared mainly in theological journals and therefore focused primarily on examining the religious element of their respective thoughts. For example, Sobosan (1975) presents Jung as a possible complement to Kierkegaardian theology, with particular reference to the theme of the construction of the Self in relation to the divine. Pattison (1987) and Johnson (1988) explore complementarity from the perspective of gender relations. But there are also works dedicated to more philosophical and/or psychological themes, including some that explore the question of the Self and the necessary confrontation with the dark elements of one's own being (Innamorati 1993; Casement 1998; Rudd 2011). A very recent doctoral thesis is dedicated to a comparison between the two authors on the theme of freedom in personality development (de Arteaga Gallinal 2024). An important monograph, also quite recent, entitled *Jung and Kierkegaard* (Cook 2017), preceded in turn by a doctoral thesis (Cook 2013), whose contents are absorbed into it, probably represents the most comprehensive examination of the possible affinities between the Swiss psychologist and the Danish philosopher. However, this is a relatively limited bibliography, considering the frequency with which essays have been written over the last century proposing comparisons between pairs of thinkers, even relatively disparate ones. Amy Cook (2017) argues that the three most important themes connecting Jung's and Kierkegaard's works are authenticity, suffering, and self-deception. Cook rightly sees in certain biographical elements the reasons why Jung might have found a kindred spirit in the Danish philosopher, starting with their complicated relationship with their fathers. She also emphasizes the importance of religion for both

men, in their written works, in the development of their respective personalities, and in their belief in the potentially therapeutic value of faith. Cook also devotes a large section of the book to Kierkegaard's diagnostic image, which can be reconstructed on the basis of Jung's texts. In the following pages, we will therefore refrain from addressing the same issues, while a partial overlap on the question of the comparison between subjective and objective, between personal and general, will be inevitable, as it constitutes an omnipresent backdrop for both.

The similarities between Kierkegaard and Jung can be identified in terms of the personalities of the two authors, their modes of communication, and of course the content of their works.

Let us begin with a curious observation. Kierkegaard described his own condition as an author as *Armed Neutrality* (2009b/1849). It would be difficult to find a more obvious definition for the Swiss position: Jung was fully invested in this role when he served as a medical officer in a camp where British soldiers who had crossed the border during the First World War were held. However, both men had the opportunity to metaphorically take up arms when they were the targets of personal attacks. In Kierkegaard's case, it was the controversy sparked by *The Corsair* magazine, which attacked the philosopher on a personal level with satirical articles and cartoons aimed at ridiculing him: Kierkegaard (1982/1846) defended himself with his own dialectical weapons and clearly won the battle against his detractors. In Jung's case, the controversy concerned accusations of anti-Semitism levelled at him following the publication of an essay in which, admittedly at a particularly inopportune moment, he distinguished between the characteristics of the Aryan unconscious and the Jewish unconscious (1964a/1934). To Gustav Bally, in particular, who attacked him rather violently, Jung (1964b/1935) responded calmly with a letter that must have been quite convincing, since once the cloud of Nazism had passed over Europe, his detractor painted a wholly positive personal portrait of Jung (Ellenberger 1970). Indeed, Jung demonstrated not only with words but also with deeds that he was anything but a supporter of Nazism. In addition to helping Jewish colleagues flee the Reich, Jung played a significant role as a secret agent for the Allied powers during the war (Bair 2003).

For both Kierkegaard and Jung, it is perhaps possible to speak of a sort of double personality. Jung admits this as a fundamental aspect of his being: he saw himself as having a more rational personality (No. 1) and a more imaginative, artistic personality (No. 2, which he called 'Zarathustra'!), which tended toward irrationality (Jung 1963/1962). For Kierkegaard, a similar definition can be deduced from his attitude towards the world. The

idea of baring his heart in an autobiography or in interviews was completely alien to him. On the contrary, he explicitly said he was happy that no one would be able to find the true motives behind his literary activity among his papers after his death (Garff 2007). What has been published as his *Journal* (the content of the *Papirer*) is incredibly reticent on many aspects of his experience (his mother, for example, is never mentioned). Alongside this reticence to confess about his secret side, the way in which his works were published, which we will return to later, offers a rather significant clue in this regard. In any case, it was Kierkegaard himself who created his own alternative public personality, a true Persona in the Jungian sense. As Cook rightly wrote, this 'mythic Kierkegaard was very much created by the pen of the great man himself' (Cook 2017: 133).

Perhaps the fundamental element that most unites Kierkegaard and Jung is their rejection of simplicity and decisive synthesis. With the irony that often characterized his style, Kierkegaard wrote in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, in a context that essentially constitutes a general admission of the authorship of pseudonymous works, that one day, while smoking a cigar in Deer Park, he had the inspiration that, since he now had no chance of being a benefactor to the world by making life easier for others in some way, he would instead try to make something more difficult:

> For when all combine in every way to make everything easier, there remains only one possible danger, that the ease becomes so great that it becomes altogether too great: then there is only one want left, though it is not yet a felt want, when people will want difficulty. Out of love of mankind, and out of despair of my embarrassing situation, seeing that I had accomplished nothing and was unable to make anything easier than it had already been made, and moved by a genuine interest in those who make everything easy, I conceived it as my task to create difficulties everywhere (Kierkegaard 1941/1846: 166).

Jung, for his part, identifies his own theory as 'complex psychology' (when he does not use this expression to envision a future psychology that will encompass all others; Jung 1971a/1921). In both cases, such position is closely linked to a figure, or rather a group of figures who seem to represent it: Hegel and the Hegelian thinkers for Kierkegaard, Freud and the psychoanalysts for Jung. Of course, it would be wrong to say (nor did Kierkegaard and Jung) that the thinking of Freud—and even more that of Hegel—can be classified as simple. However, both arrive at a single

solution. Freud considers sexual drives to be the underlying motivational factor in human beings. All other goals that apparently satisfy them are merely the result of sublimation, that is, ultimately a compromise, even if the very balance of civilization depends on the human capacity for contentment (Freud 1961c/1930). Hegel (2019b/1833) considers world history to be the history of the manifestation of the spirit, philosophy to be its highest expression, and absolute idealism to be the ultimate goal of philosophy. If Hegel therefore posits his own reflection as the true end of history, Freud (1961a/1815-1916) does not consider himself to occupy a lesser place among the giants of thought, carving out for himself the role of the third great revolutionary (after Copernicus and Darwin) in the journey that led the human race to gradually lose its original certainty of being at the center of the universe.

To better illustrate the parallel, we can use a metaphor first employed by Isaiah Berlin (1953), based on an enigmatic verse by the Greek poet Archilochus: 'The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.' Berlin used this statement to classify writers and intellectuals into two categories: hedgehogs and foxes. Hedgehogs offer a unique perspective on the world, however complex and multifaceted it may be: their view of the universe rests on a single pillar, an unchanging foundation, a universal interpretation, a key that opens all doors. Foxes are not satisfied with a single truth, with an all-encompassing explanation, but sift through the data of the experience offered to them, illuminating the fields they explore with different techniques and methods. Following Berlin's metaphor, Freud and Hegel are hedgehogs, while Kierkegaard and Jung are foxes.

Freud embraces a very broad scope of human culture, transcending psychology to offer interpretations of history, religion, the foundations of society, mythology, and literature. However, these interpretations are essentially based on a single idea: human behaviour is based on sexual drives. Those who do not share this profound truth about humanity (including Jung himself) are, according to Freud, victims of resistance, or a defence mechanism that prevents them from opening their eyes and understanding what the world is forced to hide in order to defend civilization (Freud 1957/1914). Hegel constructs the most articulate and comprehensive system in the history of philosophy, using it to illustrate the evolution of all expressions of the spirit, to arrive at the idea that everything necessarily tends towards a single, definitive conclusion: absolute idealism (i.e., Hegel's own thinking). Those who stop one step before the end of this journey remain in a 'night in which, as we say, all cows are black' (Hegel, 2019: 34). Kierkegaard opposes this claim to comprehensiveness with a

frank confession of scepticism, which leads to a paradoxical vocation: if all his contemporaries have proposed, following Hegel, to simplify the understanding of the world, he himself intends to go down in history as the one who is committed to 'creating difficulties everywhere.' Jung, for his part, identifies his position, as opposed to Freud's, as characterized by a desire to avoid explanations of human behaviour based on a single model, i.e., the formula 'x is nothing more than y.'

In their opposition to their respective hedgehogs, the two foxes have a very similar attitude towards the dichotomy of necessity versus possibility. Hegel sees in the course of history and in the history of the spirit a dialectic that has a strictly necessary unfolding. Only the particular and contingent aspects of the process leading to the present escape historical necessity, but 'what is rational is real; and what is real is rational' (Hegel 1896/1820: xvii). This means that the category of authentic 'reality' belongs only to that which corresponds to the progress of reason, which can only manifest itself in a univocal way. What has happened in the world that is important, has happened because it had to happen: reason has its own 'cunning' (*List*) that finds a way to achieve its goals; the spirit of the world proceeds on a path traced from the beginning. From the perspective of absolute idealism to that of the Berlin physicalist circle, to which Freud refers through his teacher Brücke, the deterministic belief remains unchanged—or rather, in Freud it is in some ways even more radical. While Hegel leaves a certain freedom to everything that goes beyond the progress of rationality, for Freud every tiny event has determining causes, even 'such apparent trivialities as the parapraxes of healthy people' (Freud 1961/1915-1916: 27). Indeed, as Freud wrote:

> Let us call in someone who knows nothing of psychoanalysis, and ask him how he explains such occurrences. His first reply will certainly be: ‘Oh! That’s not worth explaining: they’re just small chance events.’ What does the fellow mean by this? Is he maintaining that there are occurrences, however small, which drop the universal concatenation of events–occurrences which might just as well not happen as happen? If anyone makes a breach of this kind in the determinism of events at a single point, it means that he has thrown overboard the whole *Weltanschauung* of science (Freud 1961a/1915-1916: 27-28).

One of Kierkegaard's main reasons for opposing Hegel is precisely the adoption of such an attitude towards necessity. The past, Kierkegaard emphatically states in *Philosophical Fragments* (1985b/1844), is no more necessary than the future. What has happened cannot be changed, but that does not mean it happened because it was necessary. Indeed, necessity has nothing to do with becoming: necessity *is* and cannot change. The Hegelian idea that necessity is a 'synthesis of possibility and reality' (Kierkegaard refers to the *Science of Logic*; Hegel 1969/1812) and as such is the basis for the progression of events is simply absurd. Kierkegaard even goes so far as to assert (against Aristotle) that the necessary is not also possible. One of the fundamental characteristics of the human Self is to identify with human freedom: 'Self is freedom' (Selvet er Frihed) is written in *The Sickness unto Death*. For his part, Jung clearly writes that he contrasts Freud's determinism, which he calls 'causalism', with his own 'finalism' (Jung 1961/1931). However, this does not correspond to the idea that man proceeds toward an inevitable end, but rather that he can realize his own project.

Both Kierkegaard and Jung believed at one point that they had found a thinker who could compensate for the limitations of their respective hedgehogs, but ultimately found even this new discovery insufficient. In Kierkegaard's case, it was Schelling, whose lectures he personally attended in Berlin in 1841. As he himself wrote in a letter, Schelling only had to utter the word 'reality' for his heart to leap (Garff 2007). Finally, it seemed, a philosopher could bring him back down to earth from the Hegelian cloud of abstraction. Apart from the fact that, from the accounts of the lectures, it seems that Kierkegaard (1992b/1841-1842) tended to take a rather personal view of what Schelling was saying, his motivation to listen waned at the beginning of the following year. In Jung's case, it was Adler who caught his attention as a possible counterpart to Freud, and this happened as early as their first contact, as can be inferred from the reports of the debates of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (Nunberg & Federn 1962). On this specific point, however, the parallel with Kierkegaard quickly ends because, while Kierkegaard lost interest in Schelling after 1842, Jung continued to consider Adler an important theorist (Innamorati 2013).

Kierkegaard and Jung, strangely, also share the common fate of being considered followers of the very person they were opposing. Philosophical historiography has traditionally classified Kierkegaard among the Young Hegelians (Löwith 1964), even though the Dane's infatuation with Hegel, if there was one, was short-lived (Thulstrup 1980). Psychoanalytic historiography, starting with Jones (1953), has described Jung as a treacherous pupil of Freud, even though when the two came into contact,

the Swiss had already developed independent ideas and was in a position to make distinctions from Freudian ideas. Perhaps it was precisely this historically uncomfortable position that led Kierkegaard and Jung to share another common fate, that of being the target of psychiatric diagnoses by a number of their biographers. (cf. Fenger 1980; Shamdasani 2005)

Conversely, it should be emphasized that Hegel was a constant point of reference for Kierkegaard, even if it was to define himself in opposition to a different way of considering existence (Reale 2013) and could represent a basis for constructing his own conceptual world. For example, Kierkegaardian subjectivity is explicitly dialectical. However, it is a 'dialectic without synthesis' (Wahl 1949). Similarly, knowing Freud's work was a turning point in the maturation of Jung's thought, and Freudian psychoanalysis was always a constant point of reference for analytical psychology. This is true to the extent that the boundaries between the two are defined differently in different works of Jung. Sometimes it seems that there is a real clash between the two; sometimes Jung seems to 'delegate' certain theoretical areas, such as psychosexual development, to Freud; sometimes Jung's and Freud's thinking seems destined to be included in a future, broader theory; in some cases, one could even speak of a sort of mutual inclusion (Trevi & Innamorati 2007; Innamorati, 2013). In any case, some Jungian concepts essentially overlap with corresponding concepts of Freud. For example, the Shadow, regardless of its character as an archetype or archetypal image, largely corresponds to the Freudian personal unconscious (Jung 1966a/1929). Jung also explicitly stated that in some analyses he could be heard using Freudian language, as well as Adlerian language at times, depending on the context (Jung 1963/1962).

Kierkegaard (1941/1846) expresses his appreciation for Lessing, for having clarified that the possession of absolute truth is not humanly possible, and indeed not even desirable. Lessing had summarized his idea in an apologue. Imagining himself standing before God and being offered a choice between the contents of the Almighty's right hand (truth) and the contents of his left (the search for truth), Lessing stated that he would undoubtedly choose the left, leaving truth to God alone (cf. Stott 1993). Jung broke away from Freud when he realized that Adler's thinking had the same validity as Freudian psychoanalysis in explaining psychological phenomena and that, therefore, both of their theoretical models had to be relativized. Finally he could state: 'It is perhaps here, where the question arises of recognizing that every psychology which is the work of one man is subjectively coloured, that the line between Freud and myself is more sharply drawn' (Jung 1961/1931: 336).

The consequence of this attitude led Kierkegaard, like Jung, to lean toward a utilitarian view of truth on a practical level, albeit in different contexts and with different aims. Kierkegaard asserted in *Either/Or*: 'Only the truth that builds up is truth for you' (1988b/1843: 354). Jung considered an interpretation to be true if it was fully accepted by the patient: if it was not accepted, the truth had to be sought elsewhere. He could therefore have said: 'Only the truth that builds your health is truth for you.' This, it should be noted, contrasted sharply with Freud's attitude, who considered the rejection of his ideas as resistance. Only towards the end of his theoretical career did Freud (1964/1937) realize that such an attitude risked emulating the saying 'heads I win, tails you lose.' However, he did not change his clinical approach significantly, instead seeking to propose objective criteria for deciding whether the rejection of interpretation should be considered resistance or not (Innamorati 2015, 2022).

It should be emphasized that the relativization of truth on a human and subjective level did not, in the eyes of Kierkegaard and Jung, call into question the existence of Truth in an absolute sense, which, although unattainable for the individual, still exists: a transcendental horizon, to use Jaspers' expression, whose reality underpins existence. Lessing's God still holds it in his right hand, and Kierkegaard did not doubt the existence of God. As for Jung, when asked in a BBC interview in 1959 if he believed in God, he replied: 'I don't need to believe: I know!' (McGuire & Hull 1977).

For both Kierkegaard and Jung, the need to relativize truth has consequences in terms of how they communicate their ideas. Kierkegaard published a significant portion of his works using pseudonyms (in some cases double pseudonyms: author and editor; in others, the author is fictitious and Kierkegaard assumes the role of editor: this is the case with *Either/Or*) (1988a, 1988b/1843). This was not a random choice or one linked to a search for originality for its own sake: each pseudonym represents a distinct personality, with its own specific connotations, more or less similar to those of the real Kierkegaard, even though each one has a consistent character and deep-rooted convictions. Thus, for example, Johannes De Silentio, credited with authorship of *Fear and Trembling* (Kierkegaard 1985/1843), admires Christians but is unable to take the leap of faith himself, considering it too difficult a step for him. 'I do not have faith,' says Johannes de Silentio (1985/1843: 84), and Kierkegaard reiterates the importance of this in his *Journal* (B 68 73; 1985a/1843: 261). The one who believes is, in his eyes, a 'knight of faith' who does not tremble at the fact that 'The absolute duty can lead one to do what ethics would forbid.' (Kierkegaard 1985/1843: 74); who is not frightened by the fact that–considering biblical stories such as that of Abraham–from a purely human

point of view, God seems to be man's worst enemy. On the other hand, the author of the 'papers of A' in *Either/Or* is a man who rather romanticizes debauchery and the pursuit of the Faustian instant. Johannes Climacus, the 'author' of *Philosophical Fragments* (Kierkegaard 1985b/1844) and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Kierkegaard 1992b/1846), is not a Christian either, while his polar opposite Anti-Climacus in *Sickness unto Death* (Kierkegaard 1989/1849) and *Practice in Christianity* (Kierkegaard, 1991/1850) takes on the characteristics of a Christian with convictions so strong that they surpass those of the real Kierkegaard. These and other fundamental pseudonymous writings such as *The Concept of Anxiety* (1980/1844) are presented by Kierkegaard as indirect communication, as his writings completed 'with his left hand.' This does not mean that these works were of lesser importance or that they do not reflect Kierkegaard's true thinking: what distinguishes the different pseudonyms are their respective existential choices (which may also consist in choosing not to choose, in 'letting go' [*lad gaae*]; cf. Kierkegaard 1988b/1843). Ultimately, they are Kierkegaard's works that have had the greatest influence on twentieth-century thought, both in philosophy (cf., e.g., Poole, 1998) and in psychology (Foschi & Innamorati 2022). From his 'right hand' came the numerous *Upbuilding Discourses*, in which Kierkegaard's Christian faith emerges in its most authentic form (cf., e.g., 1990/1843), even if the emphasis on subjectivity never wavers. Consider, for example, that one topic of the *Upbuilding Discourses* is *The Lily in the Field and the Bird of the Air* (Kierkegaard 1997/1849-1851). The image is taken from the *Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 6:25-33), where Christ invites to think of the *lilies* in the field and the *birds* in the air as examples of trusting in divine providence: in Kierkegaard's version, the reference is to a single individual even when talking about animals and plants!

Such an example of the complexity of indirect communication may well be quite unique. Perhaps only Fernando Pessoa can come close to a similar articulation of pseudonyms, which he called 'heteronyms' (Pessoa 2003) with different personality traits. Taking on the roles of Alberto Caeiro, Ricardo Reis, Álvaro de Campos, and Bernardo Soares, the Portuguese writer created virtual controversies in which each supposed author could attack or defend another and even Pessoa himself. The record for the number of pseudonyms actually belongs to Georges Simenon. He used at least 37 fictitious signatures for an unknown number of novels, short stories, reports, and newspaper articles (consider that there are almost 800 articles signed Monsieur Le Coq alone), but the reason for this choice lay in his reluctance to identify himself completely with works that he considered minor in terms of commitment, value, or style (Lemoine 2002).

Jung's work can in some ways be compared to that of Kierkegaard in terms of the division between different orders of communication, because the Swiss psychologist carefully considered his audience when presenting his ideas. We can disregard his letters in this analysis, since a public figure such as Jung could well imagine that his correspondence would receive a certain amount of posthumous attention, and it is therefore difficult to assess with certainty how much of his correspondence was intended only for the recipient and how much was also written for posterity.

However, part of his legacy was simply not intended for publication. The so-called *Black Books* (Jung 2020) constitute a purely private experiment, in which the technique of active imagination plays a fundamental role. *The Red Book* or *Liber Novus* (Jung 2009), the result of the transcription and partial elaboration of the *Black Books*, as well as a pictorial illustration of the contents, was never made public by Jung but was shown to a number of people in his circle, so much so that Sonu Shamdasani (2009) was able to state that it is presumably the unpublished work that had the greatest influence on twentieth-century thought. At least within the Jungian school (but not only there), we can probably speak of a time 'before' and a time 'after' the publication of the *Red Book* (Shamdasani & Hillman 2013). This circumstance alone would be enough to count Jung among those who actively used 'indirect communication.' But other works by Jung can reinforce this image. Among Jung's published texts, the *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* occupy a very special place. They were originally published in a limited number of copies, given exclusively to people Jung knew well – although they later became, with his consent, an appendix to *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, the pseudo-autobiography edited by his secretary Aniela Jaffé (Jung 1963/1962).. The *Septem Sermones* are in any case written as a work of a mystical or sapiential nature, far from the style of Jung's works included in the *Collected Works*, a style that is certainly complex and articulated but, on the whole, in line with the canons of scientific psychological literature. Jung in fact wrote several times that although he had been defined as a mystic, he claimed to be an empirical psychologist (Shamdasani 2003). Faced with detractors of his theory of the collective unconscious, he limited himself to countering with the concrete fact of the existence of symbolic similarities across different cultures, a fact for which he simply asked for a more coherent explanation. That said, readers of Jung's later works, in which his attention is focused on alchemy, are tempted to think that Jung himself is playing the role of alchemist. According to Jung, alchemy should be interpreted as an unconscious attempt to describe the spiritual transformation of human beings rather than the physical transmutation of matter. So when, for example, he described

the evolution of transference in analysis using illustrations from the alchemical treatise *Rosarium Philosophorum* (Jung 1966b/1946), it is difficult to resist the temptation to consider it an initiatory text. One *Novella* remains unpublished, which the author of these pages learned about only through personal communication with the leading editor of Jung's unpublished writings (Sonu Shamdasani, whom I thank here), but which seems to be equally distant from Jung's usual writing style. Finally, we must consider the transcripts of conversations of varying lengths and the numerous lectures that Jung delivered orally and of which there are no written versions in his own hand, but whose careful transcription by some listeners has been published over time. Jung authorized the private circulation of at least some of them, and it is likely that he expected them to be published posthumously. Jung's desire to express himself differently to different audiences is evident in the lectures. Here, it suffices to note how much space he devotes to his research on the associative experiment in the first course he taught at the Zurich Technical University on his own psychology (Jung 2022/1934). This research had been carried out at the Burghölzli during the first decade of the century (Jung 1973a/1910), and began even before he came into contact with Freud: it was this research that earned him an invitation to the United States together with the father of psychoanalysis in 1909. Given that Jung's experience as a laboratory scientist was now almost thirty years behind him, it is more than likely that the reason for such attention was linked rather to the desire to present an image of a rigorous scientist.

The relativization of truth has another fundamental consequence: it translates into the conception of a psychological typology. In both cases, however, the typology is initially expressed in a bipartition of human beings: Kierkegaard constructs in *Either/Or* the alternative between the esthetic and the ethical; Jung, in *A Contribution to the Study of Psychological Types* (1971b/1913) and *The Psychology of the Unconscious* (1953a/1917-1943), constructs the alternative between introvert and extrovert. These are dichotomies that are not without affinity, even if they belong to different planes. The choice between an esthetic life and an ethical life seems to be the result of a decision, while introversion and extroversion are determined earlier on: they are the two fundamental possible expressions of personality. But existential choices are in turn made in accordance with individual personality. The aesthete, who lives for the instant like Faust and Don Giovanni, seems more consistently attributable to extroversion. Ethical life, which shuns affirmation in the outside world and enjoys a quiet and simple existence, like a stream that flows steadily in a bucolic landscape, would seem more congenial to the introvert.

Both Kierkegaard and Jung quickly realized, however, that a classification into two categories would be too simplistic. The Swiss psychologist then developed a broader and more systematic view in *Psychological Types* (Jung 1971a/1921). In addition to the diversity of general attitude (more outward-looking in extroverts; more inward in introverts), one must take into account the psychological function (or functions) prevalent in the individual, among thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation. In *Stages in Life's Way* (Kierkegaard 1988c/1845), the Danish philosopher elaborates a tripartite division between the esthetic, ethical, and religious stages, which are in turn divided into subtypes. The question of stages is further complicated by the fact that the 'tragic hero' referred to by Johannes Climacus in *Fear and Trembling* seems to be an intermediate level between the ethical and religious stages, while Anti-Climacus, as mentioned above, seems to embody a sort of super-Christian. In a certain sense, the classification of psychological types constitutes, for both Kierkegaard and Jung, the premise for a path of individual growth which, in Jungian terms, can be defined as a process of individuation. As has been written about Kierkegaard: 'One's genuine existence involves a self-transcendence upon seeking his true selfhood. Choice or acts of commitment are made before reason presents its idealistic blueprints' (Slaatté 1995: 27)

From Jung's point of view, only one or at most two of the psychological functions are entirely under the control of the conscious personality. Through the analytical process, the individual can succeed in integrating into consciousness, at least in part, the functions that are initially under the control of the unconscious (Jung 1960/1916-1958). For example, for the thinking type, the great difficulty will be the confrontation with the feeling function, which is its polar opposite. For the rational person, their feelings constitute a territory that is, if not unexplored, at least difficult to examine and, above all, to express.

From Kierkegaard's point of view (1988c/1845), the esthetic stage can be the premise for individual maturation that leads through the ethical to the leap towards the religious stage, which is a crowning achievement of existence (cf. Fowler 1981). However, even the esthetic stage in itself can offer an extremely complex path of individuation, as demonstrated by the analysis offered in the second essay of the second part of *Either/Or*, namely the letter taken from the 'papers of B' entitled *The Balance between the Esthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality*. But, for Kierkegaard as for Jung, such a path is not necessary for everyone and in some cases is not even desirable. Jung makes it very clear that analytical interventions, which run parallel to the process of individuation, should only

be carried out to the extent that they are useful to the individual. In some cases, the simplest intervention is sufficient, which coincides with simple confession, consisting of sharing one's secrets with the therapist, not unlike what happens in the religious sacrament of the same name. This is because secrets that are not shared are toxic for the individual, while sharing them is empowering. Only if this intervention is not enough will subsequent interventions be carried out, depending on the case: clarification (Freudian-type interventions), education (Adlerian-type interventions), transformation (which is the main element of Jungian analysis, but concerns only a minority of people of particular sensitivity and creativity) (Jung 1966a/1929). Jung dwells on the fact that individuation taken to its extreme consequences implies opposition to the community, but such a step can only be taken by an individual who is capable of pursuing truly original goals.

Kierkegaard's analysis of the esthetic stage from different perspectives would have provided Jung with perfectly fitting examples, both of how adaptation to existence can lead different individuals to different levels of the individuation path, and of how a highly creative personality must individuate itself thoroughly and consistently. Kierkegaard was, one might say, shocked by the idea that Faust, the man who sought the supreme instant and was therefore the quintessence of the esthetic stage, was made to repent and convert by Goethe at the end of the eponymous drama (Kierkegaard 1968a: 45-47, I A 72; 1969: 73-74, I A 104). On the other hand, he expressed great admiration for Mozart's Don Giovanni, who nine times responds *no* to the Commendatore's exhortation to 'cangiar vita' ('change his life') to repent of his sins and thus avoid Hell, which is opening up beneath his feet in the ineluctable key of D minor. Repenting would have meant denying himself, considering his life to be completely meaningless. Like Goethe's Faust, Merimée's Don Giovanni converts at the end of the play, and this arouses Kierkegaard's disapproval (1968a: 47, I A 72).

It may be noted incidentally that Don Giovanni is one of the most coherent expressions of the archetypal figure of the Trickster, in which Jung showed a particular interest. Well known is the book written with Paul Radin and Károly Kerényi entitled *The Trickster: A Study in Native American Mythology*. The Trickster is characterized by hyper-sexuality and an incurable tendency to play dirty tricks on others (Radin, Jung & Kerényi 1956). Don Giovanni, who collected 'milletré' ('one thousand and three') lovers in Spain alone, does not hesitate to draw his sword and get his faithful servant Leporello into trouble. Jung would certainly have found the wonderful pages dedicated by Kierkegaard to Mozart's opera in the first part of *Either/Or* of great interest. But another figure of a scoundrel had captured Kierkegaard's imagination in his younger years, i.e., the 'King of thieves'.

Kierkegaard imagines him as being endowed with an intimate, perennial dissatisfaction (Kierkegaard 1968a: 6-7; I A 12) and capable of facing punishment, as a man aware of having lived for an idea (Kierkegaard 1968a: 9, I A 18).

Incarnating himself as Judge William in *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard instead devotes himself to a thorough analysis of the path of individuation within the esthetic way of life. Seven stages (or sub-stages) are identified, characterizing an increasingly higher level of awareness and subtlety. The first four are characteristic of ordinary people. The first elevates health and physical qualities to the main object of consideration. The second considers beauty to be the highest value. The third aspires to wealth as the goal of existence. The fourth yearns for talent as the supreme ideal. Those who remain within these first levels are not affected by the anxiety of lack, by the need for something more important (just as, as already noted, for Jung, the levels of cure prior to actual transformation may be entirely sufficient in most cases). Things begin to change with the fifth stage, that of hedonism, which pursues the enjoyment of existence and aims to live out one's desires. The result is day-to-day enjoyment but also a certain melancholy due to dissatisfaction. The example Kierkegaard uses in a benevolent portrait is that of Nero, 'for however corrupt he is, he is still flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone' (Kierkegaard 1988b: 188). The next level is characterized by inner withdrawal, a consequence of melancholy. The attitude becomes Epicurean when, aware of the vanity of worldly stimuli, the person transfers the focus of enjoyment to themselves. Melancholy is overcome, but the result is dispersion. This leads to the final level, where the person reaches the maximum of refinement, contemplating themselves from above and becoming a sort of spectacle of themselves. Such a result corresponds to a disengagement from existence that is absolute, metaphysical, absorbing. Judge William has no doubts: those who reach this level should despair and choose to move on to the ethical stage. However, as has been pointed out earlier, other pseudonymous incarnations of Kierkegaard would propose the religious stage as the authentic choice. In Jungian terms, the ethical stage, which Judge William sees as the highest achievement in life through marriage, is more suited to extroverts; the religious stage, which sees the search for good *in interiore homine*, seems closer to the introvert's mentality: indeed, according to Johannes Climacus, the 'knight of faith' cannot be identified by external signs (Kierkegaard 1985a/1843). Yet, as has also been demonstrated, Kierkegaard shows appreciation for those who live the esthetic stage to the fullest, and *The Seducer's Diary*, in *Either/Or*, shows a man who takes the enjoyment of the moment to the extreme and seems anything but desperate, as Judge William would have it. This leads to a final

possible comparison between Kierkegaard and Jung: psychological types can also be described differently, depending on who is carrying out the description, i.e., the subjective factor. Jung suggests this at the end of his magnum opus (1971a/1921). Similarly, Kierkegaard shows this by the variety of perspectives that emerge through the use of pseudonyms in his works.

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