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Final Paper

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Spring 2022

KIERKEGAARD AND THE SOCRATIC RELATIONSHIP

I will be demonstrating the close bond, Kierkegaard is showing openly for Socrates, even they never met and exchanged ideas with another. Of course, the Christian aspect is of greatest importance, but it does not mean Christian philosophers do not learn from their pagan counterparts which is shown in the philosophy of Kierkegaard. The question remains how this ancient philosopher could influence Kierkegaard so much in his philosophy that even the institution of Christianity itself, so-called Church, was shaken in their fundamentals. An institution which served the establishment rather than the individual with true Christian faith. Both philosophers demonstrate a great deal of individualism which goes against authority and lets the individual be center of existence which is extended by Kierkegaard towards God and Christ. Even as a true Christian, Kierkegaard preferred the Socratic approach over any other form of philosophical possibilities. Kierkegaard could be following any of his contemporary philosophers and find some intellectual exchange in their circles without Socratic interference which he does not want. Kierkegaard’s dislike for his contemporaries could be their objective approach to most philosophical problems which leaves no room for individualism and subjective thinking. Specially, the Hegelian approach to Socrates’ irony which is “more a manner of conversation, sociable pleasantry, and not that pure negation; not the negative attitude” (Kierkegaard 33). Socrates is for Kierkegaard a genius; he follows in his own philosophy because the Greek philosopher has the status of an idealistic mentor who is an important figure only second after Jesus Christ for Kierkegaard. Therefore, the Socratic is a permanent companion of Kierkegaard’s philosophical writings.

Kierkegaard’s idealization of Socrates can be seen through his writings where he presents the ancient philosopher as a mentor and figure that takes profound influence in the way how he thinks and feels himself. Socrates’ own way of thinking cannot be analyzed in a direct way because he did not write anything down which makes it for Kierkegaard impossible to see the true Socrates. In fact, it is not possible to find any sources which are written by Socrates because Plato is the philosopher, worth mentioning, as the one who is transforming Socratic thinking into writing. Other philosophers like Aristophanes and Xenophon wrote on his behalf which Kierkegaard mentions in *The Concept of* Irony, but Plato is the most known one by writing *Apology* and *The* *Republic*. Even Plato had directly contact with Socrates and his philosophical thoughts, it never occurred that he was following the Socratic method of asking questions or living according to Socrates’ principles which are demonstrated by Kierkegaard in *The Concept of Irony.* Plato followed Socrates around as an observer to learn and study his ideas, even those two men have completely different approaches in their philosophy. Since Plato composed mostly of Socrates’ dialogues which I already mentioned, he can be seen as a secondary source when it comes to Socrates and his thoughts. Secondary sources can be confusing, even if they are the best ones, and especially on philosophical writings, they can distort the original idea of a philosopher and be interpreted completely out of context. It is worth mentioning because Kierkegaard took a significant effort to mention the Socratic in his writings, but he also was aware that Plato was the actual writer. It is curious that Kierkegaard had to deal with two philosophers to understand the Socratic principles, even that mostly Socrates is being considered as the genius.

One point, I would like to make clear that is exceedingly difficult with philosophers like Kierkegaard and Socrates to suggest a bond which is entirely based on philosophical aspects only without regarding any personal influence. Alone the fact that Kierkegaard sees in Socrates a kind of mentor, it should be suggestable that there must be some influence on Kierkegaard’s mind which also can be seen in his philosophical writings. “Kierkegaard entitled his master’s thesis “The Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates.” Irony for Kierkegaard is the principle of abstract negative subjectivity” (Lageman 220). One can see Socrates’ influence on Kierkegaard’s thesis which became one of the most significant references to Socratic irony. It is also to say that the Kierkegaardian heavenly relied on Socratic principles of being negatively free or like here suggested “abstract negative subjectivity.” Kierkegaard is impressed with Socrates as a human being who lived by his principles which influenced him not only personally, but they can be dedicated as part of his philosophy on individualism and subjectivity. But individualism and subjectivity do not say anything about ethics which are not part of *The Concept of Irony* because Kierkegaard puts Socrates in the more aesthetical stage with his writing. This does not imply that Socrates was not worth being mentioned in the ethical stage because Kierkegaard’s bond with Socrates was based on truth. Even their relationship is an example of truth in philosophical thinking, and the capability to live by this truth which does not mean he knows ever the true Socrates as a human being. Socrates and Kierkegaard are a true example of philosophical bond which goes beyond principles and concepts because Kierkegaard devoted his philosophical believes but also his personal believes to the Socratic.

Like already mentioned, Kierkegaard admits that he is unable to know the truth about Socrates, and he puts his claim on the fact that Socrates must be misunderstood. “Therefore, even though we lack direct evidence about Socrates, even though we lack an altogether reliable view of him, we do have in recompense all the various nuances of misunderstanding, and in my opinion, this is our best asset with a personality such as Socrates” (Kierkegaard 22). What is misunderstanding? The term misunderstanding refers to something, we get or understand wrong about a thing or person without doing it on purpose with malicious thoughts in mind. To be misunderstood should be taken seriously because it can cause harm to the person in question. Socrates was being misunderstood by many of his contemporaries which ended in a court trail with a death sentence just because nobody understood his philosophical point of view. His contemporaries thought they understood him and accused him of crimes, they thought he committed because they believed, they figured him out. Sometimes, one must accept that not everything can be solved and not every question can be answered like Socrates. He is like a riddle nobody can solve, even if one tries, but one will fail like others before. In one way, Kierkegaard is correct because we have no way to figure out Socrates in an objective way and have proven facts on hand which can show the opposite of any claim about him. Kierkegaard is not a philosopher who denies objective thinking, he just does not think that objectivity alone is always the right way to approach things like Socrates or faith to God. His approach to God is a topic which is going to be more interesting later in the essay where his bond with Socrates becomes clearer, and his position against the institution of the Danish Church takes place. Right now, we are focusing on subjectivity and individualism which are philosophical aspects of being free and seeking one’s own identity.

Kierkegaard hopes to seek his own identity, if he follows the Socratic irony which allows him to be free from any restraint of standardized rules and authority. “Irony is a qualification of subjectivity. In irony, the subject is negatively free, since the actuality that is supposed to give the subject content is not there” (Kierkegaard 29). What is the meaning of being negatively free which is important for Kierkegaard and Socrates in the same way, and it should be examined first. In Athens and in Denmark, there are institutions, sanctioned by governmental regulations and rules, which are leading individuals' life and thinking. Those actualities are trying to give a content to their citizens so-called empty lives because they think they are not capable of thinking for themselves and do not know the difference between right and wrong. Being negatively free is getting rid of those restrains which are so hindering to express one’s individuality, and so find one’s own identity without being influenced by the outside in form of an organized religion or needing permission for personal liberty. Socrates was such an individual who kept his own liberty and identity by claiming ignorance against society which he was living in by claiming he knew nothing. It is difficult to convince an individual who claims he is ignorant to understand anything which supposed to be good for him, and this disagreement of minds ended in Socrates’ unseemly but heroic death. We know already that Kierkegaard wants to be free also from any restrain which is imposed by government because he is convinced like Socrates that the individual needs to be honored, and subjectivity should be a way of thinking that has to be taken seriously. Otherwise, the individual will lose its identity in the crowd like God could lose his identity and just becomes a thing that is regulated by a governmental body of bureaucrats who are imposing their rules on their subjects.

In Wisdo’s essay about Kierkegaard and Socrates, the author did not fully consider the context of a quote which he reinstated in his own words. I cited the quote from the original source and had quite a different impression because the meaning goes towards justice and how one can decide subjectively which way to go. “Consider this: Is the pious being loved by the gods because it is pious; or is it pious because it is being loved by the gods?” (*Euthyphro* 10a). Even it is more Wisdo’s interpretation with this quotation, I still will give him credit for presenting a Kierkegaardian approach. “For the present, however, I would like to focus on how this question might help to illuminate one of Soren Kierkegaard’s edifying discourses, ‘Every Good and Perfect Gift is from Above,’ in which he reflects upon this problem from a Christian point of view” (Wisdo 221). The significance is more relevant for the relationship between Kierkegaard and Socrates because Kierkegaard uses his Christian view parallel of Socrates’ view to comment on it. When I say parallel, Kierkegaard does not ask questions about it like Socrates did, but he had already an answer to the questions. For Kierkegaard, there is no doubt that every goodness comes from God and not from any other place. Socrates, on the other side, asked anybody for a suitable solution which could be found by examining one’s own mind and find the answer there. According to Socrates, if we know us, we also know the solution to a problem pertaining the gods. But this is not the point, I wanted to make because my argumentation goes towards the significance, Kierkegaard is crediting Socrates unique questioning even on matters of religion which was thought he never would do in accordance with his Christian belief. Kierkegaard would never question Christ in any way because he sees it as a matter of faith and not as a decision for him to make. But he sees it in a quite unique way, if it is a matter of Socrates which could mean that he respects Socrates’ ability to decide independently in any matter. I am glad, I examined Wisdo’s claim further because it is a good opportunity to explore Kierkegaard and Socrates philosophical thinking.

According to my knowledge, Kierkegaard is as a philosopher who emerges his strong Christian faith in his philosophical theories with the main ideas of individualism and subjectivity. Socrates is following the same ideas, and to my belief it does not influence the Greek philosopher, who believes in paganism, in the same scale as his Christian counterpart. I am not trying to be biased, but this is the impression I got when I was reading the texts pertaining to them. What is individualism from a Kierkegaardian and Socratic point of view? This question leads also to the question about subjectivity and subjective truth which are both very much related to the idea of individualism of both philosophers. To make a better clarification of individualism, I will differentiate it to egoism and to collective behavior because individualism is no comparison for egoism and collectivism. It is very attempting to put individualism and egoism together because both ideas are taking the individual in consideration but from a different position. Egoism refers to the selfish behavior of an individual who is captured by his own self with the tendency of not caring for others besides itself and its own needs. An individual who just follows its idea of individualism because the idea of being recognized as a person which is unique to another, is something different, and it needs so our recognition. Unfortunately, both terms are misunderstood for the reason of not recognizing the different natures of both, and so many individuals who are living an individual lifestyle are seen as egocentric loners with special attention to Kierkegaard who preferred to live alone. Collective behavior is the opposite of individualism because it describes a behavior of many in a group who share a common opinion and act according to it. Like the Athenians Socrates’s trial in *Apology* who saw their common laws being threatened by an individual who did everything to service his society but wanted to be recognized as an independent thinker. According to Plato’s writing, “Socrates is guilty of corrupting the young and of not believing in the gods in whom the city believes, but in other new spiritual things” (*Apology* 24b-c). Kierkegaard and Socrates are driven by their individuality which is not always seen as an appropriate way of behaving, and it had in Socrates’ case terrible consequences. The exception in Kierkegaard is that he has a deep connection with God and connects him with his inner self.

Since I examined already individualism, now is a suitable time to take a closer look at subjectivity and subjective truth which are one of Socrates’ and Kierkegaard’s fundamental issues. Subjectivity and subjective truth can be best compared to objectivity and objective truth because the opposing ideas cannot only counter each other, but they also can be complimentary to each other in the case of explanatory needs. Most of us would wonder about subjectivity and subjective truth because subjectivity and truth are two notions which are still seen as impossible to match up together. According to the majority, truth should be discovered through objectivity and objective truth which are led by facts and are distance from any personal and subjective involvement. Kierkegaard and Socrates would be agreeing to that idea because subjective truth does not limit the individual to truth which is brought on and influenced by facts other than their own thinking. Since Kierkegaard and Socrates are occupied by the idea of the individual, this individual should also be allowed to have its own thoughts because it knows itself the best, and anyone else just can support it in its task. Like Socrates supported his learning followers by asking them questions which they had to answer by themselves through examining their own knowledge and so gain more knowledge. This encouragement engages one to have one’s own perspective on things without dismissing objective truth because subjectivity is just another way to engage in truth. For Kierkegaard, subjectivity and truth bring him also closer to God who cannot be understood by objective facts which are closed to the idea of faith which is key to Kierkegaard’s life and writings. His faith in God or Christ is made of a deep belief which surpasses Socrates’ faith in his deities because pagan gods are more distance which reflects also in the direct connection, Socrates could have with them. If the connection is more direct, he would have a better chance of engaging with them which would be strengthen Socrates’ faith and reflect more directly in his writings. I could be wrong about it, but this is how I see it.

Socrates sees the individual to itself as the most important part of his philosophy, and he lets this status be over everything else. “In the Socratic view, every human being is himself the midpoint, and the whole world focuses only on him because his self-knowledge is God-knowledge” (Kierkegaard 118). Since Kierkegaard is the author of this quote, one can assume that it means, the individual’s knowledge about itself can be compared with the knowledge about God because if one knows oneself, one also knows God which requires inwardness and faith. Otherwise, Socratic philosophy focuses on the individual and its relationship to itself which can be confusing for a society that has his focus on collectivism like ancient Greeks usually had. It was for them impossible to understand that one of theirs would be focusing on individualism in such an extent like Socrates did. But making the self as the center of one’s life takes an understanding of being in harmony with oneself which means one’s soul becomes the most important part of the whole existence. The body can be compensated for, but the soul is immortal and moves on after death which leaves the soul as the sole survivor of oneself. The soul is the center of self-knowledge which means one must be true to oneself first before being true to others, but with the caution that others need to find their own truth to find themselves. Only the individual knows the truth about itself because it knows itself the best and does not feed of facts which are being introduced by others who think they know this individual. This factual truth is a fabrication of objective thinking which is the product of outside thoughts and interpretations which are circumstantial and distort the truth about an individual beyond recognition. An example of this would be the misunderstanding of Socrates’ individualism and calling it an act of egoism instead of listening to that what the philosopher has to say about himself which is believing in the immortality of the soul and so not being afraid of dying. Kierkegaard’s respond to it would have been that only God would be able to know an individual in that way like the individual knows itself and its faith in God.

God is for Kierkegaard everything because he creates and gives humans the understanding to know the truth about themselves and God. “Now, insomuch as the learner exists [er til], he is indeed created, and accordingly, God must have given him the condition for understanding the truth (for otherwise he previously would have been merely animal, and that teacher who gave him the condition along with the truth would make him a being for the first time)” (Kierkegaard 121). According to Climacus, God is this teacher who creates an individual with understanding itself with the help of a mind which transforms it into a complete existence that is superior to animals. An existence who can recognize truth on its own without the help of a teacher who would tell this individual its own truth which would be untrue. God must be seen with such a subjective truth, otherwise there is no faith into God, and it is a matter of disregarding God as a teacher who has given so much to the learner that he could receive himself finally. To understand truth is for many humans an act which can be a relief on one side, but on the other side it can be scary because finding the truth about oneself means also being true to oneself and not lying to the inner self which means also lying to God. Lies are a selfish and egoistic way to take advantage of God and being in disorder with the inner self which can only find truth by being true. I need to point out that Kierkegaard is writing about the true meaning of God as it would be without the interference of an organized religion, I am referring to the Danish Church, which would be set up by a government body. This being said, I would like also to mention that the idea of religion being organized by the state was also the downfall of Socrates because authorities always expect individuals to act like one collective crowd without any regards for individuals, even if they are innocent.

Socrates’ individuality also reflects in his believes in the gods where he worships a particular deity contrary to many of his contemporary fellow Athenians. “Socrates remains controversial because he thought that his practice of ethical inquiry was a divinely inspired mission sanctioned by Apollo, the Delphic god” (Sarf 256). If Socrates is so controversial in his practice pertaining to ethics and religion, why would Kierkegaard believe in him and follow his philosophical principles. It takes a lot of faith to follow someone’s principles which cannot be proven or demonstrated. In the matter of Socrates, his principles are infused throughout Kierkegaard’s own philosophy, and they are part of his writings throughout his entire life. Sarf assumes that Socrates’ behavior in Delphi can be considered as an attempt to perform something ethical by claiming it as a mission in the name of a divinity. This seems to me an ironical description of Socrates’ belief in this certain deity, and Sarf seems to disregard any seriousness about it which gives the whole matter a sense of a bad joke. There is no proof how Socrates saw his relationship with Apollo besides assumptions which can be true or false, depending on the belief of such sources. I think, one must see this with subjective truth, and not claiming anything because there are no facts which are demonstrating otherwise. Even if Sarf would see this with subjective truth, he cannot really tell, if Socrates had this mission in mind or if it really was of ethical nature. Other scholars and he can only go by accounts of others who were present or wrote it down, but there is no concrete evidence on the matter which I am also assuming. Pertaining to Kierkegaard, he must put faith into Socrates’ philosophy and principles because it is the only way to know the truth about the real intentions Socrates was following when he assumingly did what he did in Delphi or elsewhere. Since Socrates is seen as a controversial figure in his lifetime and beyond because of his individualism, people assume a lot of things about him, but this would be rather personal.

The contrast between Christianity and paganism is a fact which cannot be denied, but this is to no disturbance for Kierkegaard’s admiration of Socrates. As far as I am concerned, Kierkegaard’s writings show no direct sign of Socrates ’pagan influence because Kierkegaard obviously proceeds with his Christian philosophy without any indication. Before I go any further, I would like to point out a quote from the *Postscript* because Kierkegaard’s relationship with the Socratic has his boundaries after all if one talks about the difference between Christianity and paganism. This differentiality separates both beliefs, according to Climacus, in a distinct way which he calls “Religiousness *A*.” Climacus is one of Kierkegaard’s authorships, but I do believe that Kierkegaard does not completely deny his influence on his authorship. This lets me conclude that Kierkegaard himself has enough influence to direct Climacus on “Religiousness *A*.” “The religiousness that has been discussed up until now and that for the sake of brevity will from now on be termed Religiousness *A* is not the specifically Christian religiousness. On the other hand, the dialectical is decisive only insofar as it is joined together with the pathos-filled and gives rise to a new pathos” (Kierkegaard 238). This means that, Kierkegaard makes a difference between Christianity and paganism in the *Postscript* which is a surprising matter in itself because the fact is, he admires Socrates as whole, including his religious belief. Instead, he produces some sort of category where he categorizes Christianity and paganism with the belief, he is doing the appropriate thing by separating Socratic ideas from their religious background. He is not actually defining Socrates as a pagan, but he is explaining it in a way that everyone who knows the Greek philosopher, knows what Kierkegaard wants to say. He wants to make clear that Christianity must be understood in a quite separate way from other religions because it is something special in Kierkegaard’s mind which cannot be reached by other faiths or not being a true Christian like Kierkegaard critics himself often. What does he mean with “pathos-filled”? Why is Christianity unique in this? Christianity is unique in its approach of love and understanding which comes from Christ and cannot be find in other religions, specially not in paganism. That is what he is referring to because the pagan gods, for example, are not filled with sorrow and grief for human suffering. Since there is no suffering, humans also do not understand the meaning of suffering, but they would do in Christianity because Christ came into this world to take all the pain away by sacrificing himself.

Like already mentioned, Kierkegaard seems not to be concerned that much of the fact that Socrates and he do not share the same religious belief which is unusual for a Christian philosopher who claims Christianity as his devotion. What do we know about Kierkegaard and Christianity? Kierkegaard claims until the very end that his intention was to let his fellow Danes see the true meaning if being Christian, and he sacrificed everything for this cause like Socrates did for his Athenian state. This establishes a relationship where Kierkegaard assumes, Socrates is his predecessor. Since Socrates is not divine, Kierkegaard cannot form a spiritual relationship with him because this kind of bond is only between God and humans who believe in the divine. The relationship between Socrates and Kierkegaard would only go as far as it would be between to mortals which does not have to depend on religious preferences at all. Let us pursue this path of critical thinking because it is difficult to get a picture of it, even if we refer only to their philosophical connection. I think the best way to describe their connection is as follows, “An imitator is or strives to be what he admires, and an admirer keeps himself personally detached, consciously or unconsciously does not discover that what is admired involves a claim upon him, to be or at least to strive to be what is admired” (Kierkegaard 384). The original meaning of the passage goes back to the difference between true Christianity and Christendom because Kierkegaard refers to the “imitator” as being true Christian and to live his life in the name of Christ. He continues by referring to the “admirer” as a person who distance himself from Christ by admiring him from far away. Christendom is the practice which Kierkegaard accuses his fellow Danes of doing they leave belief to traditional standards and rules like going to church every Sunday, instead of conducting themselves after the example of true Christian faith. The reference of this passage towards Socrates and Kierkegaard would be that Kierkegaard admires Socrates from far away also like it is in Christendom, and the only thing that is of interest to him, is Socrates philosophy and how he conducts it. But he is not particular interested to get close to Socrates that would suggest, he is not interested in Socrates personal life or beliefs which means that he does not want to live a life like Socrates which could be referred to the passage as he never intended to be an “imitator” of Socrates life.

Socrates’ influence on Kierkegaard is becoming increasingly obvious because he relies his Christian Faith on the notion of Socratic thinking and engulfs himself in the Socratic world. “The only analogy I have before me is Socrates, my task is a Socratic task, to audit the definition of what it is to be a Christian – I do not call myself a Christian (keeping the ideal free), but I can make it manifest that others are that even less” (Kierkegaard 446). It might be sounding dramatically what Kierkegaard proposes on the matter of Socrates, and it seems like he is influenced by the Greek philosopher personally. But I must go back to the last section of the essay and point out again that he possesses admiration for the Socratic in the ways of philosophical thinking and ideas. He is not trying to become Socrates and change his personality into a Socratic one which would destroy his mentorship with the Greek and turn it into something salacious. He wants to follow the Socratic by being true to himself and keeping his own identity as a Christian, even that he thinks he is not a Christian in his own ideal way. He is not only referring to himself in this way, but he is also accusing society of being even less Christian in an ideal sense. Let us call them hypocritic Christians who think by following mandated rules, they are better than the rest which reminds us on the Socratic stand against Athenian society in *Apology*. Kierkegaard’s seeking for advice and truth in Socrates’ philosophy does not mean, he is dependent on it, but he relies on it as guidance to deal with issues of a society which he cannot understand. He cannot understand, their behavior of pretending and faking a true Christian belief by following manufactured rules for being closer to God. This is Kierkegaard’s way to deal with an issue which is clear to him because only true Christian can come close to God by not only admiring him, but also imitating his way of love and understanding for others. Love is the key for true Christianity and not pretense of keeping a moral order of governmental mandates to be Christian.

Kierkegaard’s problems with the institution of the Church in Denmark are at once recognizable by his effort to distance himself and his own faith in God from it. “He finds in this type of religiosity not so much an effort to understand and apply the authentic principles of historic Christianity as the concerted effort of a mass philistinism precisely to protect itself from Christianity by the sophistic use of Christian forms and terminology” (Wild 549). In this quote, Wild argues that Kierkegaard refers to Christendom as not being true Christianity which is protecting itself through rules and traditions from living authentically as a Christian. This authenticity of Christianity does not need to be understood because it would make it unnecessary to produce common rules to practice Christianity, instead of making it possible for the individual to follow true Christian belief. I think, Kierkegaard refers in *Two Ages* to a similar problem that occurs between Christendom and Christianity which also Wild points out. Even it is an aesthetic writing of him, I thought it would be appropriate to mention because of its reference to society and the undermining of the individual’s thoughts and beliefs in it. In a social society like in Christendom, traditions and standard behaviors are leading everyone in the same direction without the purpose for anyone to understand them. True Christianity must be understood in its true principles by individuals who have authentical belief in God and practice faith like true Christians. It seems, Kierkegaard’s argumentation goes in both cases for the individual who is undermined by an abstract society.

Kierkegaard’s admiration for Socrates is the idea of a teacher who possess the highest qualities of being in this position because he is the symbol truth to himself and his relationship between him and his student. “If Christ is a judge and savior who appears from a transcendent realm to make visible normally invisible truths, then Socrates is the eternal archetype to Kierkegaard of the virtuous teacher, for between man and man, the Socratic relationship is the highest and truest” (Sarf 263). Socrates could seek the truth out of everyone, including Kierkegaard because he was always true to himself which is important to know oneself without asking others. Finding the truth about one’s own existence by someone else means manipulating the true self which has nothing to do with discovering one’s own identity. Kierkegaard seeks Socrates out as a mentor to find himself and his own identity which is not always easy to discover because of various influences from the outside which are objective truth about an individual and go by general standards without regarding the subject. The individual or subject must be regarded as the most critical component of seeking truth and living by it because only the individual can find the truth about itself. Kierkegaard’s and Socrates’ relationship is built on subjective truth by knowing themselves, they also know each other. This knowledge about themselves and each other does not mean, they can relate to each other because Kierkegaard might have an idea about Socrates which he can refer to by following his philosophy and having passion for Socrates’ principles. Like he has passion for true Christianity to be victorious over pretense as society delivers in the name of Christ.

Kierkegaard denies his belief in Christianity authorized by a governmental institution which distorts the true meaning of faith and inwardness to God. Instead, he follows a Greek philosopher, even he is a pagan because he admires him for his courage of being true to himself until the end which is higher than any institutional belief. This conclusion of the essay encourages me to point out some aspects for Kierkegaard’s choice of Socrates as a mentor which mostly circle around Kierkegaard’s admiration and understanding of Socrates. First, I would like to address the matter of mentorship again which can be confusing, if it is understood in the wrong way, and usually it is. Mentorship is a status between an older person and a younger one which was usually the case in ancient Greece, and the older is the mentor who encourages the younger to study and think about the learned material. But this is not the kind of relationship Socrates and Kierkegaard have because Kierkegaard found his own identity through Socratic philosophy which he studied extensively and shines throughout his various writings like *The Concept of Irony*. Second, I would like to point out Kierkegaard’s admiration and the understanding for a philosopher who shares no common goal with Kierkegaard when it comes to Christianity but seems to be no issue for a Christian philosopher like Kierkegaard. This means that, Kierkegaard’s relationship with Socrates is based on distant admiration for the Greek’s philosophy and principles which Kierkegaard followed all his life like a learner follows his teacher and are more worth than following a mandatory belief.

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