

# Kierkegaard Descends to the Underworld: Some remarks on the Kierkegaardian appropriation of an argument by F. A. Trendelenburg<sup>1</sup>

*Kierkegaard Desce ao Submundo: Algumas observações sobre a apropriação kierkegaardiana de um argumento de F. A. Trendelenburg.*

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**Abstract:** In 1845, still during the writing of the work that would be the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*—worked under the provisory title of *Logical Problems*—Kierkegaard outlines in his *Papirer* (IV A 145) a curious sketch that would happen in Hell—or Underworld—involving a dialogue between Socrates and Hegel. In this dialogue about the notorious problem of the beginning of Hegelian philosophy, Kierkegaard describes Hegel reading a text from page 198 of the second volume of F. A. Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen*. The precise quotation page, mentioned by Kierkegaard, can only be an indication of the relevance of its content to the topic discussed between the two philosophers in the imaginary dialogue. In fact, there is in such passage, among other arguments, the accusation of the intrusion of the *Anschauung* into the realm of pure thought, especially at the beginning of Hegel's Logic. Thus, in this work we intend (1) to clarify Trendelenburg's argument on *Anschauung*, and (2) to make some remarks on Kierkegaard's reception of the argument based on its relations with the central theses of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.

**Keywords:** Kierkegaard. Trendelenburg. Logic. Hegel. Intuition.

**Resumo:** Em 1845, ainda durante o período de redação da obra que seria o Pós-Escrito Conclusivo Não-Científico às Migalhas Filosóficas – trabalhado sob o título provisório de *Problemas Lógicos* –, Kierkegaard esboça em seus *Papirer* (IV A 145) um curioso esquete que se passaria nos Infernos – ou Submundo – envolvendo um diálogo entre Sócrates e Hegel. Neste diálogo acerca do famigerado problema do início da filosofia hegeliana, Kierkegaard descreve Hegel fazendo a leitura da página 198 do segundo volume das *Logische Untersuchungen*, de F. A. Trendelenburg. A citação precisa da

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1 I must thank Prof. Jon Stewart and Prof. Richard Purkarthofer for the previous reading and their precious advice, as well as my colleague and friend Carson Seabourn Webb for his inestimable help.

*página, feita por Kierkegaard, não poderia ser senão uma indicação da relevância de seu conteúdo para o tema debatido entre os dois filósofos no diálogo imaginário. De fato, está aí presente, entre outros argumentos, a acusação da intromissão da Anschauung no reino do pensamento puro, em especial no início da Lógica de Hegel. Assim, pretendemos neste trabalho (1) explicitar o argumento trendelenburgiano relativo à Anschauung, bem como (2) fazer alguns apontamentos da recepção kierkegaardiana do argumento a partir das relações deste com as teses centrais do Pós-Escrito.*

**Palavras-chave:** Kierkegaard. Trendelenburg. Lógica. Hegel. Intuição.

In 1845, still during the writing of the work that would be the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Kierkegaard outlines in his *Papirer* a curious sketch that would happen in Hell—or Underworld—involving a dialogue between Socrates and Hegel:

#### The Dialectic of Beginning Scene in the Underworld

Characters: Socrates  
Hegel

Socrates sits in the cool [of the evening] by a fountain, listening. Hegel sits at a desk reading Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen*,

Part II, p. 198,

and walks over to Socrates to complain.

Socrates: Shall we begin by completely agreeing or disagreeing about something which we call a presupposition.

Hegel: (sic)

Socrates: With what presupposition do you begin?

Hegel: None at all.

Socrates: Now that is something; then you perhaps do not begin at all.

Hegel: I not begin—I who have written twenty-one volumes?

Socrates: Ye gods, what a hecatomb you have offered!

Hegel: But I start with nothing.

Socrates: Is that not with something?

Hegel: No—the inverse process. It becomes apparent only at the conclusion of the whole process, when I have treated all the sciences, history, etc.

Socrates: How shall I be able to surmount this difficulty, for many remarkable things must certainly have happened which would captivate me. (Misuse of the oratorical element.) You know that I did not allow even Polos to talk more than five minutes at a time, and you want to talk XXI volumes. (KIERKEGAARD, 1975 (JP), 5, p. 3306)<sup>2</sup>

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2 Cf. KIERKEGAARD, 2012, 27, p. 323 (1845).

The scene is filled with the typical Kierkegaardian irony. But beyond this, so to speak, stylistic trait, the entry has some other elements that draw attention and deserve to be analyzed:

- a. The content of the dialogue between Socrates and Hegel—as already announced in the title—revolves around the issue of the beginning of Hegel’s Logic. This is one of the problems that most interested Kierkegaard in his clash with Hegelian logic. All other Kierkegaardian arguments aimed at undermining Hegel’s intent, which has its foundation in Logic, are unfoldings of the analysis of the so-called “Dialectic of Beginning;”
- b. Neither the opposition between Socrates and Hegel, nor their positions “in the scene”, seem accidental. As it is known, Socrates is the paradigm of a certain kind of philosophy that can rightly be contrasted with that of Hegel. The fact that Socrates is “refreshing” in front of a fountain and Hegel sitting at the table reading is significant not only in constructing the images of two forms of philosophizing, but Kierkegaard seems to suggest—once more, not without his customary irony—that even in the Underworld, Hegel still “has something to learn;”
- c. Directly connected to the second point, one of the main elements that compose the scene is Hegel’s reading. It plays the role of the *motto* of the dialogue between the two characters. Hegel reads the second part of *Logische Untersuchungen*, by F. A. Trendelenburg, the main early critic of Hegelian logic and the beginner of what became known as “The Logic Question” in 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophy and met several developments in later philosophy<sup>3</sup>;
- d. It is quite meaningful that Kierkegaard provides a very precise reference of what Hegel is reading. Often, even when he wants to quote an excerpt of some specific author or work, Kierkegaard does it, so to speak, “by heart”, with no concerns with references. By indicating the specific page in this entry, we can infer not only the obvious fact that Kierkegaard knew the work cited, but also that he seems to draw attention to the specific content of the page in question. Thus, in this paper, we will (1) point out the general features of the relationship between Kierkegaard and Trendelenburg, proceeding to (2) the analysis of one of the central aspects of the argument contained in that page, and finally, (3) show some connections in order to justify the interest of Kierkegaard in this specific aspect of Trendelenburg’s critique.

## **1. Kierkegaard, Trendelenburg and the “Logic Question”**

Among some interpreters of Kierkegaard’s thought, the relationship between the Danish thinker and Trendelenburg has not gone unnoticed. In fact, there is even a good bibliography on the subject<sup>4</sup>. However, there are two aspects that, in a sense, are

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3 On the “Logic Question”, see VILKKO, 2009. See also the precious historical exposition in FUGALI, 2007, pp. 29-35.

4 See COME, 1991; MESSAGE, J., 1997, pp. 49-61; GONZÁLEZ, 1997, pp. 309-334; PURKARTHOFER, 2005, pp. 192-207.

neglected in the analysis of this relationship, namely (a) the systematic aspect, which consists in detailed examination of Trendelenburg's arguments and the Kierkegaardian mode of reception and appropriation of these same arguments, and their uses and functions within his own philosophical project and (b) the historical aspect, which sets Kierkegaard against a broader background of problems of the Anti-Hegel turn, after his death in 1831, and had its echoes throughout later philosophy both in its Continental and Analytical tracks<sup>5</sup>. In this sense, what is developed here should be seen as a topic of our wider thesis, namely, that the participation and role of Kierkegaard in the "Logic Question" is as obvious as it is unknown even among the interpreters (of Kierkegaard and of this particular moment in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophy).

As for the historical aspect of the reception and appropriation of theses, one should also take into account that Kierkegaard regretted the lost opportunity to attend Trendelenburg's classes during one of his stays in Berlin. However, after becoming aware of the content of his thought, Kierkegaard bought all his available works and, as witnessed by both his diaries and papers, as well as several parts of his published works in which Trendelenburg is explicitly mentioned, he studied and assimilated it profusely<sup>6</sup>. Thus, according to the assessment of the Danish philosopher, Trendelenburg is the one who had provided the necessary conceptual apparatus for the deconstruction and sharp critique of the Hegelian logic: "What I have profited from Trendelenburg is unbelievable; now I have the apparatus for what I had thought out years before." (KIERKEGAARD, JP 5, p. 367 / VIII.2 C 1)<sup>7</sup>. Add to this Kierkegaard's perception about Trendelenburg as someone working and thinking in a different philosophical sphere than that of his contemporaries. For no other reason, Kierkegaard often describes him as someone "formed by the Greeks" or "sober as a Greek thinker" as opposed to that peculiar *Stimmung* of Idealism<sup>8</sup>.

There are, therefore, two major axes or themes in which the presence of Trendelenburg in Kierkegaard's thought occurs. The first is Kierkegaard's interest in problems concerning Categories—as pointed out in the Papers' quote—and the second, more properly identified to the arguments against the Hegelian dialectic. It is clear that, as we will point out below, both axes intersect at one of the fundamental problems of Kierkegaard, which is precisely the relation between being and thinking,

5 See PORTA, 2011.

6 "There is no modern philosopher from whom I have profited so much as from Trendelenburg. At the time I wrote Repetition I had not yet read anything of his—and now that I have read him, how much more lucid and clear everything is to me. My relationship to him is very special. Part of what has engrossed me for a long time is the whole doctrine of the categories (the problems pertaining to this are found in my older notes, on quarto pieces of paper [i.e., IV C 87-96]. And now Trendelenburg has written two treatises on the doctrine of categories, which I am reading with the greatest interest. The first time I was in Berlin, Trendelenburg was the only one I did not take the trouble to hear—to be sure, he was said to be a Kantian. And I practically ignored the young Swede travelling with me who intended to study only under Trendelenburg. O, foolish opinion to which I also was in bondage at the time." (KIERKEGAARD, JP, 5, pp. 367-368. VIII A 18 n.d., 1847 / SKS, 20, p. 93).

7 KIERKEGAARD, 2012, 19, p. 420.

8 See, for instance, KIERKEGAARD, 1992, p. 110.

more specifically in the scope of the Kierkegaardian thesis of incommensurability and asymmetry between Thought (*Tænke*) and Actuality (*Virkelighed*– *Wirklichkeit*) and the limiting nature of existential ontological status. However, for what concerns me here more closely, it is important to note that virtually all Trendelenburg's main arguments and theses against Hegel's Logic are present in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846) and *The concept of Anxiety* (1844)<sup>9</sup>. Kierkegaard not only alludes to but also analyzes the arguments concerning the unjustified presence of the category of "Motion" in Logic, the problem of the understanding of Contradiction as Contrariety and its correlative problem of meaning of the Negation as well as the supposed beginning with no other presuppositions than Pure Being and Reason. Thus, the existence of a text with explicit and determined reference to an argument by Trendelenburg is neither coincidental nor especially surprising.

## **2. The argument of *Anschaung* on page 198 of Volume Two of *Logische Untersuchungen***

For chronological reasons, Kierkegaard only knew the first edition, published in 1840, of the *Logical Investigations* by Trendelenburg<sup>10</sup>. What, then, is the content of that page of the second volume of the 1840 edition?

The page in question is in Chapter XIV, whose title is "The forms of judgments". One would expect that, when referring to Trendelenburg's arguments about Hegel's Logic, Kierkegaard would mention the section of the first volume called exactly "The dialectical method" in which the author analyzes the Hegelian logic, starting from its claim to set itself up as Science, in approximately 100 pages. However, Kierkegaard seems to prefer the specific wording of this section. Let us cite what seems to be the main excerpt of this page:

The immediate—a completely logical word—hides the intuition (*Anschaung*) that the logic of pure thought cannot yet know, and then gives [delivers/brings: *giebt*] the logical appearance [illusory] where in fact what is meant is perception.

The immediate has its logical content only in the negation of the logical mediation. But if we, in this determination [definition: *Bestimmung*] of dialectics, insist on the affirmative concept, then a representation immediately arises from the background [*Hintergrunde*] of a presupposed mass of thoughts, which otherwise has to be strange to the logic of pure thinking. (TRENDELENBURG, 1840, p. 198)<sup>11</sup>

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9 See also his *Polemik mod Heiberg*.

10 Because of his death in 1855, Kierkegaard did not know the extended 2nd (1862) and 3rd (1870) editions. In the Preface of the last one, Trendelenburg explains the main reason for the choice of the title "Logical investigations" as a way more modest work than a "Science" of Logic. Compare it with the Kierkegaard's reason for titles as *Philosophical Fragments* (or, in a more accurate translation, "Crumbs" [*Smuler*]) and the "Unscientific" (*Uvidenskabelig*) in *Postscript*.

11 I am very grateful to Professor Álvaro Valls for his help with the translation from the original German text and to *The Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library*, at St. Olaf College, MN – USA, for the access to this first edition.

The meaning of this excerpt may be illuminated by another excerpt by Trendelenburg, now from his pamphlet *Die Logische Frage in Hegel's System*, originally from 1843 and also read and cited by Kierkegaard:

The logic tries to presuppose nothing but pure thought, which possesses no external intuition, no image, but simply itself; but, by creating from itself, produces the conceptions and the determinations of being. It was investigated, whether in fact Hegel's logic remains true to this promise, presupposes nothing, and produces only from pure thought. Then it was plainly apparent, that, even in the first step, the principle of all external phenomena was presupposed, the concept of *spatial (räumlichen)* motion. The aid of this form-giving intuition was indeed kept hidden, but it aided mightily; and if it was once admitted, there continually arose from it new sensuous vehicles, without which, pure thought would not move from its place. Where pure thought haughtily claims to produce from itself, there this openly despised, yet secretly received principle—there the silently accompanying action of motion reflecting the images in the space of the imagination lends it the logical forms which it could never have produced from itself. By means of this foreign but hidden service, the productions of pure thought receive a sensuous freshness, without which they would have been less than fleeting shadows. [...] But since it is impossible for the human mind to accomplish absolutely the required abstraction, and to depart from the first condition of its activity, the condition of the designing fantasy, since it is always present where one has supposed it excluded, there may arise, through its silent cooperation, the appearance as if pure thought produced from itself pure conceptions of being. But pure thought lives apart from imaginative, impure thought. If it does not receive from the latter its daily bread, it dies irretrievably. [...] With such a concession, the absolute method would have perished in its beginning. A movement in the lump was acknowledged; but when this was so far brought to a stand-still that its nature was discovered, it showed itself to be the opposite of what it had given itself out to be: it was not the movement of pure thought, but the movement of intuition, a geometrical movement which designs forms in the space of the imagination. This local motion appeared as the presupposition of the presuppositionless logic. (TRENDELENBURG, 1993, pp. 188; 189; 190).

The criticism concerning the introduction of motion in logic is well known. However, the passage we quoted above contains characteristics that are not always made explicit and this fact contributes to an incorrect understanding of the argument. Thus:

- a. Trendelenburg makes use of the term “spatial motion” (*räumlichen Bewegung*). Now, the almost immediate objection—if we are allowed the pun—is that Hegel is not speaking of a spatial motion, but of a logical motion. In other words, the act of Passing (*Übergang*) present across Being–Nothing–Becoming, or that “the immediate motion into another” (HEGEL, 1968, p. 44)<sup>12</sup> is non-temporal and non-spatial. However, that is not Trendelenburg's objection.

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12 “Ihre Wahrheit ist also diese Bewegung des unmittelbaren Verschwindens des einen in dem andern”.

- b. It is not necessary to recall here the whole tour that supports the needing of a beginning with no presuppositions. However, it may be worth remembering §19 of Hegel's *Encyclopedia* in which he states that "Logic is the *most difficult* science in that it has to do not with intuitions and not even with abstract sensory representations as in geometry—but with pure abstractions." (HEGEL, 2010, §19) Now, in this paragraph from the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel seems to try to defend himself *avant la lettre* of Trendelenburg's criticism. Nevertheless, Hegel just asserts what he should prove.
- c. The obvious context of the reference to the pure geometric intuition, both by Hegel and Trendelenburg, is the analysis of this concept by Kant, especially in the "Transcendental Doctrine of Method" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A 713/B 741 onwards) and its relationship with the idea of the concept *construction*. The example provided by Kant is the proof of Proposition I.32 of Euclid's *Elements* which states that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles. In order to prove this proposition, as we know, the proof proceeds by extending two sides of the triangle and by the verification of the measure of angles through the axioms, postulates and propositions stated earlier. It is exactly in this "prolonging sides" and making a "construction" in the imagination that an *a priori* pure intuition is put to work<sup>13</sup>.
- d. One can understand now the core of Trendelenburg's argument: the motion of disappearing of one into another requires the mediation of pure intuition that constructs, builds or draws shapes in the space of imagination. It is absolutely imperative to note, once again, that the interdiction that Trendelenburg addresses is not to the passage across Being–Nothing–Becoming taken in itself, but to the possibility that for us, finite beings, it is possible to seize this movement immediately, without the assistance of pure intuition which takes place in the imagination, building—or somehow representing—the complex of progressive determinations as, precisely, "Passage" or "Movement"<sup>14</sup> which, in turn, cannot appear, as such, from the analysis of these concepts' marks or from the lack of such marks.
- e. It is on that interdiction that Trendelenburg insists saying "it is impossible for the human mind to accomplish absolutely the required abstraction". Such an objection can also be seen in the context of Kant's rejection of

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13 "Thus I construct a triangle exhibiting an object corresponding to this concept, either through mere imagination, in pure intuition, or on paper, in empirical intuition, but in both cases completely a priori, without having had to borrow the pattern for it from any experience." (KANT, 1998, A713/B 741).

14 It is known that Movement is for Trendelenburg, a category that makes up the union or passage between the spheres of Thought and Being. However, this is not the central aspect that is at stake here. Nevertheless, note the "specular" symmetry between Movement in Nature and Movement in Thought: "On one side we have a movement in outer space, another movement in the space of representation [...] The movement of thought in space always presents itself as a mirror image of the movement in outer space" (TRENDELENBURG, 1862, I, p. 146).

the possibility of original intellectual intuitions<sup>15</sup> which, so to speak, would “build” movement from itself<sup>16</sup>; taking up the words of the excerpt, “as if pure thought produced from itself pure conceptions of being.”

- f. Finally, we must look for the presence and activity of the Imagination. Here, Trendelenburg not only incorporates the already indicated Kantian context, but also the Aristotelian notion of *Phantasía*, which develops a vital role in his theory of knowledge<sup>17</sup>.

### 3. Kierkegaard – Logical Problems and Existence

One should not ignore the fact that, as his *Papirer* witness, at least for a long time while he was writing what would become the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard worked on the project under the title of *Logical Problems*, certainly under the influence of the title of Trendelenburg's *opera magna*, as well as by the new approach it already had<sup>18</sup>. Although the author chose to change the final title, it is clear that the signs of the initial project can be seen in the finished result. Note also that this is exactly the period of composition of the sketch that we use here as a *motto*. Again, the reader cannot escape thinking about these absolutely non-contingent connections.

The *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846), as the *locus* in which Kierkegaard develops in a more refined way what we call his *Existential Turn*, can be seen as filled with positions contrary to certain philosophical ideas that we could back to

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- 15 “If one will not make them into objective forms of all things, then no alternative remains but to make them into subjective forms of our kind of outer as well as inner intuition, which is called sensible because it is *not original*, i.e., one through which the existence of the objects of intuition is itself given (and that, so far as we can have insight, can only pertain to the original being); rather it is dependent on the existence of the object,” thus it is possible only insofar as the representational capacity of the subject is affected through that. It is also not necessary for us to limit the kind of intuition in space and time to the sensibility of human beings; it may well be that all finite thinking beings must necessarily agree with beings in this regard (though we cannot decide this), yet even given such universal validity this kind of intuition would not cease to be sensibility, for the very reason that it is derived (*intuitus derivativus*), not original (*intuitus originarius*), thus not intellectual intuition, which for the ground already adduced seems to pertain only to the original being, never to one that is dependent as regards both its existence and its intuition (which determines its existence in relation to given objects).” (KANT, 1998, B 72).
- 16 Compare this with this excerpt from Kierkegaard, 1992: “God does not think, he creates; God does not exist, he is eternal. A human being thinks and exists, and existence separates thinking and being, holds them apart from each other in succession” (p. 332). “Succession” should be understood as temporality, in the same meaning of the Kantian context of the note above.
- 17 As well stated by Fugali (2007, p. 182), Trendelenburg merges the Aristotelian notion of *Phantasía* with the contemporary concept of *Einbildungskraft*.
- 18 See KIERKEGAARD, 1967, 5, p. 272 / VI A 146. As Mario Porta says, the huge change of perspective from a project that aims at the construction of a “Science of a Logic” to one that intends to be just some “Logical Investigations” (see PORTA, 2011, pp. 15-44).



Hegel<sup>19</sup>. However, there is a section in which Kierkegaard specifically develops criticisms of Hegel's Logic in a more explicit manner, namely the section called "a. A logical system can be given" (KIERKEGAARD, 1992, p. 109 onwards). That's where the Danish philosopher meets and mentions Trendelenburg's arguments. As we said, there are all these nuances in such criticism. However, there is one in particular that connects with the main points of the argument on page 198 of the second volume of *Logische Untersuchungen*:

In order to shed light on logic, it might be desirable to become oriented psychologically in the state of mind of someone who thinks the logical—what kind of dying to oneself is required for that purpose, and to what extent the imagination plays a part in it. The following is again another meager and very simple comment, but it may be quite true and not at all superfluous: a philosopher has gradually come to be such a marvelous creature that not even the most prodigal imagination has invented anything quite so fabulous. How, if at all, is the empirical *I* related to the pure *I-I*. Whoever wants to be a philosopher will certainly also want to be somewhat informed on this point and above all not want to become a ludicrous creature by being transmogrified – *eins, zwei, drei, kokolorum* [one, two, three, hocus pocus] – into speculative thought. If the person occupied with logical thought is also human enough not to forget that he is an existing individual, even if he has finished the system, the fantasticality and the charlatanry will gradually vanish. (KIERKEGAARD, 1992, p. 117).

This excerpt plays a central role in the evaluation of Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel's Logic as well as his position in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century quarrel on this subject:

- a. the fundamental starting point for a correct understanding of the role of criticism of Hegel's Logic in the context of Kierkegaard's thought should be his *Existential Turn* that, to some extent, can be seen as a radicalization of the assumption—whose sources are both Kantian and Christian anthropology—of human finitude as a feature that shapes, constitute and puts limits to epistemological claims. In Kierkegaard, such radicalization goes *pari passu* with his ontological reflection which sees Existence as an ontological *stratum* with some well-determined ethical, epistemological and theological characteristics. From this point, the argument concerning the *Anschauung* acquires more defined contours. The necessary presupposition of the *Anschauung*, especially on the background that we exposed above, means for Kierkegaard the impossibility of pure apprehension of Being, not because it is in itself impossible, but because it is impossible for the finite subject—the human—who constructs and operates logic or, in Kierkegaardian terms, to the subject existing *qua* existing. This is what Kierkegaard calls attention to when he speaks of

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19 At least in this specific case, we don't think it is important to distinguish between Hegel and the Danish Hegelians, as Jon Stewart does in his magnificent work (STEWART, 2003). Both the explicit reference to Trendelenburg and the historical background of the "Logic Question" point out to Hegel's thesis.

the need for guidance on the “state of mind of someone who thinks the logical”. Otherwise, it is a “dying to oneself” or a transformation into a “marvelous creature”. The relationship of the “pure self” with the “empirical (or existing) self” is the core of Kierkegaardian bias that anticipates the famous Heideggerian philosophical gain which consists in thinking the identity between the transcendental subject/pure I and the existing or factual subject;<sup>20</sup>

- b. The presence of Trendelenburg’s argument in the background of the excerpt can be seen by the *petitio principii* about the investigation of the role of “Imagination” [*Phantasien*] in the construction of a logical system, such as in the author of *Logische Untersuchungen*.
- c. Finally, and as a sign of Kierkegaard’s complete awareness of the intricacies of the problem regarding the dialectic of beginning, as well as its *status quaestionis*, one should notice the fact that Kierkegaard knew even Schelling’s critique of the Hegelian logic from the “intellectual intuition” and mentions it.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, at least two of the common views on Kierkegaard’s relations to Hegel and to Modern and Contemporary Philosophy should be, at the least, revised. First, derived of some sort of contemporary reception of his thought, Kierkegaard is sometimes seen, still today, as an eccentric critic of Hegel (or of the Danish Hegelians) with philosophically weak attacks. Secondly, there is a very incomplete evaluation of Kierkegaard’s thought in the context of 19<sup>th</sup> Century philosophy. Kierkegaard was profoundly aware of the latest philosophical critique and discussion whose unfoldings defined the course of all subsequent philosophy. Nevertheless, his perceptions and contributions in a question that was decisive to a broad range of philosophers, like Brentano, Frege, Husserl and Heidegger, are virtually never present when this part of the recent history of Philosophy is written. But, I think, neither mistake can stand up to scrutiny after a close examination of the points above.

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20 In extremely close connection to the notion of Existence in Kierkegaard’s thought, it is fundamental to remember what may be the crux of Kierkegaardian philosophy, as well as of his critique of Hegel: “[...] I shall also be just as proud, just as defiant, just as obstinately assertive, just as intrepid in my assertion that Hegelian philosophy confuses existence by not defining its relation to an existing person, by disregarding the ethical.”(KIERKEGAARD, 1992, p. 310).

21 See KIERKEGAARD, 1981, p. 13 and 1992, pp. 105; 150n; 335.

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