

"Repetition" and the Concept of Repetition¹

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1. "A confusing form, fraught with antitheses"

"This book is certainly an odd book, which was indeed what its author intended. Still, as far as I know, he is the first person who has energetically comprehended 'repetition' and has made manifest the pregnance of the concept in order to clarify the relationship between paganism [lit. "the ethnical"] and Christianity, by directing attention to the invisible point and to the *discrimen rerum* [turning point] where one science breaks against another until a new science emerges. But what he has discovered he then conceals again by cloaking the concept in the jest of an analogous notion" [6, 116n].²

¹ Translated from the Danish by Bruce H. Kirmmse.

² All references to Kierkegaard's published works are to A. B. Drachmann, J. L. Heiberg, and H. O. Lange, eds., *Søren Kierkegaard Samlede Værker* [Søren Kierkegaard: Collected Works], vols. 1-20, 3rd edition, newly edited and with notes by Peter P. Rohde (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1962-64). References to this edition are contained in square brackets, with the first numeral indicating the volume number and the second indicating the page(s).

All references to Kierkegaard's papers are to P. A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr, and E. Torsting, eds., *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer* [The Papers of Søren Kierkegaard], vols. I-XVI, 2nd augmented edition by Niels Thulstrup with Index and Bible Index by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1968-78). References to this edition are contained in square brackets, with "Pap." followed by the volume number, the tome number (if any) in superscript, a subdivision letter ("A," "B," or "C,"), and the serial number of the entry; a page number is also included if the entry extends over more than one page.

This is how Kierkegaard has Vigilius Haufniensis, in *The Concept of Anxiety*, describe *Repetition* by Constantinus Constantius. In this passage Vigilius confirms what the reader of *Repetition* quickly senses: that it is a confusing book. There seems to be a discrepancy between, on the one hand, the decisive significance which repetition assumes in Kierkegaard's writings and, on the other hand, this work, which not only gives repetition its name, but also discovers it. It is quite clear that Constantinus Constantius himself understands repetition as a new category. He makes programmatic declarations such as the following: "Repetition is the new category which is to be discovered." [5, 130]. "Recollection is the pagan [lit. "ethnical"] view of life, repetition is the modern view" [5, 131]. But this happens in a strangely quirky fashion. In fact, in other respects the book shows what true repetition is *not*. Constantinus's attempt at repetition serves only to place true repetition in relief. And at the end, when the young man believes that he has repeated himself or taken himself again,³ it is in fact not repetition in the decisive sense of the term. What the book sets forth as repetition is not in fact repetition.

Vigilius claims that the confusion and discrepancy in the book *Repetition* is intentional: "But what he has discovered he then conceals again by cloaking the concept in the jest of an analogous notion." This is repeated by Johannes Climacus in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. In Kierkegaard's pseudonymous canon there is not only interplay between the author and the work within each individual work, but also among the works and their various authors. In the middle of the *Postscript* (which in its very title relates itself to the works in conclusory fashion) there is a commentary on Kierkegaard's works which are being brought to

³ In Danish the text reads "taget sig selv igen" which means "repeated himself" and also has the literal meaning of "taken himself again."

a conclusion. This is contained in a section entitled "A View of a Contemporary Effort in Danish Literature." With respect to *Repetition* it is stated: "And Constantin Constantius wrote, as he calls it, 'an odd book'" [9, 220]. Vigilius' description has now become that of Constantin Constantius.⁴ But Johannes Climacus adopts a similar line to that of Vigilius Haufniensis: immediately preceding this passage he states that "a confusing form, fraught with antitheses" is employed in *Repetition*, because that which is to be said is of decisive significance, but it must be said without lecturing. On the one hand, it is necessary to coin the concept of repetition in order to maintain that "the immanence of ethical despair *has been broken*" and that "*the leap has been posited*" [9, 219]. On the other hand, this must not be the subject of a straightforward lecture, but must be said indirectly through a jest.

Referring to the title page, Johannes Climacus states that *Repetition* contains a psychological experiment—the subtitle reads: "A Venture in Experimental Psychology." This can be understood in various ways: Constantin undertakes an experiment regarding the existence of repetition; he travels to Berlin and ascertains that it does not exist. In a certain way he also undertakes an experiment with the young man. Repetition is not an experiment, however, but a trial.

In what follows I will give a more detailed description, in three steps, of the meaning of the category of repetition. First I will point out that Constantin himself uses repetition as a concept of epoch-making significance. Next I will show that as a religious category repetition is related both to what Climacus calls "ethical despair," and to what Vigilius calls a "second ethics" [6, 119]. Thirdly, I will show that the discovery of repetition as a new category is a (re)discovery of what Kierkegaard calls the

⁴ In the *Papers*, however, Constantin Constantius does call *Repetition* "an odd little book" [Pap. IV B 120 p. 306].

category of spirit. In conclusion I will revisit the question of form: Is repetition as a category inconsistent with *Repetition* as a book?

2. *The Significance of Repetition*

a. The Modern View

On the first page of *Repetition* Constantin Constantius declares that for quite a period of time he has “at least occasionally” concerned himself with “the question of whether a repetition is possible and of its significance” [5, 115]. Right from the outset one can become confused when Constantin speaks, without explanation, of “a repetition” as well as of “the repetition.” Because, what is it that is to be repeated? Constantin gives what appears to be a straightforward answer in the next sentence where he discusses “whether a thing gains or loses in being repeated.” That which is to be repeated can apparently be anything whatever, as long as a suitable experiment can be arranged. And even though Constantin has considered the problem of repetition—“at least occasionally”—for a long time, it “suddenly” occurs to him that “of course you can travel to Berlin, where you have been before, and you can satisfy yourself about whether a repetition is possible and what its significance is” [*ibid.*].

As if it were a sudden whim, Constantin continues by sketching, in a rather quirky fashion, the significance of repetition—not just any repetition, but repetition as a category. And repetition as a category must first be discovered. It is noteworthy that Constantin Constantius attributes epoch-making importance to this discovery of the significance of repetition. It forms the boundary between what Constantin calls the Greek or

pagan [lit. "ethnical"] and the "modern." While still on the first page of *Repetition*, Constantin states: "Say what you will about it [i.e., about the question 'of whether a repetition is possible and of its significance'], it will come to play a very important role in modern philosophy, because *repetition* is a decisive expression for what '*recollection*' was for the Greeks. Just as they taught that all knowledge is recollection, so will modern philosophy teach that all of life is a repetition" [5, 115]. This must be understood, however, as meaning that repetition will become the category for modern philosophy just as recollection was the category for Greek thought—and that precisely herein lies the decisive difference between Greek and modern thought. Further on he writes: "When the Greeks said that all knowledge is recollection, they said that the whole of existence, which is, has been; when one says that life is a repetition, then one is saying that existence, which has been, now comes into being" [5, 131]. Both categories give coherence to a life which would otherwise dissolve into "empty noise, devoid of content." But they do so in decisively different ways. Constantin puts it succinctly: "Recollection is the pagan [lit. "ethnical"] view of life, repetition is the modern view" [*ibid.*].

There is, however, yet another dividing line, namely that between recent times, or recent philosophy, and modernity. When the young man is brought to a stop by the problem of repetition, he turns neither to Greek nor to recent philosophy, but to Job. While the Greek chooses recollection, recent philosophy makes no movement. Or rather, to the extent that it makes a movement "it is always within immanence" [5, 161]. Just as Greek thought moved within the immanence of eternity, recent philosophy takes everything back into mediation or into suspension.⁵ I will return to this point shortly. For now the important thing is that

⁵ The Danish term is "Ophævelsen" (related to the German "Aufhebung").

repetition is the modern view of life, but not in the sense that it has already been discovered. On the contrary, "repetition is the new category which is to be discovered," and this will be a clear contrast to recent philosophy's talk of mediation [5, 130]. What Constantin calls modernity is thus that which is to come.

What is the meaning of this dividing line? The pagan view is characterized by recollection. This means that the truth is found by going back. Back, that is, to eternity, which forms the basis of all reality. In other words this is the immanence of eternity. Repetition also has the apparent meaning of going back, because that which is to be repeated existed before. But for Kierkegaard repetition is something which is to happen. The forward movement takes on decisive significance. As early as the first page of *Repetition*, Constantin Constantius says that both recollection and repetition are the same movement, but "in opposite directions": backwards and forwards [5, 115]. In simplified form we can say that recollection returns to that which was, and in so doing does not really repeat it in the present. Mediation is a form of repetition which does not really make any difference. On the other hand, repetition in the strict sense makes a real difference. This is what we should read into the formulation: the whole of existence, which has been, now *comes into being* [5, 131]. The emphasis is upon this becoming. This is of decisive importance, because the movement backwards, "the back door of recollection," is closed (as Climacus says in the *Postscript* [9, 174]). There is only the movement forward.⁶ The future is granted decisive significance, but in a paradoxical fashion—by means of repetition.

What I have said above points forward toward *Philosophical*

⁶ Cf. Pap. IV B 111 p. 273: "...the modern view, on the other hand, must indeed be the expression of freedom in the movement forward, and in this lies repetition" [cf. also *ibid.*, 117 p. 298].

Fragments and the *Postscript*. *Repetition* contains a sketch of the antithesis with which the *Philosophical Fragments* begins and which receives further treatment in the *Postscript*: the antithesis between the Socratic and the Christian. As has been mentioned, according to Constantin Constantius, the discovery of repetition as a category is of epoch-making significance. Modernity, of which he speaks, points back to Christianity—but to the Christianity whose significance must first be (re)discovered.

b. Repetition as Transcendence

As has already been mentioned, repetition is a word with many meanings. In an immediate sense it points backward, because that which is repeated has already been. Repetition is that the same thing happens again. But Kierkegaard emphasizes that repetition is a becoming. Repetition is something which is to happen. But to the extent that repetition is something one aspires to it seems to connote uniformity: nothing new must happen. One protects oneself by doing the same thing over and over again. This is what the bourgeois philistine does.

In his use of the concept of repetition, Kierkegaard means the opposite of this. Courage is required for repetition, and this is so because repetition is not something which comes naturally, but involves a fundamental transformation. More specifically, it consists in repeating something which has been lost. Let us see in more detail how this is so.

Repetition is discovered as a separate category when it takes on this added significance. It is a requirement, something which is to happen, and as a requirement it lies within what Kierkegaard calls the ethical. Constantin Constantius puts forth the slogan that "repetition is the watchword of every ethical view" [5, 131]. The ethical is characterized by a person's wish to remain in continuity

with himself. This is expressed in the requirement to choose oneself, and this contains a repetition: to will oneself again.

This leads us back to *Either/Or*, where the ethicist "B" several times describes the dialectic of choice. "What I choose I do not posit, because if it were not posited [i.e., if it were not *already* posited — trans.] I could not choose it—and yet, if I did not posit it by choosing it, I would not choose it" [3, 198]. When "B" speaks of *the* choice, he means the individual's choice of himself: "This self has not existed before, because it came into existence by means of the choice—and yet it did exist, because it was of course 'himself'" [3, 200]. This dialectic of choice recurs as the dialectic of repetition.⁷ "The dialectic of repetition is easy, because that which is repeated has been, or else it could not be repeated—but precisely the fact that it has been makes the repetition into something new" [5, 131]. This also makes it clear that repetition is the new, or that it renews. Repetition transforms, and this places requirements on what may be counted as repetition. Ethically viewed, repetition is when one takes over or assumes one's self. It is the watchword of every ethical view because it is the obligation of the self.

Repetition, however, does not merely repeat what is said in *Either/Or*. It displays not merely an aesthetic despair, but a despair over the ethical. While Constantin Constantius suggests an aesthetic solution to the young man's problem, the young man himself seeks an ethical solution—and despairs precisely by doing so. Constantin himself indicates what the answer to this despair would be: repetition by virtue of the absurd [5, 160].

With this we have come to repetition as a religious category. If repetition is to assume its full pregnancy, it must contain a decisive transformation. For why attempt to repeat or "take

⁷ Cf. Wilfried Greve, *Kierkegaards maieutische Ethik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990), pp. 147f.

things again?" It must be because that which one wishes to repeat has been lost. One tries to regain it. In the pregnant sense, repetition assumes a decisive loss. If "the back door of recollection" is closed, it is because the truth has been lost in a decisive fashion—by means of something one oneself has done. In *Philosophical Fragments* this is what Johannes Climacus suggests we should understand by the term "sin." In its pregnant sense repetition presupposes the concept of sin.

It is true that this does not come through clearly in *Repetition*. The book evinces only a despair over the ethical, and gives the outlines of an answer: repetition as transcendence. But the possibility—or rather, the presupposition—which is implicit in the pregnant sense of the concept of repetition is precisely this book's point of contact with *The Concept of Anxiety*. And here I can repeat the quotation I started with: science conflicts with science. The footnote which I cite is found in the introduction to *The Concept of Anxiety*, in which science is opposed to science: psychology and dogmatics, ethics and dogmatics. "Ethics and dogmatics struggle over reconciliation in a fateful *confinium* [boundary area]" [6, 111]. Vigilius notes that "the science in which sin might find its role most nearly is probably ethics" [6, 115]. But sin only belongs to ethics to the extent that it is upon the concept of sin that ethics breaks down. Dogmatics, on the other hand, presupposes the reality of sin. And here ethics returns, the second ethics. This new ethics presupposes dogmatics and with this, the reality of sin.

Vigilius now repeats the antithesis between the Greek and the modern which Constantin sketched in *Repetition*. He differentiates between the first and the second philosophy: the first denotes "the totality of science which one could call the pagan [lit. "the ethnical"], whose essence is immanence, or according to the Greeks, recollection;" while the second philosophy is "that of which the essence is transcendence or

repetition" [6, 119].

"Transcendence or repetition." In *Repetition* it had been stated that repetition "is and remains a transcendence" [5, 161]. This must be understood against the background of despair over the ethical. As I said in connection with the *Postscript*: in emphasizing repetition as a new category, the intention is to assert that the immanence of ethical despair has been broken and the leap has been posited. Repetition as a category thus signifies a liberation or a release from the power of the ethical to bind or to judge.⁸ Repetition is not so much to regain something by one's own strength as it is to receive again something which has been lost to oneself. But what has been lost is in fact one's self. Sin means that one is imprisoned by oneself, that one cannot break free because one is bound by oneself. Repetition thus comes to mean reconciliation.⁹ And this repetition begins in faith. Therefore it is stated in slogan-like terms that "repetition is the *conditio sine qua non* for every issue in dogmatics" [5, 131]. "If repetition is not posited, dogmatics cannot exist at all," Vigilius adds [6, 117n].

Here the connection between *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition* is very clear. Repetition in its deepest sense is the double movement of faith. As mentioned, Constantin Constantius makes use of the key phrase from *Fear and Trembling* when he speaks of repetition as a movement by virtue of the absurd. But there is an important difference. The category of repetition is related to the ethical, to despair over the ethical. The ethical requirement is repetition: to will oneself, specifically to will

⁸ Cf. once again Vigilius: "If repetition is not posited, then ethics becomes a binding power. This is probably why he says that repetition is the watchword of the ethical view" [6, 117n].

⁹ Cf. [Pap. IV B 117 p. 293]: Reconciliation is "the most profound expression of repetition."

continuity with oneself in what one does. But when one loses oneself in doing what one does, a simple ethical repetition is impossible. Repetition therefore becomes a religious category. Unlike *Fear and Trembling* there is no mention of a suspension of the ethical, but of its transformation. As a new category repetition points forward to the second ethics.

c. Repetition as Freedom

Thus far I have pointed out connections between *Repetition* and the pseudonymous works with which it is surrounded: *Either/Or*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Philosophical Fragments*, *The Concept of Anxiety*, and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. *Repetition* is a work complete in itself to a lesser extent than the other books. If one takes one's cue from the title, *Repetition*—which, incidentally, is also repeated as the heading for the second part of the book—the purpose of the work is to formulate the concept of repetition. And in fact *Repetition* does discover a category which is of decisive significance for the rest of Kierkegaard's works. But in order to understand repetition as a category we must include other works than *Repetition* itself.

Kierkegaard also comments upon *Repetition* in his *Papers*, and especially in the drafts of his "Open Letter to Herr Professor Heiberg, Knight of the Dannebrog from Constantin Constantius." Heiberg had "corrected" Constantin in an article in which he had asserted that repetition belonged to the world of natural phenomena. This "correction" now provokes Constantin to come forward and state directly his main thesis, which he had wished to conceal in *Repetition*.

One of Constantin's key words makes another appearance in the sketch by Vigilius from which I quoted at the beginning of the present article, namely the word "pregnance." There is "only one

repetition in the pregnant sense,” and “it is the repetition of the individuality itself, raised to a new power,” Constantin says [Pap. IV B 111 p. 270]. To invent repetition as a category is to decide what constitutes repetition in the pregnant sense. What, then, is necessary to repetition in the pregnant sense? What is it that makes it possible for us to speak of *the* repetition? The underlying argument seems to be as follows: a repetition is later than that which it repeats. In the realm of spirit this difference in time is a difference in meaning. The repetition happens in another place and with another consciousness. The repetition transforms what is repeated precisely by repeating it. The “true” repetition, therefore, cannot be an external or a simple repetition, because it itself adds something. And one tries to repeat something because in one or another sense it has been lost for one.

As mentioned, Constantin's “pregnant example” is “the repetition of the individuality itself.” It is the individual who repeats, and also the individual who is repeated. To use Constantin's words, it means to “take oneself back (repeat oneself)”¹⁰ [Pap. VI B 117 p. 282]. And this is so because one has lost oneself. As we have already seen, repetition comes to mean reconciliation. In Constantin's words, reconciliation is “repetition *sensu eminentiori* [in the highest sense]” [Pap. IV B 118,1 p. 301]. This is in fact a repetition which transforms. Even if it is the same life which is “taken again” (“repeated”) or regained, repetition makes a decisive difference: See everything is new.¹¹

Repetition, in the pregnant sense, is to become oneself. And this is what Kierkegaard understands by freedom. In the draft of his reply to Heiberg, Constantin repeatedly emphasizes the connection between repetition and freedom. There is only one

¹⁰ The Danish text reads “tage sig selv tilbage (gentage sig)”; see note 2.

¹¹ Cf. *The Concept of Anxiety* [6, 116n].

repetition in the pregnant sense, and it is "the repetition of the individuality itself, raised to a new power." This is repetition *sensu eminentiori*, and, Constantin adds, it is "freedom's deepest interest" [Pap. IV B 111 p. 270]. This must be understood in a double fashion. Repetition is the "task for freedom"—that is, for the individual as a self—but repetition simultaneously *is* freedom. It can be seen that the question in *Repetition* is not about "repetition of something external, but about the repetition of his [that is, the young man's] freedom" [Pap. B 117 p. 284]. Repetition in the pregnant sense is to be seen "as the task for freedom and as freedom" [*ibid.*, p. 293]. Repetition "means freedom itself" [Pap. IV B 120 p. 308].

In the *Papers* Constantin says that the concept of repetition has a history in "the sphere of individual freedom," "because freedom passes through several stages in order to reach itself" [Pap. IV B 117 p. 281]. He differentiates between three stages: a) at the first stage, freedom is qualified as desire; b) at the second stage freedom is qualified as shrewdness; c) at the third freedom is qualified in relation to itself. Here it comes to itself. "Freedom itself is now repetition" [*ibid.*, p. 282]. It is—in a passage I have already cited—to take oneself back (to repeat oneself) [*ibid.*].

This definition of the concept of repetition is a (re)discovery of the concept of spirit. The individual becomes himself by coming to himself, or by coming back to himself in the movement forward—by regaining himself. And spirit means precisely to come to oneself in regaining oneself. In his draft, Constantin Constantius does not say this directly, but in the *Papers* he repeatedly returns to the significance of repetition in the realm of the spirit. And in *Repetition* the young man concludes by saying that in a human life "only the repetition of the spirit [is] possible" [5, 186]. It is, however, only in *The Concept of Anxiety* and subsequent works that spirit is explicitly connected to the

regaining of freedom and to reconciliation.

In the drafts of his reply to Heiberg, Constantin does not conceal his discovery. On the contrary, he insists upon it almost as though he has been wronged. He explains *Repetition* by developing its principal idea. But the Constantin whom we read in the *Papers* is no longer the Constantin who had connections with the young man. It is Constantin who takes possession of his book and asserts himself as its author. In the letter to his "dear reader" which concludes *Repetition*, Constantin states that he has allowed the young man to come into being [5, 191]. Now, in the *Papers*, not only the young man, but also the experiment—and thus the "odd" book—are retracted. The confusion is ended, and the book becomes something other than what it was, just as Constantin has become another author. The fact that the pseudonym writes himself out of a job was a bit too much. In any case, the drafts of the reply to Heiberg remained drafts. Instead, Constantin attempts to do what he had already done at the conclusion of *Repetition*: to write to his "dear reader." This also ends up as a draft.

3. *Melancholia and Observation*

Vigilius said that what Constantin Constantius has discovered "he then conceals again by cloaking the concept in the jest of an analogous notion" [6, 116n]. But just a couple of pages into *Repetition* Constantin Constantius declares, "repetition, that is actuality and the seriousness of existence" [5, 116]. Does the confusing and antithetical form do anything other than confuse and create distance from what is said about repetition as a category? In the retrospective glance in the *Papers*, Constantin Constantius says that he has caused repetition to come into existence "by illuminating it with the antithesis of jest and of

despair" [Pap. IV B 117 p. 295].¹² If *Repetition* is not only to state, but also to demonstrate, what repetition is, it does so negatively, in the form of an antithesis, the antithesis of despair. But does it do so? In the *Postscript Climacus* asserts that *Repetition* is definitely a case of doubly reflected communication. Because the communication takes place in the form of an experiment, it "produces an opposition to itself" [9, 220]. But does *Repetition* contain the tension between communication and form which is necessary to doubly reflected communication? Does *Repetition* as a work cohere with repetition as a category?

First of all it is worth noting the fact that Constantin Constantius himself talks about "the book," *Repetition*, and in so doing speaks directly to the book's reader. After having read the final letters from the young man the reader must turn the book sidewise to read the dedication: "To the Worthy Mr. X, The Real Reader of This Book." The reader is literally drawn into the book, but more or less only to be sent out of it again. The text addresses itself directly to its reader and provides a description of who this reader is.

I will not discuss in any more detail this interplay between the text and the reader.¹³ Instead I will examine the circumstance that Constantin Constantius and the young man produce portraits of one another. The key terms in these mutual portraits are melancholia and observation, respectively.

Constantin Constantius attempts to describe how the young man's love has gone wrong. He speaks of the young man's "mistake" [5, 120]. "His depression ensnared him more and

¹² Earlier in the *Papers* [IV B 117 p. 282] Constantin Constantius stated that he would "let the concept come into being in the individuality and the situation, working its way forward through all sorts of misunderstandings."

¹³ See Joakim Garff, "My Dear Reader! Kierkegaard Read with Restrained Affection," *Studia Theologica*, 1991 no. 2: 127ff.

more" [5, 121]. Constantin links depression with recollection in a manner that implies their antithesis to repetition. The young man's mistake was that he "stood at the end instead of at the beginning" [5, 120]. "Right away, within a few days," he was capable "of recollecting his love," and thus he was "essentially finished with the entire relationship" [5, 119]. In the middle of the relationship the young man feels a melancholy longing [5, 120].

Constantin Constantius subsequently notes that the young man, in his relationship to Constantin himself, "stands in a continuing contradiction to himself: he wishes for me to be his confidant, and yet he does not wish it—indeed, it causes him anxiety" [5, 156]. The young man also speaks of his anxiety.¹⁴ For his part he describes Constantin as an observer who has "a demonic power" [5, 163]. Constantin views himself as an observer. The young man repeats this view while assigning another meaning to it. He portrays Constantin as a detached observer who subjects every passion "to the cold regimen of reflection" [5, 163].

In an entry in his papers from 1846 Kierkegaard notes that in *Repetition* "feeling and irony are kept separate from one another, each in its representative: the young man and Constantin" [Pap. VII¹ B 83]. When, as quoted above, Constantin spoke of an "antithesis of despair," who is it, then, who despairs? The young man describes himself as despairing and "in contradiction to himself" [5, 171f.]. But in the *Papers* Constantin observes that "I despair of the possibility [of repetition], and I now yield to the young man who will discover repetition with his religious primitivity" [Pap. IV B 117 p. 284]. And later: "I, however, in

¹⁴ Both in the case of Constantin and in that of the young man anxiety is to be understood as an ambivalent form of existence (cf. *The Concept of Anxiety* [6, 136]).

despair have abandoned my theory of repetition" [*ibid.*, p. 298]. The young man despairs when his life comes to a halt at the problem of repetition. It is thus the young man who is also to discover repetition. But at the same time it is Constantin who reports on this discovery as a detached observer.

These two modes of existence—shrewd observation and melancholia—are two ways in which repetition does not succeed. The mark of melancholia is that one holds oneself in reserve. One will not wholly will that which one wills.¹⁵ There is also a clearly discernible reserve in the making of shrewd observations, in which one places oneself outside of that which one observes. Constantin's "despair" is that he is incapable of discovering repetition by himself.

Thus *Repetition* as a work gives a negative delineation of repetition as a category. But in its description of negative phenomena—melancholia and detachment, despair and anxiety—it is also the case that *Repetition* points beyond itself. The analyses of the negative are developed in works which appeared after *Repetition*, primarily in *The Concept of Anxiety* and *The Sickness Unto Death*.

¹⁵ Melancholia is "the sin of not willing deeply and profoundly" (*Either/Or* [3, 177]).

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