A Theological-Biblical Anthropology of Sin in light of a Kierkegaardian Philosophy of Human Subjectivity

by

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Declaration

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Eliézer dos Santos Magalhães

25 November 2021

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my loved wife, Eridan Sanches Magalhães. She invested in this dissertation, encouraging, and supporting me throughout the process of research. This work would not be possible without her love and investment in my life.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to God for the opportunity to pursue this PhD, and I hope that through it I can serve and glorify him. I am also deeply grateful to my parents, for always investing in my life and inspiring me to study more. This dissertation would not exist if not for their investment in my life. I am particularly grateful to Dr Jason Butler. He encouraged and supported me to write this dissertation. Finally, I want to express my gratitude to Dr Robert Falconer, who patiently read my thesis countless times, discussed concepts, and pointed me to relevant books for my research. To God be the glory for using his servants!

Abbreviations

Arist. Ethic.	Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics"
Arist. Metaph.	Aristotle's "Metaphysics"
Arist. Physics.	Aristotle's "Physics"
Arist. Poetic.	Aristotle's "Poetics"
Aug. 1John.	Augustine's "Homily on the First Epistle of St. John"
Aug. Ag. Ac.	Augustine's "Against Academics"
Aug. Cath.	Augustine's "On the Morals of the Catholic Church"
Aug. City.	Augustine's "City of God"
Aug. Conf.	Augustine's "Confessions"
Aug. Free.	Augustine's "On Free will"
Aug. Gen.	Augustine's "On Genesis"
Aug. Gen. Man.	Augustine's "On Genesis Against the Manichees"
Aug. Harm.	Augustine's "The Harmony of the Gospels"
Aug. John.	Augustine's "Tractates on The Gospel According to John"
Aug. Jul.	Augustine's "Against Julian"
Aug. Lit. Gen.	Augustine's "Literal Meaning of Genesis"
Aug. Mer.	Augustine's "Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of infants"
Aug. Psalms.	Augustine's "On the Psalms"
Aug. Reb.	Augustine's "Treatise on Rebuke and Grace"
Aug. Rel.	Augustine's "On True Religion"
Aug. Serm.	Augustine's "The Lord's Sermon on the Mount"
Aug. Soli.	Augustine's "Soliloquies"
Aug. Soul.	Augustine's "The measure of the soul"
Aug. Spir. Let.	Augustine's "Treatise on the Spirit and the Letter"
Aug. Trin.	Augustine's "On the Trinity"
Barn.	The Epistle of Barnabas
Clem. Inst.	Clement's "The Instructor"
Calv. Inst.	John Calvin's "Institutes"
CD	Karl Barth's "Church Dogmatics"

Chrys. Gen.	Chrysostom's Homilies on Genesis
CSV	Christian Standard Bible
Epic. Disc	Epictetus's "Discourses"
ESV	English Standard Version
Eus. Ecc.	Eusebius's "Ecclesiastical History"
Greg. Man.	Gregory of Nyssa's "On the making of Man"
Ign. Eph.	Ignatius's "Epistle to the Ephesians"
Ign. Magn.	Ignatius's "Epistle to the Magnesians"
Ign. Phil.	Ignatius's "Epistle to the Philadelphians"
Ign. Poly.	Ignatius's "Letter to Polycarp"
Ign. Rom.	Ignatius's "Epistle to the Romans"
Ign. Smyr.	Ignatius's "Epistle to the Smyrnaeans"
Ign. Trall.	Ignatius's "Epistle to the Trallians"
Iren. Ag.	Irenaeus's "Against Heresies"
Iren. Dem.	Irenaeus's "Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching"
ISV	International Standard Version
Just. Dial.	Justin Martyr's "Dialogue with Trypho"
Just. First.	Justin Martyr's "First Apology"
Just. Sec.	Justin Martyr's "Second Apology"
LEB	Lexham English Bible
Luther. Bab.	Martin Luther's "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church"
Luther. Bond.	Martin Luther's "The Bondage of the Will"
Luther. Heid.	Martin Luther's "Disputation of Heidelberg"
Luther. Hom.	Martin Luther's "*Disputatio De homine*"
Luther. Ind.	Martin Luther's "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences"
Luther. Schol.	Martin Luther's "*Disputatio* for Scholastic Theology"
Luther. Two.	Martin Luther's "Sermon Two kinds of Righteousness"
Math. Diog.	The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	NET Bible
NHEB	New Heart English Bible
NIV	New International Version

NKJV	New King James Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
Orig. Celc.	Origen's "Against Celsus"
Orig. Gen.	Origen's "Homilies on Genesis"
Orig. Princ.	Origen's "First Principles"
OT	Old Testament
Ovid. Meta.	Ovid's "Metamorphoses"
Plato. Apol.	Plato's "Apology of Socrates"
Plato. Meno.	Plato's "Meno"
Plato. Phaedrus.	Plato's "Phaedrus"
Plato. Phaedo.	Plato's Phaedo
Plato. Rep.	Plato's "Republic"
Plato. Thea.	Plato's "Theaetetus"
Plot. Enn.	Plotinus' "Enneads"
Tert. Ans.	Tertullian's "An Answer to the Jews"
Tert. Bap.	Tertullian's "On Baptism"
Tert. Heretics.	Tertullian's "The Prescription Against Heretics"
Tert. Hermog.	Tertullian's "Against Hermogones"
Tert. Marc.	Tertullian's "Against Marcion"
Tert. Pray.	Tertullian's "On Prayer"
Tert. Pat.	Tertullian's "On Patience"
Tert. Prax.	Tertullian's "Against Praxeas"
Tert. Rep.	Tertullian's "On Repentance"
Tert. Soul.	Tertullian's "Treatise on the Soul"
Theo. Apol.	Theophilus's "Apology to Autolycus"
Thom. Gent.	Thomas Aquinas's "*Summa contra Gentiles"*
Thom. Sum.	Thomas Aquinas's "*Summa Theologiae"*

Abstract

This thesis seeks to propose a new approach to the anthropology of sin from a rereading of the problem using the concept of subjectivity from the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard. The mischaracterization of the theme of sin in society raises the need for the subject to be revisited by theology, seeking a self-evident approach, therefore, considering human subjectivity.

This research begins by studying the anthropological insights in Kierkegaard's writings, emphasizing what he wrote about the doctrine of sin. Consequently, a detailed study about his concept of anxiety, despair, untruth, and the relationship with his idea of self is performed. The research also evaluates historically and theologically the arguments raised by Kierkegaard. The concepts presented are especially examined in the biblical narrative. It is argued that theology should consider the human being as a theomorphism and a kinetic self. Moreover, the doctrine of original sin is revisited. A new approach to sin is elaborated, considering its aesthetics and ethical realities concerning human subjectivity.

Some implications are explored for this anthropology of sin, helping theology present sin more effectively and providing a lens for understanding various issues related to anthropology. These implications show that biblical-theological anthropology needs to see the human as a multi-dimensional being to avoid producing an abstract and unidimensional understanding of the human and sin. This research argues for a "kinetic anthropology", where the human being is conceived not only regarding his substances, as traditionally addressed, but also regarding the multiple ontological relations composing human selfhood, where the God-relation is the main one.

“Such is the relation between the natural man and the Christian; it is like the relation between a child and an adult: what makes the child shudder and shrink, the adult regards as nothing. The child does not know what the horrifying is; the adult knows and shrinks from it.”

Søren Kierkegaard (2010, 21)

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Thesis Title

A Theological-Biblical Anthropology of Sin in light of a Kierkegaardian Philosophy of Human Subjectivity.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 *Kierkegaardian Philosophy*

Kierkegaardian Philosophy refers to the philosophical perspective developed by Søren Kierkegaard (1991a; 1994; 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2011). Born in Denmark (b. 5 May 1813, d.11 November 1855), Kierkegaard was an influential Christian philosopher. His philosophical perspective was Christian, bringing significant contributions to theology. Using classical Greek philosophy and showing a fascination with Socrates, he placed the human being's interiority under the philosophical inquiry, addressing issues such as subjectivity, freedom, sin, anxiety, anguish, and despair.

There is a deep relationship between Kierkegaard's philosophy and Hegel's, for, in his time, Hegelianism was the main subject in philosophical discussions in Copenhagen (Stewart 2017, 43; 2003; Lowrie 2013, 5). Kierkegaard was drawn to Hegel's philosophy because of the theme of Socrates's irony, which was present in the Hegelian texts and was the subject of research for Kierkegaard's doctorate (Stewart 2017, 47). Hegel's influence on Kierkegaard's philosophy is a complex subject, and Stewart (2003) makes a diligent evaluation about this. He argues that Kierkegaard's apparent opposition to Hegel was an opposition to the Hegelians of his time. Kierkegaard assumed innumerable concepts from Hegel, re-signified some, and violently rejected a few. Nevertheless, as Steinmetz (2021,7) argues, Kierkegaard ultimately disagreed with the purpose of the Hegelian system. It was probably Hegel's approach to Socrates's irony that attracted Kierkegaard to the theme of subjectivity (Stewart 2017, 49; Obinyan 2014, 2).

Kierkegaard opposed Hegel's dialectical triad by claiming that, regularly, thesis and antithesis cannot be mediated (Kierkegaard 2013, 38–39; Champlin 2013a, 197; Geisler 1999, 406). Kierkegaard developed his own concepts about the human constitution, defining it as the synthesis of finite and infinite, the merge of freedom and determinism (Farago 2011, 21; Kierkegaard 2010, 25). He opposed some concepts of Hegel and Kant but also incorporated many of their thoughts (Elrod 1975, 49, 57, 75, 201; Stewart 2017,125–135).

Kierkegaard's anthropology is innovative by breaking with prior anthropological concepts forged by illuminism, especially the Hegelian. His perspective is innovative due to his ontology which underlies his concept of the self as spirit (Davenport 2015, 233). Westphal (1996, viii) points out that in Kierkegaard, the only way to be a self is to be in the process of becoming a self. The self is not the starting point of human existence but its target, its *telos*. Humans exist before genuinely becoming a self. Kierkegaard's use of the term self must be understood in terms of the authentic self, only possible to be achieved in true Christian existence, because the self has God as measure and requires a proper relationship with him to become wholly (Kierkegaard 2010, 104–105; Obinyan 2014, 3; Davenport 2015, 230).

For Kierkegaard, the self is the spirit, the dialectical relation between the finite and the infinite, temporal and eternal, freedom and necessity (Kierkegaard 2010, 25). As the human is this dialectic, the relation itself becomes a third thing, a self-related synthesis that is self-conscient, which relates to who established the relation, that is God (26) (Evans 2019, 12–13). The dynamic behind the movement of the self is precisely in Kierkegaard's emphasis on development, which occurs in three stages in his literature (e.g., Kierkegaard 2004; 2013a): the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious (Obinyan 2014, 4; Rae 2010, 83–84). The religious stage has two distinct possibilities: "Religiousness A", which is a non-Christian religiosity, involving the spirituality available to everyone, a type of immanent religiosity; and "Religiousness B", that is Christianity, when the individual breaks with general concepts, daring to believe in response to the divine revelation (Kierkegaard 2016, 269–275; Evans 2019, 64; Rae 2010, 105–106).

Considered by many as the father of existentialism and by others as the precursor of deconstructionism and postmodernism, he, in fact, fits no label, and I argue he should be seen above all as a Christian thinker (Stewart 2017, 252; Rae

2010, 1). Kierkegaard's genuine interest was about authentic selfhood, found in authentic Christianity. In many ways, his thinking was a reaction to the institutional Christianity of the Danish Lutheran church of his time. His theological concern was to restore to Christianity its personal character, freeing it from dogmatism that objectified God's truth, reducing revelation to mere knowledge, accusing the church of not incarnating it, lacking the proper subjective appropriation (Evans 2019, 162–195; Farago 2011, 27; Rae 2010, 2–4).

1.2.2 *Human Subjectivity*

Subjectivity refers to the individual, which is relative to consciousness and relationship with himself (Abbagnano 2007, 922). For Kierkegaard (2009, 107), the concept is synonymous with inwardness because subjectivity arises in human interiority. He contrasts subjectivity with objectivity because subjectivity is always relative to the self, while objectivity is external, independent of the subject (Stewart 2017, 53). Kierkegaard considers objective truth as uncertain, for history and science, for example, as sources of objective truths are constantly changing (Kierkegaard 2013, 27–29; Watkin 2010, 259). However, to speak of subjective truth is to speak of a truth that can be checked subjectively when an individual appropriates and validates it inwardly. Subjective truth does not contradict objective truth but validates it subjectively. As Stewart (2017, 55) commented, "The key point in this is that the individual, with its own reason, must test whether what has been stated is true". I argue that it is necessary to understand Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity disconnected from the relativistic idea that developed later mainly from other existentialists. The Kierkegaardian idea does not fall into relativism, and I must give some attention to this question in this work.

1.2.3 *Anthropology of sin*

Anthropology studies the human, its constitution and relationship with the world, offering different approaches such as Physical Anthropology, which deals with the biological perspective, treating it as a physical animal; Philosophical Anthropology, which studies the subject from philosophical perspectives such as phenomenology, existentialism and personalism; and Theological Anthropology, which studies the

constitution of the human being from the biblical revelation, as well as his relationship with God (Champlin 2013a, 198–199; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 76).

The perspective addressed in this work is that of theological anthropology, considering, however, the Philosophical Anthropology of Kierkegaard as a tool. Anthropology of Sin does not allude to another anthropology; it focuses, however, on the relationship between human existence and sin, with the consequent anthropological unfolding. After all, it is part of theological anthropology to deal with the creation of humanity, its fall, original sin, its transmission, and its effects on humankind and the world (Ferreira and Myatt 2007, 36; Cairns 2002, 30; Hodge 2010, 24).

1.2.4 *Review of Scholarship*

To address this matter today, it is necessary to understand what psychoanalysis, philosophy, and linguistics have to say about subjectivity, because they have appropriated the theme, setting the tone for academic discussion. According to Torezan and Aguiar (2011), for psychoanalysis the concept of subjectivity comes in terms of consciousness and unconsciousness, with the strong predominance of unconsciousness. They affirm that psychoanalysis arose during the modern era when science departed from theology and through reason sought to understand consciousness (529). In this sense, the Freudian concept of unconsciousness was developed, which for Torezan and Aguiar (531) is what genuinely “constitutes subjectivity”. Atkins (2005, 195) states that in Freud, the concept of subjectivity is distinct from that developed by Descartes, where mind and body were separate and unrelated. Freudian subjectivity affirms the intrinsic relation of the mind to the body, involving its drives, desires, and emotions (196). Atkins declares that it is more than a biological influence, where all the energies flow from the body, and which are related to what Freud called libido, involving the desire to keep the body in balance and self-satisfaction. In this sense, Freudian psychoanalysis conceives human subjectivity in terms of unconsciousness.

Torezan and Aguiar (2011, 533) also distinguish Freud’s psychoanalysis from Lacan’s, where the latter substitutes the Freudian emphasis of the biological on the unconsciousness by language, influenced by Saussure and the structural theory of Levi-Strauss. Murray (2016, 163) asserts that Lacan’s most substantial influence came

from Saussure's linguistics, which also influenced Strauss, shaping psychoanalysis, philosophy, anthropology, and hermeneutics. That is why subjectivity in Lacan is defined by language, as he believed that unconsciousness is immersed and structured by language (Murray, 172; Torezan and Aguiar 2011, 533). This does not mean that Lacan denied Freud's concept of libido but takes away Freud's substantial weight given to the biological, emphasizing the role of language. For Lacan, subjectivity was a quality of the unconsciousness, the place which houses particular and hidden truths (Murray 2016, 174).

McGrath (2005, 152) states that Saussure also influenced Jacques Derrida, the creator of deconstructionism, significantly impacting hermeneutics in general. He asserts that Derrida deconstructs the concept of textual objectivity, where the author fails to communicate its real intentions, transmitting what was not intended, concluding that any interpretation is valid. Vanhoozer (2010a, 27) and Mohler (2005, 60) warn of Derrida's emphasis on subjectivity, where the truth of a text lies in the hands of those who read it and not of the writer. For Mohler (2005), Derrida's deconstructionism removes the objectivity of any text, for to interpret now means to create meaning, not to find it. Mohler believes that Derrida's emphasis on subjectivity is part of postmodern thinking, which abandoned the notion of absolute truth, embracing relativism.

Shakespeare[1] (2015, 470) disagrees that deconstructionism rejects truth and has abandoned objectivity. For him, Derrida's emphasis is on identifying elements hidden in words, seeking out the real intentions, and exposing the forces behind the text. Vanhoozer (2010a, 27), nevertheless, shows how Derrida indeed demoted logic and reason, where for him, truth is subjectively created by the interpreter. Shakespeare (2015, 471) even connects Derrida to Kierkegaard, arguing that the Danish philosopher also "deconstructed", albeit in his own way. Nevertheless, Shakespeare (465–469) argues that Kierkegaard rejected numerous assumptions of the postmodern concept of subjectivity, with its "distractions, simulations, and fantasies." However, I argue that precisely for Kierkegaard rejecting subjectivism and relativism, it is a mistake to confuse his thought with Derrida's, or with the so-called existentialists. Vanhoozer (2010a, 513) shows how Derrida and Nietzsche valued what

[1] Not the English playwright and poet.

for Kierkegaard was warned as a “Sickness unto death”, while Evans (2019, 37) argues the same regarding Jean-Paul Sartre, who turned Kierkegaard’s thought upside down.

For Farago (2011, 181–184), Kierkegaard did not abandon objective truth but instead emphasized subjectivity as an opposition to the Hegelianism of his time and the cold systematization that penetrated Christianity. Westphal (2015, 320) agrees with Farago, asserting that in Kierkegaard, subjectivity is not an excuse to transform personal interests, desires, and passions into truth. For Kierkegaard, Westphal says, subjectivity involves knowing the “how”, not just the “what”. By emphasizing subjectivity, Kierkegaard highlighted faith as a passion, contrasting the Hegelian idea that reduced it to mere cognition (318).

Grøn (2015, 276) suggests that Kierkegaard’s anthropology placed the human as a being situated between two worlds. In this sense, he states (277), human existence is always the product of a reaction between forces of opposite natures, a synthesis of these in time. The human for Kierkegaard is a synthesis, manifesting its own choices concretized in time (Evans 2019, 10–12).

Grøn (2015, 278) understands that Kierkegaard emphasized human freedom in his dialectic, raising the problem of how the choices of others in the past consequently affected the choices of individuals. Grøn believes that at the core of this question is the concept of sin, because it embodies human freedom, responsibility, and the historical influence of past sins. For her, Kierkegaard separated the concept of sin from sinfulness, dealing dialectically with the problem of human freedom and historical determinism.

Influenced by Kierkegaard’s thought, there are significant points of contact in the anthropology of sin from leading theologians of the last century, such as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Evans 2019, 1; Stewart 2016a; 2016b). However, one should not judge Kierkegaard based on the theologians’ use of his thought, for they were not influenced only by him. Barrett (2016, 22), for example, states that the way Kierkegaard dealt with human freedom is quite different from how Barth did. For him, Kierkegaard was more interested in the psychological aspect of sin and how to warn his readers about the challenge in this struggle, while Barth had no interest in why people negatively use freedom. For Barrett, Barth’s theology does not focus on human responsibility as

freedom but on the participation of the human in the personhood of Christ, in which everyone is made perfect. Barrett (18) also points out that Barth criticized Kierkegaard's emphasis on human subjectivity, replacing it with God's salvation. Barrett further highlights this theological distinction between Kierkegaard and Barth regarding salvation. While Kierkegaard insisted on the self-consciousness of sin as a prerequisite for faith and salvation, Barth rejected anything that diminishes grace and its unpredictable character (Barrett 2016, 25–26). Although influenced by Kierkegaard, Barth was unable to understand him fully, I argue, for Barth ended by producing what the Danish philosopher mostly denounced: a theological objectivism.

Tietz (2016, 48), in turn, speaks of the concept of sin for Bonhoeffer and how it approaches that of Kierkegaard. He states that for this German theologian, sin is existential, and as such, must be treated. The importance of Kierkegaard to Bonhoeffer, recalls Tietz (46), is evidenced when the German theologian names the Danish thinker a representative of "genuine Christian thinking". According to Tietz, Bonhoeffer shares the same disapproval Kierkegaard showed of Lutheranism which misused grace, "which isolates the *sola fide* and ignores the necessity for deeds" (54). According to Tietz (55), for Bonhoeffer Christianity is not a mere cluster of concepts, but discipleship coined by a relationship of obedience to Christ.

Some current theologians have also revisited the themes of anthropology of sin using the ideas of Kierkegaard as background. Cappelørn (2010), for example, rejects the classical Augustinian definition of original sin, following Kierkegaard. For him, sin comes into the world every time someone sins, and is not transmitted from father to son. If sinfulness is transmitted, he says, freedom is consequently affected, exempting the individual from the guilt of his or her own sins. By reflecting on Kierkegaard's "The Concept of Anxiety", Cappelørn (145) concludes that sin comes to the world through anxiety and that it is not "caused by an arbitrary, accidental decision nor is it caused of necessity". For him, anxiety is "a basic condition of human existence" (145), relating sin to human freedom.

The idea of "Becoming", for Jothen (2018, 48), is the key to understanding Kierkegaard's concept of selfhood, for the self is defined as a dialectical structure of opposites, as the tension between possibility and necessity. The integration of these opposites occurs through the concretization of human choice, where the person imagines its existence and embodies it in his own life, in a movement that actualizes

the self. There is only one authentic existence, the Christian, lived through Christ's imitation. Because of sin, Jothen (2018) states, the person needs God to bring conscience of his sinfulness and the truth of his personhood, where healing occurs only through Christ. For Jothen (3-4), the role of imagination, will, and passion plays a fundamental function in the construction of the image of Christ in the person.

Jothen's (2018) work is exceptional in applying the Kierkegaardian concepts of imagination, will, and becoming for theology. However, it is still necessary to think about the subjective relation of imagination, will, and the virtual dynamics of the self's becoming with the anthropology of sin.

I think Kierkegaard's philosophy can help theology rethink the anthropology of sin, given his concepts in terms of anxiety, despair, and untruth. When the term sin is studied only objectively, it falls into an abstraction disconnected from human reality. On the other hand, when it is reduced to human existence, the concept becomes relativist. I think theology has not yet found biblical balance in the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity in different matters. I believe the anthropology of sin is essential to balance them, and Kierkegaard's thought can provide direction.

1.3 Main Research Question

For theology to redeem God's centrality over all aspects of human existence in this era, it needs to rescue objective truth, but with genuine subjectivity, which is not based on strange inventions but inward human truths. This requires a rethink of biblical anthropology not in merely objective terms but using Kierkegaardian anthropological insights, which consider the human being a synthesis between different realities.

Therefore, the main research question asks: How might Kierkegaard's philosophy of human subjectivity be employed to construct a biblical contemporary theological anthropology of sin?

1.4 Subsidiary Questions

- In what ways does Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Human Subjectivity relate to Anthropology and sin?
- What have theologians said about the relationship of Human Subjectivity and the Anthropology of sin?
- What does Scripture say about the relationship of Human Subjectivity and sin?

- How might we construct a Theology of Human Subjectivity from Kierkegaard's thought that is both actual and biblical?
- What are the theological implications of the theological-biblical formulation on Human Subjectivity for a contemporary theological Anthropology of sin?

1.5 Presuppositions

I believe that postmodernity is the age of hysterical subjectivity, which, by "killing God" with the philosophy of Nietzsche, Freud, and others, have also murdered objective truth, thereby losing the frames of reality. This relativistic subjectivism is emerging in society, requiring theology to reemphasize the pillars of truth that sustain it. However, theology must do this in constant relation to human subjectivity. I think that objective theology must be transcended, because many of the questions made by the thinkers who helped shape this relativistic era must indeed be heard. While we can reject their solutions, I think theology must pay attention to the sincere and genuine questions they raised.

My central assumption is the need to construct theological anthropology that is subjectively objective and objectively subjective. Compared to physics laws, which always involve variables and constants, in my view objectivity is theological constants, while subjectivity is human variables. To construct theology only with constants is a mistake similar to a theology built only on variables.

1.5.1 *Scripture*

I hold that the Bible is the ultimate authority for theology, inspired entirely by the Spirit of God. It must be interpreted in the light of all of Scripture. I believe in the historicity of Genesis as well as in the historical existence of Adam and Eve. The Bible needs to be interpreted respecting the distances between us and the original text, including linguistic, temporal, historical, geographical, spiritual, and other distances.

1.5.2 *Philosophy*

I believe that the general revelation of God, imprinted in nature and reason, is essential to the Christian theologian through the good use of philosophy. Through the lens of special revelation, the Holy Scriptures, the theologian can philosophically reflect upon the truths present in general revelation. This can bring benefits to

humanity through the development of “theological psychology,” “theological anthropology” “theological sciences,” and others, always considering, however, the supremacy of God’s revelation above all.

I believe that using certain philosophical concepts may also restrict some broader biblical views, rationalizing what is spiritual, reducing essential dimensions of human existence, such as emotions and will. Thus, philosophy should be used with caution and humility, always in dialogue with the Scriptures. Otherwise, it becomes a tool of reductionism, conditioning biblical concepts to be monocultural and monochromatic, blinding theology to the colorful revelation of the Scriptures.

1.6 Purpose and Significance of the Research

1.6.1 *Purpose*

This research project develops a theological anthropology that deals with the problem of sin from the perspective of subjectivity. It departs from Kierkegaard’s thinking and is not restricted by it. This is a Kierkegaardian anthropology of sin, but not Kierkegaard’s anthropology, not a mere repetition of his thought. This is a theological approach that is both biblical and current, answering to the yearnings of the contemporary human being, providing reflections and tools to serve the church.

If the self is a synthesis of two realities, physical and psychical, sin and faith can also be conceived as a different synthesis in dialectical relationship between God and humans, and one another. Therefore, it is necessary to study how these relationships are created and developed. In this case, sin would not be a metaphysical entity distinct from the human being but an existential synthesis that transforms the human into something else. This is why this is an anthropology of sin, because sin has no objective existence outside of human beings. The same is true for faith, but with different results. This research studies the relation of sin with the human, examining how it affects the becoming of the self in his relationship to God.

1.6.2 *Theological Significance*

I believe there is great theological value for this research. First, the development of an anthropology of sin that is both biblical and philosophical, which considers the subjective nature of the human being, can help theology acquire an up-to-date

Christian thought that is more sensitive to the demands of the modern human being; up-to-date in the sense of answering both the old and the new questions about the relationship between human subjectivity and sin, human existence and its sinfulness. The very meaning of the term sin has been degraded in society, and I think studying its relationship to human subjectivity based on Kierkegaard's thought can help restore its proper theological value.

Second, it develops a theological anthropology, not an anthropological theology. The core of this study is theological, not anthropological. Although humanity and sin are the main subjects, they are studied with their relationship to God in mind, as revealed in Scripture. I consider there are many positive repercussions for theology, which may elaborate critical thinking concerning secular themes so current today, such as subjectivity, identity, anguishes of the soul, and how they are related to sin.

Third, the emphasis on developing a theology considering subjectivity brings significant benefits to the Church. It is not, however, a relativistic theology as sometimes subjectivity is treated. Instead, it is a more human and less theoretical theology, an incarnated type, not conceptual, an approach more sympathetic to human struggles. Fourth, it is a theology that may serve for the development of other theological disciplines.

1.6.3 *Practical Significance*

The practical importance of this study lies in the production of theological reasoning for the Church to deal with more empathy the subject of sin, thus, providing concepts that can serve the Church in pastoral counseling, biblical teaching, gospel preaching, missions, and probably other areas.

1.7 Research Methodology

This is a literary research project in Systematic Theology in the field of anthropology and hamartiology, focusing on Kierkegaardian Philosophy. I make use of a modified version of Osborne's Comprehensive Model (Osborne 2006; Smith 2013, 49-56). Systematic Theology synthesizes what the Bible says about specific topics. Thus, it differs from Biblical Theology, which often organizes the subjects historically or canonically, as already established in Scripture, respecting the progressive revelation of God. Instead, Systematic Theology seeks to formulate the different

themes of the Christian faith rationally and coherently (Peppler 2014, 245). Osborne's model is more suitable because it starts from preunderstandings (Smith 2013, 50), which are based on Kierkegaard's philosophy in this research. Next, the theme is studied historically and biblically in different chapters (Ibid, 53). Once the biblical and historical perspectives are researched, it is possible to generate a systematization. Finally, from the systematization, doctrinal and practical implications for the theme are raised. I believe that Osborne's model provides a better synthesis for the research, involving a philosophical, historical, biblical, and theological approach to the topic studied.

Because of the philosophical nature of this project, the first methodological step is the analysis of Kierkegaard's philosophy concerning his anthropology of sin. The second step is the study of this subject in Christian history. The third is a theological-biblical examination; the fourth, the formulation of contemporary theology, also addressing the possible implications for theology. I chose this model because I believe it is more objective for the composition of systematic research. Furthermore, as this work has a philosophical-theological character, I believe that Osborne's Comprehensive model is more suitable for enabling a clearer systematization of the themes addressed, making possible the development of this research in a more suitable way.

Step 1: Philosophical Examination

This step examines Kierkegaard's philosophy, identifying how his thinking about subjectivity relates to biblical anthropology and the concept of sin. Many of Kierkegaard's works are addressed in this step. Here, both the analytical and the dialogical methodology are used, where different anthropological views developed by Kierkegaard are examined and evaluated, also considering what his interpreters wrote.

Resources used for this step include: (1) the primary sources, Kierkegaard (1991a; 1994; 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2011), and (2) secondary sources, namely, Kierkegaard's interpreters, like Barrett (2015), Cappelørn (2010), Evans (2019), Farago (2011), Grøn (2015), Jothen (2018), Kirkconnell (2012), Law (2015), Rae (2010), Steinmetz (2021), Stewart (2016a; 2016b; 2017), Walsh (2015).

Step 2: Historical Theology

In this step, a contrast is made between Kierkegaard's anthropology of sin and the theology of some influential theologians in the history of Christianity. The methodology used are the dialogical and epistemological, where a conversation between concepts is developed and stressed critically.

Resources used for this step include: (1) Historical sources, like the Apostolic Fathers, the Church Fathers, Reformers, and others, like Cross and Livingstone (2005), Hagglund (1981), Maia (2007), McGrath (2005), Richardson (2010), Sausurre (2003), Schaff (2001; 2008). (2) Theological books, like: primary sources from Augustine (e.g., Aug. City.; Aug. Conf.; Aug. Free.; Aug.Trin.), Irenaeus (Iren. Ag.; Iren. Dem.), Origen (Orig. Princ.; Orig. Gen.), Tertullian (e.g., Tert. Bap.; Tert. Prax.; Tert. Soul.), Thomas Aquinas (Thom. Sum.; Thom. Gent.), Luther (e.g., Luther. Bab.; Luther. Bond.; Luther. Heid.; Luther. Hom.; Luther. Schol.), Barth (2009), Bonhoeffer (1996), Ferreira and Myatt (2007), Ford (2005), Garrett (2014), Grudem (2009), Law (2015), Pannenberg (2009a; 2009b; 2009c), Puchniak (2016), Robert (2016), among others.

Step 3: Theological-Biblical Examination

This step examines the biblical texts regarding the anthropology of sin. First, it identifies the primary biblical texts related to the subject, analyzing them theologically dialoguing with other Scripture texts. It identifies the relationship between human subjectivity and sin in the Scriptures, deducing concepts for the construction of an innovative anthropology of sin. The exegetical study employs the following tools: textual criticism and lexical analysis.

This study makes use of the Hebrew and Greek texts as primary sources, in addition to the ESV, LEB, NASB, NET, NIV, NKJV, NRSV bible translations. Also, numerous biblical commentaries and biblical theologies, like Bruce (2009), Carson (1991; 2009), Lopes (2017; 2017a; 2019), Keener (2004) and biblical theologies, like Lasor, Hubbard and Bush (1999), Merril (2009), Merril and Zuck (2009), Morris (1992), von Rad (2006). Likewise, dictionaries and biblical encyclopedias, like Cairns (2002), Champlin (2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2013d; 2013e), Coenen and Brown (2000), Harris, Archer and Waltke (2017), and academic articles among others are used.

Step 4: Theological Formulation

At this stage, a theological anthropology of sin is systematized, considering human subjectivity. In addition, this step tackles the theological implications for contemporary anthropology of sin based on the main conclusions reached previously. The methods used are: (1) From the previous steps, systematically gather the primary insights and findings. (2) Deduce principles and propose fresh concepts. (3) Compare with opposing ideas of other theologians. (4) Evaluate how it may affect other theological disciplines. (5) Examine how it may serve the Church today.

The following, among others, are used in dialogue with different ideas: Barth (2009), Berkhof (2001), Bonhoeffer (2009), Davis, Pound and Crockett (2015), Ford (2005), Frame (2013; 2015), Garrett (2014; 2014a), Green (2008), Grudem (2009), Jothen (2018), Kirkconnell (2012), McGrath (2005), Milbank (2003), Milbank, Pickstock and Ward (2006), Muller (2013), Pannenberg (2009a; 2009b; 2009c), Stewart (2016a; 2016b; 2017), Tillich (2019), Vanhoozer (2005; 2006; 2010; 2010a), Walsh (2009; 2015), as well as various journal articles.

Chapter 2

The Kierkegaardian Anthropology of Sin

2.1 Introduction

This chapter studies the relationship between Kierkegaard's philosophy and biblical concepts on the anthropology of sin. However, before addressing the biblical-theological question, it is necessary to look at the formation of Kierkegaard's Christian thought. The chapter considers some of the influences Kierkegaard received from Socrates and Hegel, and how they relate to his anthropology. After this, the chapter approaches the relationship between Kierkegaard's thought and the Biblical anthropology of sin through his pseudonymous books.

The main Kierkegaardian terms studied here are anxiety, despair, and untruth. These terms refer directly to the philosophical approach Kierkegaard took to the subject of sin, as will be demonstrated. Besides, it will be essential to explore Kierkegaard's definition of the self and the distinction he made from his concept of the human being. With this, the chapter also tackles the relationship between the self and the biblical idea of spirit. Moreover, Kierkegaard's well-known stages of existence are also discussed, considering the relationship with his concept of self and sin. Although other Kierkegaardian terms are also approached in the rest of this work, the concepts studied here are fundamental.

Therefore, this chapter tackles Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity dialoguing with the Bible. The first step depicts elements of Kierkegaard's biography that influenced his thought. Then, it traces how Kierkegaard's thought is related to theological anthropology. Finally, Kierkegaard's anthropological concepts regarding sin are explored concerning the Scriptures. Thus, this chapter is not a mere explanation of Kierkegaard's ideas but a critical and constructive dialogue with his writings to identify new theological insights.

The analysis of this chapter considers Kierkegaard's authorial books and their interpreters. The insights raised in this chapter will provide the foundational thought for the rest of this study.

2.2 Influences in Kierkegaard's Philosophy

No one who emerges and grows in this world develops his ideas free from history and the influence of their context, and Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was no exception. Therefore, despite how insightful he was, understanding Kierkegaard must come from considering the place and time in which he lived, the prevailing ideas during his time, and what questions he attempted to answer. This is why this section begins with the person of Kierkegaard and his interest in subjectivity.

Kierkegaard was a dedicated student, reading different authors, mentioning many philosophers, theologians, poets, and scientists in his works, demonstrating an extensive erudition. Tracing all these influences in Kierkegaard's thought would exceed the boundaries of this section. Although he is in debt to so many scholars, two names are repeated in his books many times, revealing how precious they were for him: Socrates and Hegel. The following subsection highlights the main elements in Kierkegaard's biography, and the subsequent two will give some attention to Socrates and Hegel's impact on him.

2.2.1 *Kierkegaard's Life in Copenhagen*

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was born in Copenhagen on May 5, 1813, dying in the same city on November 11, 1855. At that time, Copenhagen was a poor city in a poor country (Stewart 2017, 23). Few people managed to maintain their wealth at that time, one being Kierkegaard's father, Michael Pederson Kierkegaard. His mother, Ane Sørensdatter Lund, was his father's second wife. Their relationship began scandalously and seemed to have reverberated over his father's spiritual life. Ane worked at Michael's house, and soon after the death of his first wife, the two had a love affair that resulted in her pregnancy. The two were married only thirteen months after the first wife's death, with Ane pregnant with a girl. The child Maren Kirstine was born only four months and eleven days after the wedding (Lowrie 2013, 22; Rae 2010, 9; Watkin 2000, 7). The feeling of guilt was always part of Søren's father's life, directly affecting Søren's upbringing. His parents had seven children, Søren being the youngest. The children were educated in Lutheranism, and Kierkegaard's elder brother, Peter Christian Kierkegaard, studied theology and became a pastor and later a bishop in the Church of Denmark.

There was in Kierkegaard's family a melancholy that everyone shared. There is much speculation as to the reasons for this depressing mood that affected Søren. For example, Farago (2011, 26–27) believes that it was related to the father's guilt at starting a family from his transgression with Ane before marrying her. Stewart (2017, 26) believes it was because of the family's many losses, since each of Kierkegaard's brothers and sisters died very young. When Kierkegaard was twenty-one years old, only his older brother Peter Christian and his father were alive. Lowrie (2013, 71), however, argues that this melancholy came from the confession that as a child, his father had cursed God when he was hungry, cold, and having a challenging time, blaming God for allowing a child to suffer in that way. Kierkegaard's father believed that God would make him pay for his sins sooner or later (Farago 2011, 28). Based on his vision that God was a punitive figure, his father believed that he would see the death of all his children (De Almeida and Valls 2007, 10). The confession of his father about this "curse" shook his son, who wrote in his diary that it was "the great earthquake" (Lowrie 2013, 67–72; Rae 2010, 8; Watkin 2000, 10), leading him to a crisis of faith where he rediscovered Christianity, albeit a different one from his father, and that preached by the Danish church of his time!

Kierkegaard wrote in his journals about this spiritual melancholy, a problem he called the "thorn in the flesh" (Watkin 2010, 165). Kierkegaard's melancholy may have been a combination of all the factors described above. Nevertheless, Watkin points out that it is vital to differentiate Kierkegaard's spiritual melancholy from the well-known depression. Kierkegaard's melancholy resulted from an awareness of the seriousness of his duty and the burden of fulfilling the obligations he thought were imposed on him. His spiritual melancholy may not be much different from the feeling Solomon experienced when he realized that all is vanity, meaningless (Eccl 1:1–18). However, Kierkegaard did not surrender to his melancholy, stating that "when everything becomes vanity, subjectivity is set free" (Kierkegaard 2015, 200).

Kierkegaard had, like Socrates, the idea of a personal mission, conditioning his whole life to the fulfillment of this existential task. As will be demonstrated in the following subsection, Kierkegaard was greatly influenced by Socrates. The Greek philosopher thought he had a divine mission, for in Plato's Apology and the Phaedrus dialogue, Socrates speaks of a divine voice that guided him in his mission (Plato. Apol., 31c–d, 40a–c, 41c–d; Plato. Phaedrus, 242b–d; Thiselton 2002, 287). Socrates's

mission as “midwife of the truth” portrayed in the Theaetetus greatly impacted Kierkegaard, who saw himself with a similar purpose (Plato. Thea., 148e–149a; Kierkegaard 2009c, 341). Kierkegaard believed everyone has an existential task to be accomplished (Kierkegaard 2004, 496–509). This is why I agree with Watkin (2010, 165) that Kierkegaard’s melancholy can be understood as an awareness of his existential purpose, which demanded from him the ostensive writing of his books and the opposition to the corrupted Danish Christendom of his day.

Kierkegaard attended the School of Civic Virtue as a child, a reputable institution for the children of bourgeois families, learning Greek and Latin, and developing an interest in classical texts (Stewart 2017, 24–25; Watkin 2000, 12–13). In school, he read the writings of Plato for the first time, developing a fascination for Socrates. After concluding his studies, Kierkegaard studied at the University of Copenhagen, presenting a master’s thesis with the theme: “The concept of irony” (Kierkegaard 2015), writing his interpretation of Socrates’s irony and its expression in the literature of the German Romantics (Söderquist 2015, 344). While he valued Socratic irony, he criticized the German Romantic expression for leading to relativism and nihilism (Stewart 2017, 27; Shakespeare 2015, 467).

Some individuals greatly impacted Kierkegaard’s life, and his father was probably the most important. By observing his father’s struggle with guilt and the theological ineffectiveness of the church to deal with the problem of his soul, Kierkegaard rejected the doctrinal theology, which was only objective and intellectual. The vision of a punishing God, his father’s obsession with sin, and the recognition of the inefficacy of that version of Christianity led Kierkegaard to seek the Christianity of Christ, different from that of Christendom (Farago 2011, 30). Observing his father’s internal struggles and his own sins was one of the reasons for turning his attention inward.

Another important person worth mentioning is Hans Lassen Martensen, a contemporary scholar of Kierkegaard. Martensen spent two years traveling in Europe, learning about Hegel’s philosophy (Stewart 2017, 42–47). After returning to Copenhagen, Martensen defended his thesis titled “An Autonomy of Human Self-Consciousness in Modern Dogmatic Theology”. He argued against the idea of human autonomy, the concept that individuals act on their own, concluding that this notion is dangerous in distracting people from Christian faith (75). According to Hegel’s

dialectic, Martensen claimed that faith and thought should be reconciled in a synthesis where Christianity is the point of reconciliation (Watkin 2000, 16). He produced a speculative theology that integrated rationalism and orthodoxy harmoniously. Martensen began to teach Hegel's philosophy at the university, and as Kierkegaard was a student, he was bothered by the excitement his colleagues showed to the lectures (Stewart 2017, 47; Rae 2010, 19). Because Kierkegaard disagreed with Martensen's notion of autonomy and his Hegelian theology, he became a great critic of Hegelianism.

For Kierkegaard, Martensen's Hegelianism placed more importance on intellectual speculation than on the ethical-religious existence (Rae 2010, 18–19; Watkin 2000, 16). His opposition was because Martensen confused existence with thought. Christianity became the logical result of intellectual evolution. This turned human freedom and subjectivity into illusion, and Christianity became Pantheism. Kierkegaard rejected these conclusions, arguing in favor of human freedom and subjectivity as essential factors. For this reason, the relationship between Kierkegaard and Hegel has been under debate, for he used Hegelian thought many times but opposed Martensen and many Hegelians (Hühn and Schwab 2015, 64–65; Rae 2010, 74).

Another person who impacted Kierkegaard's life was Reverend Jakob Peter Mynster, bishop of the Church of Denmark (Lowrie 2013, 4; Watkin 2010, 170–171; Walsh 2009, 24). Mynster had been the his father's pastor, and although Kierkegaard had admired him for a long time, Mynster was denounced by him as a "symbol of the worldly degeneration of the Church which he died combating" (Lowrie 2013, 4). The most significant controversy concerning the bishop was after his death. The newly-appointed bishop, the above-cited Martensen, delivered a sermon referring to his predecessor as "a witness of the truth", which offended Kierkegaard (Evans 2019, 187; Stewart 2017, 240–242). This led him to write an article in the newspaper "The Fatherland", on December 18, 1854, entitled "Was Bishop Mynster a witness to the truth?" (Kierkegaard 1991, 5–9; Watkin 2010, 173). In this article Kierkegaard described what he called "The New Testament Christianity," demonstrating how different the lives of Mynster and Martensen were from those of early Christians. Kierkegaard emphasized how radical the early disciples where—they risked their lives to be persecuted, marginalized, and killed. For Kierkegaard, the priests of the Church,

Mynster and Martensen especially, did not resemble any part of that Christianity, for instead of being persecuted by society, they supported it. Instead of losing their lives by living for the sake of truth, they were paid salaries for being supposedly exemplary Christians, enjoying luxurious lives. For Kierkegaard, the Church of Denmark had redefined the Christian ideal, “turning Christianity into something that everyone could manage without any alteration to their middle-class lives” (Rae 2010, 14). For him (Kierkegaard 1991, 8), Mynster and Martensen were not examples of a Christian life, claiming that they only “played” at Christianity. Kierkegaard wanted the priests to reform themselves, adapting their lifestyles to the harsh demands of Christianity. In summary, Kierkegaard denounced the inconsistency between their exteriority and interiority, for they were not living what they were preaching.

Hence, it is possible to understand why Kierkegaard attacked the Church of Denmark. His critique of objectivity and appreciation of subjectivity must be seen considering these facts, where Christianity was incoherent. Their external selves were different from their inward selves, and Kierkegaard was denouncing the incoherence.

Kierkegaard’s engagement and breakup with Regine Olsen are also important to highlight. While he was writing his thesis “On the Concept of Irony”, he approached Regine and courted her (Stewart 2017, 147–150; Lowrie 2013, 135–143; Farago 2011, 49–56). After receiving the consent of her father, the two were engaged on September 10, 1840. Yet, a few months later, struggling with his melancholy, he felt he was wrong to drag Regine into what he was suffering. Consequently, on August 11, 1841, he broke off the engagement (Steinmetz 2021, 5; Evans 2019, 190; Watkin 2010, 184–185). There is much speculation about the motives that led him to end it, but it is evident that although he did seem to love Regine, he preferred a life of solitude, possibly because he imagined that he would follow the same fate as his brothers and would probably die soon. Kierkegaard had this strange idea that he would die before reaching the age of thirty-four[2] (Kierkegaard 2011a, 490; 2014, 349; 2017, 621; Stewart 2017, 207–208). Perhaps the breakup was only the fruit of his renunciation of what could prevent him from doing his duty, his Socratic mission (Watkin 2000, 12). He then found himself called to a life of sacrificial celibacy (Evans 2019, 190; Farago

[2] When he turned thirty-four, alive and well, Kierkegaard doubted his birth date, checking the parish records to see if it was correct (Kierkegaard 2011a, 490; Stewart 2017, 208).

2011, 52). However, Regine Olsen is present in many characters in his books, especially the one he wrote shortly after breaking off the engagement, the book “Either/Or” (Kierkegaard 2004; Evans 2019, 178; Lowrie 2013, 151–152).

2.2.2 *Socrates’s Influence*

There is no doubt Socrates was the philosopher who most influenced Kierkegaard, being present in most of his books (Stewart 2017, 21; Furtak 2015, 131; Söderquist 2015, 352). Socrates is the main character of his thesis, and he plays a significant role in books such as “Philosophical Fragments”, “Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments”, “Either/Or”, “The Sickness unto Death” and appears in the epigraph and in the background of the “The Concept of Anxiety” (Kierkegaard 2004; 2010; 2011; 2013; 2015; 2016; 2019). Moreover, Socrates is present in Kierkegaard’s religious writings and quoted several times in his journals[3] (Söderquist 2015, 352). At the end of his life, in the magazine “The Moment”, Kierkegaard wrote, “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”. (Kierkegaard 2009c, 341).

Kierkegaard placed Socrates as a model for his own life and a parameter to “audit” Christianity. His use of a pagan philosopher to judge Christianity, however, should not be misunderstood. Socrates saw his mission like a midwife, helping people recollect the inward truth by questioning them dialectically (Evans 2019, 63; Frame 2015, 63; Rae 2010, 38). This was his method called “maieutic”, where Socrates as a midwife gave birth to truth by questioning people, demonstrating that they had innate knowledge of basic realities (Davie et al. 2016, 680). This is evidenced in Plato’s Theaetetus, where Socrates compares his work to the midwife (Plato. Thea., 150c). Likewise, Kierkegaard saw his own task as that of Socrates, where he questioned the church maieutically (Stewart 2017, 35; Watkin 2010, 128–129). Like Socrates, Kierkegaard would use subjective irony to question people’s erroneous beliefs to bring them to the awareness of their own inwardness. For this, Kierkegaard used indirect

[3] To quote a few from the innumerable citations he made: Kierkegaard 2007, 22, 44, 216; 2008, 151, 216, 227; 2010a, 321, 417; 2011a, 28, 38, 68; 2011b, 49, 66; 2012, 166, 268; 2014,12, 39, 46; 2015a,28, 197, 205; 2017, 10, 12, 25; 2018b, 27, 63–65.

communication to allow people to evaluate the truth for themselves (Watkin 2000, 50), because the truth should be grasped subjectively.

Subjectivity is vital to understand Kierkegaard's approach to sin. For him, sin is the point of departure for a religious existence, for there is no relationship with God without the recognition of sin and the inner feeling of existing in front of God (Rae 2010, 90; Kierkegaard 2010, 103–107). This recognition must arise subjectively, for self-conscience as a sinner does not happen objectively.

In Kierkegaard's thesis about Socrates's irony, he presented embryonically much of his thinking about subjectivity. Socrates is presented as an ironist whose task is to destroy the illusions of those who think they know something (Kierkegaard 2015, 204–205; Söderquist 2015, 352). The Socrates of Kierkegaard has no hidden knowledge, as he knows nothing and cannot come up with any positive solution. His task was only to deconstruct the certainties by showing the inconsistencies of what people believed.

When Kierkegaard wrote that there is nothing positive about Socrates's irony, he did not mean to signify a pessimistic view, but Socrates did not intend to prove any positive doctrine (Kierkegaard 2015, 54–59). The irony consists of presenting a doctrine that "annihilates itself" (59). To prove something would be positive while questioning to the point of evidencing its inconsistencies was negative. Socrates was negative, for he undermined the position of others by refusing to present a thesis or positive doctrine (Stewart 2017, 26). Kirkconnell (2012, 97) asserted that for Kierkegaard, Socrates's self-attributed ignorance "was the highest expression of subjective truth." Opposing Hegel, who saw in Socrates's irony a positive element, for claiming that he intended to demonstrate a hidden truth, Kierkegaard (2015, 205) argued that Socrates had no point of view whatsoever, saying that Hegel refused to comprehend this because to his eyes, "irony was an abomination." Kierkegaard wrote in one of his journals,

> the fact that several of Plato's dialogues end without result has a far deeper reason than I had earlier thought. For this is a reproduction of Socrates' maieutic skills, which make the reader or listener self-active, and therefore end not in a result but with a sting. This is an excellent parody of the modern rote-learning method that says everything at once, and the quicker the better,

> which does not awaken the reader to any self-activity but only occasions the reader to recite by heart. (Kierkegaard 2008, 276).

Socrates's negativity to which Kierkegaard was attracted was the naive doubting of the established reality, to expose the incongruities of life and the need for choice by the individual. The value behind Socrates's negativity relied upon the subjectivity it provided. The negative "helps the self to reflect on itself and become conscient with the self" (Kierkegaard 2015, 35). This fascinated Kierkegaard, for it made people reflective in Socratic dialogues, leading them to reconsider their personal beliefs and concepts (Stewart 2017, 32). This process of getting the person to look inward was what Kierkegaard was looking for: subjectivity.

As in the time of Socrates, there were sophists, scholars who had the reputation of distorting arguments to prove whatever they wanted (Frame 2015, 61–62; Abbagnano 2007, 918; Thiselton 2002, 288). The sophists had answers to everything and manipulated the truth employing a relativistic epistemology (Frame 2015, 776). While the sophists claimed to have all the answers, Socrates claimed to know nothing. Socrates used his negative dialogue to demonstrate the weakness of the arguments, reducing them to nothing. Kierkegaard, in turn, saw sophists in his own time, both in Christendom and academy (Stewart 2017, 32). Like Socrates, Kierkegaard took an ironic stance, seeking to expose the weaknesses of their thoughts and awaken their subjectivity.

Kierkegaard's (2015) thesis is divided into two major parts. The first compares the view of Socrates presented by the classical sources: Xenophon, Plato, and Aristophanes. In this part, Kierkegaard intended to identify the true Socrates, highlighting the contradictions in the sources' accounts. The Danish thinker began arguing that Xenophon was not faithful in presenting Socrates, because his writings depicted Xenophon's hidden intention of displaying to the Athenian people the error they made in condemning Socrates (Kierkegaard 2015, 24–25). Moreover, Kierkegaard argued that Socrates's irony in Xenophon's writings has a positive character. However, Xenophon's Socrates is very different from Plato's and Aristophanes's, Kierkegaard contended, since there was nothing positive reached in the dialogs for them. Consequently, Kierkegaard did not appreciate Xenophon. Instead, Plato's account was highly appreciated (33–106), as well as that of the playwright Aristophanes (107–123).

In the second part of his thesis, Kierkegaard (2015, 187–247) addressed the modern expressions of irony in the Romantics. He evaluated the thinking of Friedrich von Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, and Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger. While in the first part, Kierkegaard valued subjectivity in Socrates's irony, in the second, he argued that subjectivity went too far in the Romantics. Kierkegaard used the irony of Socrates to compare and expose extremes in the Romantic subjectivity. He accused the Romantics of placing irony in the service of relativism and nihilism, a temptation to which Socrates never succumbed (Stewart 2017, 27). While the irony of Socrates questioned the Hellenistic reality of his own time, the Romantic irony did not address or question the truth and history of its time, only denied it with the intention of poetically creating a new Romantic reality (Kierkegaard 2015, 212–219). In this sense, they were more like the Sophists, relativizing everything.

Kierkegaard argued that Socrates's subjectivity was not alienated from his Greek reality but rather a response to it, while Romantic subjectivity invented a fictitious reality that denied the truth (Kierkegaard 2015, 212). Kierkegaard, therefore, differentiated the Romantic idea of creating the self from his Socratic idea of allowing the self to be created (217). The first creates a fictional identity; the second is the Christian who allows God to create him. This becomes very important when Kierkegaard deals with the problem of despair. One is the person who knows God and becomes himself as planned by the Creator, and the other fails to become himself and defiantly creates his own version of a human being (Kierkegaard 2010, 33–34; Evans 2019, 39; Howland 2015, 19–20). This point is crucial in his anthropology, as he argued that the poetic creation of the self denies reality and falls into despair. Kierkegaard denounced this existential relativism of the Romantics Schlegel and Tieck for confusing metaphysical reality with the historical, the empirical with the eternal (Kierkegaard 2015, 212). His criticism of the Romantics of his time is very actual and can be easily applied to the postmodern relativistic thinkers of today, including the so-called existentialists. They also confuse physical-historical-biological reality with the metaphysical. Ironically, even though Kierkegaard is called the "father of existentialism," thinkers like Sartre proposed the exact opposite of what Kierkegaard proposed (Evans 2019, 37). The Sartrean view of the self is what Kierkegaard defined as existence in despair; that is, Sartre put Kierkegaard's Christian thought upside down.

One of the aspects of Socrates that also caught Kierkegaard's attention was the famous demon of Socrates (Plato. Apol., 31c–d, 40a–c, 41c–d; Plato. Phaedrus, 242b–d). Kierkegaard (2015, 128) claimed the Greek term *to daimonion*, is not a purely adjective or substantive word, arguing that the term does not refer to a singular being, like a spiritual demon, but rather to something abstract. Unlike the Greek demons who vocalized through mediums, this one had its divine voice within Socrates. Kierkegaard (128–129) claimed that this *daimonion* was instinctive, presenting itself like an inner voice that warned the philosopher, but never gave orders. A negative voice.

For Kierkegaard, Socrates's *daimonion* was different from the NT's concept of demon, as it was Socrates's subjectivity, not another being. It is not a voice that differs from Socrates's, but a voice that flowed from within, from his intuition, warning, questioning, misadvising him (Kierkegaard 2015, 128–129). Kierkegaard identified in Socrates's *daimonion* a conflict with the religion established by the Athenian state (131). When Socrates claimed that his *daimonion* was divine, Kierkegaard believed that the Greek philosopher was putting something unprecedented and subjective in opposition to the concrete individuality of the Greek gods. Kierkegaard underlined that Socrates attributed to his own interiority the same value that the Greek Oracle had, meaning that it was up to the individual to evaluate and make decisions. Therefore, Kierkegaard declared: "In the place of the Oracle, Socrates now has his demon" (Kierkegaard 2015, 131). However, the Danish thinker emphasized that the *daimonion* of Socrates should not be confused with his conscience, since this *daimonion* was concerned only with Socrates's interiority.

Socrates was a turning point in the history of humanity, wrote Kierkegaard (2015, 158), agreeing with Hegel on this point (Stewart 2017, 86). However, contrary to Hegel, Kierkegaard asserted that Socrates was not a logical result, a necessary historical outcome, a synthesis of his time; instead, he was an entirely original element. His originality is perceived in his breaking with the system of his own time, choosing a different direction, becoming evidence that the Hegelian system is mistaken because of human subjectivity. Furthermore, Socrates was himself, not because of a logical necessity of his time, as a temporal synthesis that culminated in his automated decisions, but because he exercised his freedom listening to his inner voice.

2.2.3 *Hegel's Influence*

As mentioned, the second thinker who mostly influenced Kierkegaard's thought was Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. He is present throughout Kierkegaard's thesis, "On the Concept of Irony" (Kierkegaard 2015; Hühn and Schwab 2015, 65–66), and directly quoted in many other works (Steinmetz 2021,7).[4]

Kierkegaard's relationship with Hegel, however, was not as simple as with Socrates. Since Kierkegaard's thought became notorious in the early twentieth century, it was interpreted as opposed to Hegel's, as if Kierkegaard disagreed with the entire Hegelian system (Evans 2019, 5–6; Watkin 2010, 253–254; Stewart 2003, 4). According to Stewart (2003, 44), those who diffused this idea, failed to see the complexity of Kierkegaard's thought. Stewart (81) points out that Kierkegaard strictly opposed the Danish expression of Hegelianism, developed by Martensen and Heiberg. The misappropriation of Hegel's philosophy applied to theology by Martensen, and his followers, was the reason for Kierkegaard's attacks (Rae 2010, 19). Martensen developed a speculative theology that mediated faith and reason (Watkin 2010, 108; 2000, 16). Stewart (2003) suggests three different periods in the relationship between Kierkegaard and Hegelianism, starting with a positive attitude, moving to a critical posture, and at the end of his life openly assuming some Hegelian elements (cf. Jothen 2018, 74).

Kierkegaard's (2015) thesis evidenced the influence Hegel exerted in that period of his life, quoted throughout the work. On a page of his journal, referring to those days, Kierkegaard reveals the influence on his thinking: "what a Hegelian fool I was!" (Kierkegaard 2015a, 29; Stewart 2003, 17), he wrote indicating that it was from Hegel that he built much of his thinking, although disagreeing with many points.

The complex association of Kierkegaard with Hegel is also evident from the fact that shortly after Kierkegaard's death, Hans Friedrich Helweg (1816 to 1901) published the article "Hegelianism in Denmark", listing the names of important Hegelians of that time, citing Kierkegaard as a central figure (Stewart 2003, 81). Helweg identified this relationship of attraction and repulsion in Kierkegaard's relation with Hegelianism as

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[4] e.g., Kierkegaard 1994, 45, 46, 58, 71; 2009b, 145, 148, 152; 2011,13, 32; 2013, 39, 83, 109, 179.

ambiguous. Kierkegaard, for example, made use of many terms and concepts developed by Hegel's phenomenology (Evans 2019, 5, 6; Welz 2015, 440–444). On the other hand, he opposed Hegel's resolutive dialectic, proposing that there should be no synthesis for many paradoxes that should be accepted by faith (Steinmetz 2021,12; Frame 2015, 314; Farago 2011, 70; Watkin 2010, 65). The paradoxes cannot be explained, for they demand existential choices that the Hegelian system cannot explain. Logical and rational speculation has its role in philosophical thought, said Kierkegaard (2013, 61), but it has nothing to do with questions concerning eternal happiness and inwardness. Kierkegaard established the limits of logic in terms of human subjectivity, because existence cannot be explained by logic. For example, logic cannot explain why the human being, even knowing what is right, chooses the wrong!

Stewart (2003, 24) believes that the reason many people think that the focus of Kierkegaard's philosophy was to oppose Hegel comes from the fact that one of his most-read works in the English-speaking world was the "Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments" (Kierkegaard 2013; 2016). In this book, Hegelianism is explicitly opposed by Kierkegaard. Perhaps because he imagined that he would die after the publication, Kierkegaard demonstrated, in a very articulated way, his relation to the so-called speculative philosophy, dismantling it from inside using the argument of subjectivity (Kierkegaard 2013, 253; Stewart 2017, 208–209).

Kierkegaard (2013, 248–254) described that after witnessing the conversation of a grandfather before his son's grave, talking to his grandson, Kierkegaard was deeply impacted by the honesty filled with emotions of the grandfather. In that place, the Danish philosopher decided to dedicate his life to "discover where lies the misunderstanding between speculation and Christianity" (253). According to Kierkegaard, the mistake of speculation was reducing faith to a moment, neglecting what it means to exist, and the lack of understanding about inwardness (254). Speculation was the term used to refer to Hegel's logical philosophy, concluding that "speculation is always wise after things have happened" (Kierkegaard 2013, 39).

However, Kierkegaard did not wholly reject Hegelianism. On the contrary, Kierkegaard emphasized his respect for speculative thinking when applied to subjects other than existence, faith, religion, and eternal happiness (Kierkegaard 2013, 60–61).

Carlisle (2005, 36) compares Kierkegaard's relationship with Hegel to an adolescent son who rebelled against his father.

Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegelian theology was caustic, which is accurate for today's theology. He did not deny the value of history to Christianity, although he rejected the idea that historical facts or doctrinal information have eternal value for the individual (Kierkegaard 2013, 60). Instead, he argued that speculative Christianity replaced personal faith, which is subjective, with the objectivity of doctrinal information (35–41). Kierkegaard mocked those who based their eternal happiness on the objective fact of having been baptized (48–49), as if the joy of salvation depended on a record held in a church and not on the inner passion that involves the eternal happiness through faith. He called it magical baptism (50), for being a mere external event not permeated by faith.

Perhaps here is why it is popularly believed that Kierkegaard was opposed to any objective truth. If he were against objective truth, he would not have cited many historical and biblical characters in his books.[5] However, for him, faith is an inward matter that involves more than knowing or accepting the historical events of Christianity. It involves personal appropriation more than reasoning. For him, subjectivity means inward appropriation, which does not mean that the individual creates his truth, but that he needs to internalize it to truly change (Steinmetz 2021,14). This is one of the reasons why Kierkegaard's perspective is more current than ever. At a time when mega-churches took place in several western countries, Kierkegaard (2013, 292–293) ironically criticized pastors who get "10,000 adherents" by using beautiful and inflamed speeches, teaching Christian content as nothing more than theater, changing nothing subjectively. There are indeed discrepancies today found in several Christian countries, with churches concerned with entertaining their members or merely educating them with teachings that intend to format their behavior instead of changing their hearts. They evidence a theoretical Christianity that is full of knowledge but empty of life, full of objective knowledge but void of its subjective incarnation. Kierkegaard's warning of this incoherence between exteriority and

[5] Kierkegaard cited numerous biblical characters, such as Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and many others (e.g., Kierkegaard 1994; 2008, 167, 279; 2011, 34–40; 2012, 51, 236; 2015a, 343).

interiority is more than an attack on the Hegelian theological system. However, it is a call for today's church to reevaluate its own theological method. After all, the inconsistency between what the church preaches and what it is and does is the main reason hindering society from believing the gospel.

2.3 Kierkegaard's Anthropology

Kierkegaard was not a systematic thinker; however, he framed his thought, addressing themes like Trinity, creation, Christ, salvation, resurrection, and faith throughout his writings (Rae 2010, 3). Like these subjects, his anthropology is scattered in the different books he wrote. In this section, I will tackle his concept of human and the self, approaching the dialectics that constitutes his ontological thinking and its unfolding for biblical anthropology.

The way Kierkegaard developed his anthropology is quite peculiar. To understand his thought, one needs first to understand his concept of spirit related to the self. In his book "Sickness unto Death", Kierkegaard (2010, 25–26) wrote:

> A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. Considered in this way, a human being is still not a self. In the relation between two, the relation is the third as a negative unity, and the two relate to the relation and in the relation to the relation; thus, under the qualification of the psychical the relation between the psychical and the physical is a relation. If, however, the relation relates itself to itself, this relation is the positive third, and this is the self. Such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must either have established itself or have been established by another. If the relation that relates itself to itself has been established by another, then the relation is indeed the third, but this relation, the third, is yet again a relation and relates itself to that which established the entire relation.

Here Kierkegaard defined in metaphysical terms the biblical teaching that the human is the unity of physical and psychical; however, he is more than just a body

synthesized with a soul because this synthesis also relates to itself, meaning that it is self-conscious (Evans 2019, 5,11; Rae 2010, 92–93). Besides, the synthesis self-related is also related to the one who created the relation, God. Kierkegaard's definition, therefore, differentiates the human being from the self. The self is a human being, but not every human being is a self. The self is another type of human, which Kierkegaard expresses as a "theological-self", the authentic human (Kierkegaard 2010, 104). As a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, the freedom and necessity, the human being is not yet relating to itself. It is not yet self-conscious and not yet relating with the one who created the relation; therefore, it is not authentic. The human being has all the potential to become an authentic self, but only those who consciously relate to themselves and God exist in authentic selfhood (Davenport 2015, 230). Kierkegaard briefly addressed this idea in his book "The Concept of Anxiety" but developed it deeper only in "Sickness unto Death" (Kierkegaard 2011, 90; 2010).

From Kierkegaard's definition, a kinetic nature of the self can be identified. Because the human changes from simple physical-psychical synthesis to a self-conscious synthesis, and then to an authentic self that relates appropriately with God, it is an inward movement. For Kierkegaard, the teleological goal for the self is to become Christlike, resting transparently in the power who established the self (Jothen 2018, 1–6; Rae 2010, 93).

Man is the synthesis between body and soul, an existential tension, a living dialectic between two different realms. As a synthesis, the human being needs to synthesize himself, actualizing eternal ideas in his temporal existence, concretizing through his finite body what is conceived in the infinite possibilities of his mind (Evans 2019, 10–11). As a synthesis, man must reconcile contrary elements and is urged inwardly to bring existence through his choices. At the core of Kierkegaard's anthropology is the concept that the self is transformed into another type of self, developed dialectically (6). To become an authentic self is to achieve the full potential planned by God for human beings, reaching inner harmony through a genuine relationship with God. The disharmony is the proper imbalance of the internal synthesis, called despair, which is sin in existential terms (Kierkegaard 2010, 25, 26, 101). Therefore, every human living without the proper God-relation is living in despair, which is sin, even though not aware of it.

Kierkegaard thus defined the human in terms of different states of existence. Latently every human is a self, but in actuality, it is only those who achieve self-conscience and establish a relationship with the one who created the self, God. Potentially every human is spiritual, either unaware of their spirituality or with a negative spirituality, that is, without a genuine relationship with God. Pagans lack the spirit, for they lack the God-relationship, believing that nature is God and in an immanent relationship with it (Kierkegaard 2011, 101–102; 2010, 65; Hannay 2007, 28). Through its grades of selfhood, the different levels of the self are the basis for the three stages of human existence advocated by Kierkegaard (Glenn 2007, 6).

As philosophical as Kierkegaard's definition may be, the idea of relation and synthesis should not be taken in merely abstract terms. The human being as a synthesis and his self-consciousness as a self-relation are distinct ontological realities, subjectively evident[6] in the human being. The proper relation of the self with God involves an entire ontological change involving the whole self. As God is the "criterion and goal" for the self, the relation between the self and God is "as much axiological as ontological", for selfhood is relational (Kierkegaard 2010, 104; Glenn 2007, 17; Evans 2019, 14).

Kierkegaard's use of the term spirit is distinct from that used by trichotomists and dichotomists.[7] For Kierkegaard (2010, 25), however, "the spirit is the self". Although some consider Kierkegaard a trichotomist (e.g., Thompson 2016, 260), I argue that this is a misunderstanding, because the spirit in Kierkegaard's view is not a distinct third substance of the human being, but rather the proper synthesis between body and soul which relates to itself consciously, unfolding into its interiority, and thereby becoming a new dimension of the whole self. Thus, the spirit is the complete self. Nevertheless, the spirit only becomes "positive," or authentic when positively grounded in God (Hannay 2007, 27).

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[6] I say subjectively evident because dimensions of human reality are not objectively evident, for they are not tangible, like thought, emotions, and will. However, every human can perceive alone the subjective reality affirmed by Kierkegaard and validate it or not because the very person is both the object and the subject of the definition.

[7] The dichotomist sees the human divided into two parts, the material and the immaterial, the body and the soul, where the term spirit is conceived as synonymous of soul (Frame 2013, 797; Grudem 2009, 388–389). However, the trichotomist believes that humans are divided into three distinct parts: body, soul, and spirit.

If observed in a certain way, Kierkegaard's anthropology could be considered trichotomist because he wrote in terms of body, soul, and spirit (Kierkegaard 2010, 25–26). However, if observed from another perspective, his anthropology could also be considered dichotomist. He divided the human being in terms of exteriority and interiority as a dialectical synthesis of two distinct dimensions (Kierkegaard 2018, 61; 2010, 25, 26; 2011, 168–177). If viewed from yet another angle, his anthropology could be considered monistic or holistic,[8] for to him, body, soul, and spirit merge in such a way that they become inseparable (Farago 2011, 76). For him, human beings do not have a body and a soul but are a body that merges with a soul, the result of which is the spirit. Therefore, the whole human being is the spirit. Although it may not seem difficult to define Kierkegaard's anthropology in any of the three most defended positions, I argue that he does not fit into any of them.

Kierkegaard's anthropology must be understood under his concept of the theological self, the ideal human in front of God (Kierkegaard 2010, 104). For him, the human, as body, soul, heart, spirit, mind, memory, desires, imagination, can be divided into as many parts as possible through its internal relations. However, at the same time, it should not be separated from the whole because the self is a relation of relations, a synthesis of syntheses. Each relation affects the whole self through its dialectics, which are tensions pressuring the person for actualization. These tensions generate anxiety, for they urge for decision (Kierkegaard 2011, 44–49). Moreover, the dialectical imbalance which every human experiences inwardly between conflicting elements is the state of despair, sin (Kierkegaard 2010, 25–26). This state is associated with individuals alienated from God; a condition healed only through establishing a relationship with him (Rae 2010, 93; Evans 2019, 14). This relationship, called the God-relation, is not only social but mainly ontological and normative.

I agree with Madureira (2017, 205) and Hoekema (2018, 224–248) that we should abandon dichotomy and trichotomy, for the human is a psychosomatic unity. The problem is not conceiving of the human in terms of two or more dimensions but conceiving of it as a fragmented self. After all, separating body from soul, distinct

[8] This is the theory that the human cannot be separated into parts, for it is one wholly. The elements that make the human being cannot be separated from each other (Garrett 2014, 516).

dimensions of the same self, annihilates what it means to be human. The Bible speaks in terms of resurrection and glorified bodies after death (e.g., 1 Cor 15:42–44; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2), not in terms of bodyless souls existing in heaven.

Kierkegaard rejected the Greek dichotomy that separated the material from the psychical, and the Aristotelian (and Aquinas's) hylomorphic[9] view that conceived the self as the union between matter and form (Davenport 2015, 234–235). To be more specific, as Davenport highlighted, Kierkegaard used the hylomorphic approach to give the correct account of a human being, "but not of a person or self", for the spirit is the self (Kierkegaard 2010, 25, 26). Thus, the human as an inauthentic self is a hylomorphic union, while the Christian is spirit as the authentic self (Kierkegaard 2010, 104; Evans 2019, 7–9; Jothen 2018, 48). Therefore, an anthropological metamorphosis needs to happen, an inward, not outward, complete change (Kierkegaard 2013, 133–135).

The human is a synthesis between the opposites "finite and infinite", "temporal and eternal", "freedom and necessity" (Kierkegaard 2010, 25), which are poles of hylomorphic synthesis, where finitude, temporality, and necessity are associated with the body. By contrast, infinitude, eternity, and freedom are related to the soul or mind (Davenport 2015, 235). However, the self-conscience transcends this mere animal hylomorphic relation, connecting with itself, turning the self-conscience into a self-transcendent reality. Both human immanence (hylomorphic union between psychical and physical), and self-transcendence (self-conscience as the hylomorphic synthesis relating with itself), are grounded not in themselves but are established from outside, from God's own transcendent reality (Evans 2019, 112). The self is grounded on God; however, when it is not in direct relationship with the Creator it seeks ground on another self. For as a spirit, the self is on the move, and it needs a target to move to. Therefore, the godless self usually constructs itself socially or psychologically, grounding on another person. Thus, the godless self is inauthentic because it takes another inauthentic human self as its measure instead of God.

[9] The Aristotelian hylomorphism was the belief that everything is formed by matter and form, where in man the soul is the form and the body the matter, merged and not dissociated (Arist. Physics. 1, 7; Arist. Metaph. 7, 10: Cross and Livingstone 2005, 814).

As perceived, Kierkegaard did not conceive the human being as a static being but as a process of becoming (Jothen 2018, 47–49; Davenport 2015, 235–236; Farago 2011, 90). Therefore, I argue that the term defining Kierkegaard's anthropological perspective is neither dichotomist, trichotomist, nor monist. Instead, I argue that he developed a Kinetic Anthropology, from the Greek word κίνησις, movement (Swanson 1997, §3076; Louw and Nida 1996, §16.1). Kierkegaard's Kinetic anthropology emphasizes the self-becoming, self-morph character of the human existence, from a simple hylomorphic constitution to a self-conscient and self-transcendent reality, to finally a spiritual person, grounded in God.

Kierkegaard's stages of existence should be understood as different degrees in the individual's interiorization as self-becoming in front of God (Farago 2011, 120; Glenn 2007, 6). The existential goal is found transcendently, because it is God, who is independent of human immanence; however, God is not reached outwardly, but inwardly, because he grounds the proper human self. It does not mean that human beings can find God by themselves in their subjectivity. This is not what Kierkegaard claims, as in fact, man needs divine revelation to know God. Kierkegaard (2010, 26) emphasized that the self is incapable, by its own forces of achieving equilibrium and rest, reaching this only by relating to God. Knowing the divine revelation is like seeing the way and not the same as walking it. The path, however, always leads to subjectivity and not merely to external acts, which in themselves become empty works. Yet, authentic subjectivity will always generate external acts, works of love and faith, as Kierkegaard (1991a; 2018a) also argued.

Consequently, Kierkegaard's theory of the stages (or spheres) is directly related to his Kinetic anthropology. Therefore, it is essential to understand it to grasp the ontological movement where the self becomes authentic, spiritual. The following subsection will discuss the stages of the self and how they relate to Kierkegaard's anthropology. The second subsection will tackle the self as the spirit and the subjective movement of becoming a self.

2.3.1 *The Stages of the Self*

As already argued, Kierkegaard's definition of the self is inherently connected to his theory of life stages (Davenport 2015, 230; Glenn 2007, 5–21). These stages should not be conceived as entirely distinct but as three dimensions in developing the

same self (Carlisle 2005, 113; Watkin 2000, 54; Caputo 2007, 13). When Kierkegaard (2010, 25) wrote that “A human being is a synthesis,” he was referring to the first sphere (dimension) of existence, the aesthetical (Glenn 2007, 5–6). In this stage, the self is a simple “synthesis”, where the existence gravitates around this synthesis, conceived aesthetically as the lack of spirit (Davenport 2015, 245). The second stage is defined as a self-relating synthesis because “the relation relates itself to itself” (Kierkegaard 2010, 25). This self-relation is consciousness, which takes the self into an ethical existence. In this stage, the spirit is a striving will (Davenport 2015, 245). The third stage is when the self “relates itself to that which established the entire relation”, God, leading to a religious stage, an existence by faith. Kierkegaard’s position is an incisive argument that there is no authentic human existence other than the Christian (Oliveira 2016, 63–64).

Kierkegaard’s stages of existence are one of the most popular aspects of his philosophy (Stewart 2017, 12; Farago 2011, 119–120; Vardy 2008, 35; Watkin 2000, 52). There is a direct relation between Kierkegaard’s theory of the stages and Hegel’s triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis; where the aesthetical is the thesis, the ethical the antithesis, and the religious the synthesis (Frame 2015, 317). However, while Hegel’s process was logical and monist, Kierkegaard rejected his monism, affirming the paradoxes of human existence (Evans 2019, 4–5).

The stages or spheres of existence are layers, dimensions of the same self (Vardy 2008, 35; Obinyan 2014, 4). This image is painted in Kierkegaard’s metaphor of the self as a three-story house, with a ground floor, a basement, and a first floor (Kierkegaard 2010, 61). The self is the house, but the person is not always aware of all the floors, living confined in the basement (sensual sphere) or ground floor (ethical sphere), unaware of the first floor (religious sphere). Thus, the human has the whole potentiality to become an authentic self but is usually unaware of it.

The so-called aesthetic stage is when the self poetically develops itself; while the ethical is when the self is formed by others, usually when the person submits to the general concepts of law and morality; and the religious is when it submits to be formed by Christ, surrendering the self to God (Garff 2015, 254; Rae 2010, 85–95; Farago 2011, 120–128). In the aesthetic stage, the self is bound to the immediacy of its desires; in the ethical, it submits to the majority's will expressed in the moral law; while in the religious, it embraces eternity through faith and love. Each stage change

occurs through qualitative leaps, where the self is transformed through acts of freedom (Obinyan 2014, 4).

The aesthetic stage is the sensual, whose center of gravity is personal satisfaction, where selfhood is physically qualified, built-in relation to the desires (Rae 2010, 85; Vardy 2008, 36). This is the lowest stage, “when the self is not a self, as it lacks the self-consciousness of the demand to become a certain type of self through actualizing a higher ontological truth within one’s being.” (Jothen 2018, 11).

Oliveira (2016, 65) uses “interest” to define the aesthetic stage, declaring that this sphere does not rely on right or wrong but is the pure dialectic between interest and disinterest. Thus, the aesthete is the “carnal man” quoted by the apostle Paul, who summarizes this life view: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (cf. 1 Cor 15:32, NIV; Farago 2011, 123).

Kierkegaard (2004, 243–376) explored the theme of aesthetic existence in the first part of his book, “Either/Or”, stating that the aesthete ignores ethics, morality, and eternity. They are ignored because this is a corporeal stage, where the body subjugates the mind imposing its selfish demands: “it is a prey to sensuality and a fully corporeal soul.” (Kierkegaard 2010, 61). The term “corporeal soul” denotes the imbalanced self, where the body exercises dominion over the whole person.

The aesthetic sphere is also concerned with self-creation, where the self composes himself freely (Kierkegaard 2015, 217; Walsh 2009, 75–76; 1994, 57). Unlike the ethical and religious stage, the aesthetic invents itself based on its imagination, following its desires and own interests. In the Romantic era, there was a search for total freedom long before Nietzsche pronounced the death of God (Garff 2015, 255). However, this Romantic freedom produced a feeling of existential dizziness, called by many names, where “irony” was Kierkegaard’s favorite word. This irony resulted from the unlimited freedom with an absolute sense of powerlessness, a type of dizziness caused when facing an abyss.[10] Kierkegaard ascribed this unlimited irony to the aesthete (Garff 2015, 255). He argued that the task for the individual is not to create himself poetically but to be poetically composed by God (Kierkegaard 2015, 217; Garff 2015, 255–256; Walsh 1994, 57).

[10] Kierkegaard explored this notion of dizziness twice, applying to anxiety and despair (Kierkegaard 2010, 27; 2011, 67).

The Danish thinker accused the Romantics Schlegel and Tieck of denying reality and inventing an illusion (Kierkegaard 2015, 213; Walsh 1994, 49-–56). Therefore, as an expression of the ironic, the aesthete denies reality and history to invent a self-pleasant reality, assuming a relativistic attitude (Kierkegaard 2015, 216; Garff 2015, 255). In its sinful and unpredictable character, the aesthete is one of Kierkegaard's major anti-Hegelian arguments (Oliveira 2016, 72–73). Because of its randomness of sensual desires, the aesthete contradicts the logic.

The second stage is ethical, characterized by seriousness, responsibility, and commitment, regulating life through moral law (Farago 2011, 124; Rae 2010, 86). Unlike the aesthete, the ethicist is the one who strives to eliminate from his life the elements that make him incoherent with himself (125). The ethicist establishes an active and responsible relation to the world, shaping himself through outside values. At this stage, he chooses to conform to the law and universal values of good and evil (Oliveira 2016, 74; Obinyan 2014, 5; Vardy 2008, 48). At this stage, the individual is aware of himself and how he should be, but because he is disconnected from God, he seeks the ideal model for his existence in other human beings.

In his book, "Either/Or", Kierkegaard (2004, 561), in the voice of the ethicist Judge Wilhelm, argued that before becoming ethical, the aestheticist is nothing more than a negative relation, which must become positive, concrete. According to him, this happens only by taking active responsibility in the world. Thus, the movement to become ethical is "from himself, through the world, to himself" (561). This means overcoming self-centrality to establish new relationships with the world and people through moral commitment, whose result returns to the self, changing it. This overcoming of aesthetic self-centrality turns him outward and finally back inward.

Before, as an aestheticist, his self as a synthesis was still negative, for even though he recognized the difficulties inherent in his inward tensions, he made no concrete decisions about them. He lived passively, serving the unbalanced demands of himself. Now, becoming ethical, his selfhood is shaped by his individual moral decisions related to others (Rae 2010, 86; Vardy 2008, 48).

Marriage, for example, is what mainly represents the type of moral commitments of the ethicist (Rae 2010, 86; Vardy 2008, 48; Glenn 2007, 13). While the aestheticist "used" women to satisfy his desires, the ethicist commits freely through love with a woman in the duty of marriage (Kierkegaard 2004, 400–401). Indeed,

Kierkegaard himself never married (Evans 2019, 190; Vardy 2008, 49). This does not mean, however, that he condemned marriage.[11] For him, marriage and other social commitments can dangerously become an end by shaping selfhood, stealing the true love that should be focused on God. Consequently, the ethicist lives for the commitment of marriage, where his life, passions, and love are directed to that sole relation. The same applies to other types of social commitments.

The ethicist has selfhood shaped by the moral relationship with others. The ethicist is the resulting product of society, the differentiation between everyone and himself, being shaped by society. In this aspect, society for Kierkegaard has a highly human-shaping character. By submitting to social laws and universal ethics, the ethicist annuls his individuality (Vardy 2008, 53). He levels himself to the multitude in general, for the sake of duty, exempting from the inalienable responsibility of being a singular individual created by God (Farago 2011, 125–126; Oliveira 2016, 78). The ethicist becomes a behavior copier, a crowd follower, instead of an authentic self, created to reflect God. For no one can approach God thinking to have this right because he was baptized in a specific community, for example, or for being part of a group (Kierkegaard 2013, 48–49). Relating to God in merely ethical terms reduces Christianity to legalism; however, "Christianity is spirit; spirit is inwardness; inwardness is subjectivity" (38).

As the ethicist relates to himself positively, he develops the capacity for reflexive activities, such as "self-love, self-hate, self-judgment, self-direction, and, above all, of faith or despair" (Glenn 2007, 11). Besides, the self-relating characteristic of the ethical sphere creates a new phenomenon, where the self can "step back and look at itself" (Evans 2019, 11). The self is now able to interact with itself as if it was a different self. Self-consciousness allows the self to self-evaluate, thinking about itself in terms of the ideal self and actual self. From this perspective, Kierkegaard addressed the dialectic of virtual versus real despair (Kierkegaard 2010, 27–30).

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[11] Kierkegaard's relationship with marriage is full of controversies, and I do not intend to broaden the discussion here. However, I disagree with Evans (2019, 190), who, by reading the criticism that Kierkegaard made of marriage as it was practiced in his time's "Christendom" (Kierkegaard 2009c), failed to perceive the ironic elements of his thought. Kierkegaard condemned that type of marriage, not the institution of marriage. In my reading, Kierkegaard praised celibacy as a Christian ideal but without condemning marriage itself (Vardy 2008, 52).

Judge Wilhelm, Kierkegaard's (2004, 516) stereotype of the ethicist, explained that the self is "the most abstract thing of all which yet, at the same time, is the most concrete thing of all – it is freedom". The ethicist acknowledges the inherent tension between body and soul, finite and infinite, the temporal, and the eternal, trying to harmonize them through moral choices (Glenn 2007,13). Moreover, his self-consciousness also makes him aware of self-ideality and self-actuality, which increases despair in front of conscience of self-incoherence. The growing recognition of such self-incoherence is what can lead the self to the religious sphere. With self-awareness of the incapability of self-harmonizing, the individual becomes ready to turn to God (Farago 2011, 125–126).

Oliveira (2016, 78) believes that the idea of God in the ethical stage is close to that presented by Kant in his book "Religion within the bounds of bare Reason" (Kant 2009), where God is an immanent ideal, relating to humanity only in moral-ethical terms. The relationship the ethicist tries to develop with God is a mere legalist relation (Glenn 2007, 14–15), as Kierkegaard pictured Judge Wilhelm, who relied solely on his freedom, attributing to himself the power to make his life right. Judge Wilhelm preached a kind of justification by works when he stated he was able to save his soul and win the whole world (Kierkegaard 2004, 492). This is a genuinely Kantian concept of autonomy, ironically portrayed by Kierkegaard, who possibly expected the reader to grasp the incoherence of the speaker subjectively. Therefore, the distinction between the ethical sphere and the religious is not apparent because the ethicist appears as a religious, but whose religion is the proper self and the will of society (Vardy 2008, 51–52). If the aesthetic self is a hedonist, the ethical is a humanist.

The ethicist's inability to find equilibrium by himself is evident in Kierkegaard's definition of the self, declaring that alone it cannot balance its internal dialectics (Kierkegaard 2010, 26). The human self is a derived relation, for man did not create himself, and only when he relates to his Creator can he find balance and coherence (Evans 2019, 11–12; Vardy 2008, 56; Glenn 2007, 15). The absence of the God-relation is what causes despair, the existential imbalance. That is, human despair is the self-inconsistency, subjective evidence of God's existence. Furthermore, Kierkegaard asserts that God is not only the Creator of the human being, but also his existential purpose, "for only in Christ is it true that God is man's goal and criterion, or the criterion and goal." (Kierkegaard 2010, 146).

Kierkegaard differentiated two types of religiousness at the religious stage: Religiousness A and B (Kierkegaard 2016, 269; Evans 2019, 64; Watkin 2010, 212). Religiousness A is a non-Christian religiosity, and Religiousness B is specifically Christianity. Religiousness A is a type of Socratic religiosity because Socrates defended the idea that truth could be found immanently from within through reminiscence (Plato. Meno, 80e–81e; Plato. Phaedo, 72e–76; Plato. Phaedrus, 249b–250b; Rae 2010, 106). Kierkegaard (2016, 271) asserted that this is the religiosity found in paganism and inauthentic Christianity. Eternal truth, however, is only found transcendentally in God, argues Kierkegaard (275). This is why Christianity is so different from Religiousness A, for it relies upon God's transcendent revelation (Roberts 2007, 135). Inwardness is still necessary, as faith emerges from within; nonetheless, through an encounter with Christ. An encounter with the paradox of the incarnated God, the eternal made flesh, demanding either faith or offense.

The most notable book depicting the religious stage is "Fear and Trembling", where Kierkegaard (1994) addressed the narrative of Abraham sacrificing Isaac. Abraham represents the religious sphere, the model of a knight of faith. Glenn (2007, 17) claims that if one merges the book "Either/Or" with "Fear and Trembling", one gets the three stages of existence exemplified by their representatives.

Abraham, according to Kierkegaard, experienced an infinite resignation and a teleological suspension of the ethics to be able to obey God (Obinyan 2014, 5–6; Rae 2010, 120–123). The paradigm of faith in Abraham took him to a crisis that involved all his inward relations. According to Glenn (2007, 18), infinite resignation directly affected the aesthetic dimension of Abraham, while the teleological suspension of the ethical disturbed his ethic self-relation. Aesthetically his desires towards his son were challenged, while ethically, his morality and rationality concerning the law of not murdering his son and hiding from his family were at stake.

Abraham made a double movement of faith: complete resignation, where he decided to sacrifice his son, and at the same time, by "virtue of the absurd", believed that he would receive back what he sacrificed (Kierkegaard 1994, 27). Kierkegaard asserted that Abraham was a knight of faith, different from those he called knights of resignation (29–30). The difference between Abraham and others, like Agamemnon, who sacrificed his daughter in resignation (49), is that Abraham sacrificed to receive

back what he was giving. Abraham believed in the one who asked for the sacrifice, trusting in the character of God.

The teleological suspension of the ethics refers to a tension between Abraham's ethics and God's will because he has a commitment with Isaac and Sarah, as father and husband, but God calls him to murder his son (Kierkegaard 1994, 45–48; Rae 2010, 120). The sharp contrast between the ethical and the religious stage is perceived in this question and Abraham's decision. According to ethics, universal moral values, and rationality, Abraham would be considered a murderer, and his act completely unjustified (Kierkegaard 1994, 46). Ethics is governed by rational and common sense, and when God asked for the sacrifice of Isaac, he was asking him to suspend it to obey his divine will. God's revelation to Abraham demanded either get offended and disobey or believe and obey. Abraham's story reveals that any relationship an authentic religious self develops, even with his family, must be governed by the God-relation (Obinyan 2014, 6).

In the preface of "Fear and Trembling", Kierkegaard (1994, 3–4) quickly addressed the question of faith and reason, declaring that even Descartes, usually cited to talk about doubt, did not intend to deny divine revelation or exclude faith. Kierkegaard emphasized that Descartes did not impose the obligation to doubt everything, making a direct criticism of the Christian philosophical teaching of his time, because Martensen, the eminent Lutheran Hegelian, encouraged his students to doubt everything (Stewart 2017, 84–85). However, doubting everything would eventually destroy their beliefs, leading them to despair. Although doubt is encouraged to some extent, when taken to the extreme it deconstructs all foundations. For if one doubts absolutely, one reaches absolute despair! Kierkegaard showed that this approach leads to the opposite of what is found in Scriptures, that is the path of faith.

Here I must highlight another distinction between Kierkegaard and other later thinkers, like Nietzsche, Freud, Sartre, Derrida, for example. The path proposed by Kierkegaard (1994) is opposed to the path of absolute suspicion, which, like the ancient Romantics, deconstructed the foundations of reality. Kierkegaard (3-4) clarified that when doubt is absolute, reason becomes irrational, precisely the position taken by the so-called "masters of suspicion", Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud (Thiselton 2002, 234). Kierkegaard is neither a rationalist nor an irrationalist, asserting the limits

of reason and the necessity of faith as response to the revelation that transcends reasoning.

To conclude this section, it is crucial to identify that the change between the stages demands different qualitative leaps. The aestheticist is a slave of passions, and through self-consciousness and the leap of decision, he becomes ethical. Choosing and deciding to commit to moral choices is what changes the aestheticist into the ethicist. The religious stage also occurs through a leap of decision, where the person, like Abraham, decides between his self-will and God's will, a decision of faith. Each leap is a decision that changes the will and the self from the inside out. They produce qualitative changes in the self. The changes do not annul other spheres but re-signify them inwardly. To summarize, human will changes from desire to responsible choices and from choices to faith.

2.3.2 *The Self as the Spirit*

Although Kierkegaard's anthropology uses a philosophical approach (Davenport 2015, 233; Hannay 2007, 23–38), this subsection aims to check how his conclusions are related to the Bible and the theological concept of spirit. Kierkegaard's use of the term spirit is both Hegelian and biblical, synonymous with self (Evans 2019, 5–6). Furthermore, he affirmed the immortality of the spirit, arguing that Socrates demonstrated it (Kierkegaard 2010, 34; 2009e, 102). He even dedicated an entire "Christian discourse" entitled "There Will Be the Resurrection of the Dead, of the Righteous and of the Unrighteous" to address spiritual resurrection using both a biblical and philosophical approach (Kierkegaard 2009e, 202–213).

However, Kierkegaard's vocabulary is Hegelian, and his concept of spirit is similar to Hegel's. He appropriates from Hegel that spirit is a process, a becoming that develops dialectically (Evans 2019, 6). While for Hegel (2020, 299), the spirit was the absolute, a monist universal substance, Kierkegaard rejected this concept, applying the process of becoming inwardness instead of reality itself (Kierkegaard 2010, 25, 26; Thiselton 2002, 125; Walsh 2009, 52–54). This is particularly important because the result of Kierkegaard's argument is the opposite of Hegel's. Hegel presented an optimistic perspective towards the idea of natural progress, affirming the world's spiritual evolution through dialectical tensions. Kierkegaard, meanwhile, presented a pessimistic position towards natural progress, repeatedly placing the problem of sin

as the most significant evidence that the world does not evolve but is instead regressing. Besides, while Hegel defended an immanent and pantheistic view, Kierkegaard affirmed the transcendency of God incisively as an essential truth of Christianity.

In terms of biblical anthropology, the authors of the OT used an anthropological perception, named by Wolff (2007, 30) as “stereometric of expression”, or “synthetic thinking”. Wolff argues that in stereometric-synthetic thought, the parts of the human being are seen as members of the whole, not as separate parts. The analytical-differentiating perspective, which Wolff claimed to be Greek, affected the anthropological view that separated the human into parts. Therefore, when the OT authors wrote of body, soul, heart, spirit, and other words, they underlined the same person’s specific characteristics. In this sense, calling the human a spirit is to understand it in its entirety, genuinely complete. However, although the Semitic stereometric perspective did not split the human into parts as the Greeks did, it used different words to denote distinctive qualities of the same person (Madureira 2017, 205–210; Hoekema 2018, 224; Wolff 2007, 29–31). Biblical anthropology points to the fact that the human does not have a body but is a body. Man does not have a soul but is a soul. In the same way, he does not have a spirit, however is a spirit! Each word denotes a distinct characteristic of the same whole human being. Unity and multiplicity are categories applied to the same human being.

The word spirit, רוח in Hebrew and πνεῦμα in Greek refers to the aspect of the human being related to God, sometimes translated as wind and breath (Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 1195; Swanson 1997, §8120; 1997a, §4460; Liddell et al. 1996, 1424; Schultz 1996, 744). Wolff (2007, 67–68) declared that רוח in the OT refers more to God than man, calling it a “Theo-anthropological” term. The spirit, like the wind, brings the idea of movement, dynamics, transformation. Jesus used this metaphor when he described the new birth and the nature of the Holy Spirit (John 3:7–8). The born-again human is born of the Spirit and therefore becomes a spirit. In the Johannine account, there is a clear connection and distinction between the Spirit of God and the human spirit. Without the relation with the Holy Spirit, the human is a spiritless self; humanly alive, but spiritually dead (e.g., Matt 8:22; Rom 5:12–14; Eph 2:1; Col 2:13). This distinction is also present in the Pauline language that differentiates the natural man

(ψυχικός), from the spiritual man (πνευμᾰτικός; c.f. 1 Cor 2:14–15; Swanson 1997a, §4461, §6035; Liddell et al. 1996, 1424; 2027). The psychical person is, in Kierkegaardian terminology, the inauthentic self, who lacks the God-relation only established by the subjective movement of faith. A complete change must occur in the spiritless person to make it spiritual. This is a "qualitative leap" (Kierkegaard 1994, 240; Jothen 2018, 104; Walsh 2009, 47), not exclusively relational or normative but mainly ontological. The leap[12] is faith as an answer to Christ, the only one who can bring balance to the unbalanced self (Evans 2019, 41; Rae 2010, 56).

Spiritually, the self establishes its identity, whether creating an illusory ideal self or assuming one from society. However, the authentic-self accepts it from the God-man Jesus Christ, the existential *telos* to Humanity. Kierkegaard (2013, 135) wrote that "every human being has a strong desire and drive to become something different and greater." Therefore, whether real or not, the self is spiritually oriented by a *telos*.

The inward becoming of this *telos* is where being and non-being coexist, because "becoming" is the intermediate state, bringing to existence what does not exist yet, where Kierkegaard borrowed from Aristotle, applying his concept to the human spirit (Arist. Physics, I.7**;** Arist. Metaph., II.2; Jothen 2018, 49–50; Carlisle 2005, 32). Kierkegaard's idea of qualitative change occurs when something moves from potentiality to actuality. Therefore, Kierkegaard's notion of "becoming" is the spiritual movement that inwardly transforms the person into someone else (Roos 2008, 69). This principle is important because, on one side, faith moves the self towards God, shaping it according to Christ, but sin moves away from God, shaping the self according to an autonomous self-image. Therefore, both faith and sin entail qualitative leaps of opposite results.

Kierkegaard believed that there is a unique divine purpose for each person and that it is up to each one to find and fulfill it (Kierkegaard 2009g, 93). Becoming whom the individual is supposed to become means first seeking self-knowledge to discover

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[12] I argue that the popular idea that Kierkegaard stated that a belief in God requires a "leap of faith" is wrong. As demonstrated before in his concept of "Religiousness A", every human has the natural capacity to grasp God's existence. The immanent perception of God within man is enough to bring awareness of the divine, needing no objective proof, but this knowledge is not enough for salvation. The qualitative leap referred by Kierkegaard is the leap of trust in answer to Christ (Evans 2019, 41, 44).

the true self intended by God. The Creator implanted talents, gifts, and latent capacities that call the individual inwardly to fulfill them. Concretizing them authentically brings glory to God and happiness to the self.

To concretize its potentiality, the self needs to decide to undergo the qualitative leap from potentiality into actuality. No actualization is automatic and exempt from decision-making. As already mentioned before, for Kierkegaard, each stage of selfhood represents a change in the will. The will is also a crucial factor in the book "Fear and Trembling" (Kierkegaard 1994), when Abraham made the subjective movement of resignation and faith, moving towards the sacrifice of his son. His decision of faith changed him. In Abraham's story, it is possible to identify that God had already tested him several times before his test with Isaac. Like when he believed and left his homeland and family (Gen 12:1–4), and when God changed his name to Abraham, meaning "father of many nations", when at the time he only had Ishmael as his son (Gen 17:1–8). In other words, Abraham did not undergo a unique "qualitative leap", but several "qualitative leaps" that prepared him for the most vital test. The faith in God forged his will through these experiences. Therefore, the Abraham of Genesis 22 is different from the one in Genesis 12 due to the transformation his will underwent by faith.

In the book "Sickness unto Death" Kierkegaard (2010, 45) addresses the direct relation between human consciousness and will, and how one grows with the growth of the other:

> Generally speaking, consciousness—that is, self-consciousness—is decisive with regard to the self. The more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will; the more will, the more self. A person who has no will at all is not a self; but the more will he has, the more self-consciousness he has also. (Kierkegaard 2010)

This relationship between self-consciousness and will is essential because the more will, the more aware of its responsibilities and consequences the self is. Accordingly, the more ethical and conscious, the more desperate the self becomes, for it is increasingly aware of its self-inconsistencies (Kierkegaard 2010, 37–44; Rae 2010, 93–97). Hence, the greater is despair because the human condition perceives itself as incapable of existing coherently.

Moreover, Kierkegaard (2010, 27) affirmed that through self-consciousness, the human being can step out of himself and see the self as an object and judge it (Evans 2019, 11–12). For example, a man can see himself in terms of past-self through memory, or ideal-self, through imagination. A person can imagine different versions of himself as virtual selves. Kierkegaard raises important questions that I believe can serve today's theology, like the relationship that an individual has with his reality and virtuality. Kierkegaard's thinking is crucial today, where humanity is increasingly involved by technology, daily living between different worlds. Now, not only a self-virtuality affects the individual, who sees himself as an object to be manipulated, but also the collective virtuality which internet, social media, gaming, and other technologies provide. I believe that that the human being for some has today become a fragmented self, increasingly objectified, anxious, desperate, who lost the limits between reality and imagination. I will address this later.

2.4 Kierkegaard's Concept of Sin

Kierkegaard dealt with sin in most of his writings, directly and indirectly. He used different vocabulary from the theological, occasionally using indirect communication, sometimes philosophical reasoning, and at other times speaking as a faithful preacher delivering a sermon. However, he always wrote as a Christian thinker (Jothen 2018, 34; Rae 2010, 1; Kirkconnell 2012, 1). Throughout his literature, there is a Christian mindset, a biblical lens. Therefore, I argue that any interpretation of Kierkegaard's thought that does not use the Christian lens will bring wrong elements. He declared in a late book that he always wrote as a religious writer, "The content, then, of this little book is: what I in truth am as an author, that I am and was a religious author, that my whole authorship pertains to Christianity, to the issue: becoming a Christian." (Kierkegaard 1998, 23)

Although Kierkegaard speaks of sin in many books, using different terms, four of them deserve special attention: "The Concept of Anxiety", "Sickness unto Death", "Philosophical Fragments", and "Post-Script to Philosophical Fragments." Chronologically, among these books, Kierkegaard first published "Philosophical Fragments" (1844), and after, in the same year, "The Concept of Anxiety" (1844), then he published the "Post-Script to Philosophical Fragments" (1846) and finally "Sickness unto Death" (1849; c.f. Kirkconnell 2012, 40–41). However, I will address first "The

Concept of Anxiety" because Kierkegaard put this book before the others (perhaps mistakenly), and because in this book he dealt with hereditary sin (Kierkegaard 2013, 283–285). Then I will address "Sickness unto Death", where his anthropology of sin finds its climax, dealing with the dialectics of sin as despair. Finally, I will tackle his concept of sin as untruth, in both his, "Philosophical Fragments" and "Post-Script".

2.4.1 *Hereditary Sin and "The Concept of Anxiety"*

The recognition of sin is a necessary point at which to enter into the religious sphere because self-consciousness as a sinner is fundamental for the Christian life (Kierkegaard 2016, 296–299; 2013, 283; Evans 2019, 112–115; Rae 2010, 90; Dunning 1985, 10). Kierkegaard pointed to his book "The Concept of Anxiety" as his essential work addressing the problem of sin (Kierkegaard 2013, 284). The book was a result of his early concern regarding original sin, as found in one of his journals: "Now people have often enough treated the nature of original sin, and yet they have lacked a principal category, namely anxiety; this is its essential determinant." (Kierkegaard 2008, 286)

In the book "The Concept of Anxiety", Kierkegaard (2011) proposes using psychology to understand how the first sin and its heredity occurred. For him, sin is an issue of divine revelation, where no one can subjectively understand it by himself (Kierkegaard 2016, 298; Rae 2010, 90). Kierkegaard (2011, 14) accused Dogmatics of reducing everything to logical thought by merging the concepts of the theological *logos* and the philosophical logic. This was a criticism of the Hegelian theological thought, which conceived sin in logical terms, as "the negative", implying that sin was not really a failing, but an inescapable process necessary for the development of the spirit (Kirkconnell 2012, 42). This confusion between *logos* and logic reflects a misunderstanding that confuses objectivity with subjectivity; a theme treated in-depth by Kierkegaard (2013; 2016; 2019).

According to Kierkegaard, there is no space for movement in logic, the concept of becoming, therefore forcing fantastic theories to theology (Kierkegaard 2011, 15). He asserted that "as a state (of potency) sin is not, whereas *de actu* or *in actu*, it is and is again" (17). He proposed that sin exists from a movement of becoming, from nothingness to something. That is why he was interested in "how sin can arise, and

not: that it arises" (23). Psychology, therefore, helps understanding how sin emerges, while theology explains the hereditary sin (25) (Dunning 1985, 12).

Kierkegaard (2011, 27) criticized earlier doctrines of original sin, both Catholic and Protestant, calling them "dialectic-fantastic" and "historical-fantastic" because Adam is "fantastically" placed outside history. He accepted the doctrine of hereditary sin but rejected traditional interpretations (Walsh 2009, 84; Barrett 1985, 52). He emphasized that the Reformed doctrine of federalism, where Adam is a plenipotentiary of the whole human race, is "fantastic", for it "invents something that explains nothing" (Kierkegaard 2011, 28). He argued that if Adam's first sin is different from the sinfulness inherited, then theology only addresses the hereditary problem. Adam is put fantastically outside history because he sinned without being influenced by sinfulness (Walsh 2009, 84). Kierkegaard (2011, 31–32) argued that the idea of Adam's fall representing humanity, for supposedly being the head of humanity, also makes huge mistakes.

Kierkegaard claimed that the inaccuracy lies in separating Adam's first sin from our sins as if his sin was different. To consider our sins merely consequences of Adam's is to perform a hermeneutic juggling that brings confusion and exempts the individual from his real responsibility. Hence, he argued, both Adam's original sin and our sins must be explained together, since "to explain the sin of Adam is therefore to explain hereditary sin", because every person is at the same time an individual and "the whole human race, so that humanity participates in the whole of the individual" (Kierkegaard 2011, 30). What is original in Kierkegaard's reflection about original sin is that he breaks equally with the Augustinian, Lutheran doctrine and rejects the Pelagian, proposing a subjective treatment to the problem (Walsh 2009, 84; Barrett 1985, 38, 52).

The conflict and apparent contradiction between the biblical teaching regarding the universality of sin, and the biblical teaching that a person is only morally responsible for the acts committed, has been the subject of a significant debate throughout Christian history (Farris 2020, 140–158; Garrett 2014, 539–569; Rea 2011; Pannenberg 2009b, 345–364; McGrath 2005, 503–510).

Kierkegaard resolved this dilemma by separating the concept of sin from sinfulness in terms of objective anxiety and subjective anxiety (Kierkegaard 2011, 32–60; Rae 2010, 91; Watkin 2010, 48; Dunning 1985, 13). He claimed that just as sin

entered the world for the first time through Adam, it continues to enter every time someone sins (Kierkegaard 2011, 33; Grøn 2015, 278). He argued that every human is born innocent, but by committing the first sin, undergoes a qualitative change, from innocence to guilt. Thus, sin is a qualitative leap, while sinfulness is a quantitative disposition to sin (Barrett 1985, 59). Every man is, therefore, at the same time an individual and humanity, which means he inherits sinfulness as anxiety from the race and extends it to his offspring, but only becomes guilty by choosing to sin by himself (Kierkegaard 2011, 32–37; Grøn 2015, 278; Kirkconnell 2012, 45). Sinfulness is a disposition attracting the person to sin, but it is not guilty (Kierkegaard 2011, 42). This will be clarified in the next subsections.

2.4.1.1 Anxiety as the "Becoming" of Sin

Kierkegaard (2011, 38–40) defended that "innocence can only be nullified by guilt", which is not a matter of logic but of ethics, because sin only occurs through a qualitative change conducted by the individual (Kirkconnell 2012, 45–46; Walsh 2009, 89; Dunning 1985, 13). Quoting Genesis, he affirmed that innocence is, in fact, ignorance, lack of knowledge. It is not cognitive knowledge but subjective,[13] because, through sin, man and woman acquired knowledge that came with sinfulness. The knowledge came with the qualitative leap of sin, where now the self can never return to be innocent again. However, how does this qualitative leap happen?

Kierkegaard proposed that sin can be understood by the concept of an intermediate state between innocence and guilt, the becoming of sin called anxiety (Kierkegaard 2011, 44–45; Rae 2010, 91). Anxiety is the movement from innocence to guilt through a qualitative leap of choice. Anxiety is not sinning but a "middle term" to understand sin's becoming (Barrett 1985, 57–59). It is also not logical, in the sense that when anxiety starts, it must lead to sin because the qualitative leap does not always occur. Anxiety is existential, for it pressures inwardly the self, which can resist or surrender to it. Kierkegaard defined: "Anxiety is the reality of freedom as a possibility

[13] The distinction between objective and subjective knowledge, Kierkegaard developed in two books, "Philosophical Fragments" and "Post-Script to Philosophical Fragments", where he addressed the importance of subjective truth for eternal happiness (Kierkegaard 2019; 2016; 2013).

for possibility", and again: "Anxiety is a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy" (Kierkegaard 2011, 45).

Unlike fear, which has a specific object of reference, anxiety relates to nothingness (Kierkegaard 2011, 45; Grøn 2015, 276; Walsh 2009, 91). Indeed, anxiety relates to nothingness, which in Adam and Eve's case was the chance of knowing the good and the evil, the unknown[14] possibility of experiencing death, and the illusory possibility of becoming like God. Hence, nothingness can become something through anxiety, for it urges the self to act in response.

Eve had the freedom to obey or not, recognizing the real possibility of continuing as she was or doing what was forbidden, believing in God or the serpent. This possibility was frightening and attractive, as a "sympathetic antipathy, and an antipathetic sympathy" (Kierkegaard 2011, 45; Walsh 2009, 91). The qualitative leap occurs only by acting in freedom, from innocence to guilt (Kirkconnell 2012, 44).

Although Adam was tempted by Eve, she was tempted by the serpent, Kierkegaard (2011, 52) quoted James (1:14), remembering that "every man is tempted by himself". Anxiety is temptation, caused by the freedom viewing many possibilities, raised from the self who pressures the self. The same phenomenon happens with every human being because we are free and responsible for our actions. Therefore, every person is tempted as Adam, experiencing anxiety to sin, even though every experience is anew (Jothen 2018, 89). In one of his "Upbuilding Discourses", Kierkegaard (1992, 127) wrote:

> What happened at the beginning of days, that the fruit of the knowledge was delectable to look at, is continually repeated in every generation and in the individual. If the Lord's warning was unable to save the first human being from this deception, how would a human voice be able to do anything but make that fruit even more delectable for the individual to look at.

Anxiety is a spiritual category, where the individual imagines himself in different possibilities, where he can evade them without guilt or concretize through the qualitative leap (Kierkegaard 2011, 45). Anxiety is the tension of wanting and not

[14] It was unknown in an existential sense, as cognitively God said they would die if they ate the fruit. What they lacked was the experiential knowledge of what it meant to die.

wanting. Through imagination, the individual invents a virtual self, and by seeing it, is both attracted and repelled. Kierkegaard (67) compared anxiety to mental dizziness, when the self wants to act, desiring to establish the synthesis between his inward tensions, bringing the imagined possibility into existence (Kirkconnell 2012, 44; Rae 2010, 93). The dizziness is a reality of awareness of freedom. Kierkegaard (2010, 29) declared that “dizziness is for the soul as despair is for the spirit”. In this case, if the soul is in synthesis with the body, anxiety is the tension that urges the corporeal realization of what is imagined.

Kierkegaard (2010, 62–89) differentiated objective anxiety from subjective. For him, objective anxiety is present in the world, outside man, and the subjective is put inside, resulting from sin (62) (Rae 2010, 91; Dunning 1985, 15–16). Objective anxiety can be perceived in the Creation, which was “subjected to futility” (Rom 8:20), related to the increasing of sins that still enter the world every time someone sins. In this case, anxiety is both subjectively inherited from the parents and objectively present in the world.

Adam was innocent when the serpent led him to experience objective anxiety to eat the fruit. By sinning, subjective anxiety as sinfulness became a reality to him, even though quantitatively inferior to the subjective anxiety inherited by his offspring (Kierkegaard 2011, 62–63). The historical transmission of subjective anxiety increases the degree of anxiety through time. Newborn babies inherit the cumulative subjective anxiety from their parents and the increasing objective anxiety in the world. The subjective anxiety is a predisposition to sin without making the individual guilty, for only by acting in sin makes one guilty (Walsh 2009, 93). This increase of anxiety through generations substitutes Augustine’s theory of biological transmission of guilt without conflicting with personal responsibility (Walsh 2015, 301; Barrett 1985, 59).

Kierkegaard (2011, 69) wrote that one of the consequences of subjective anxiety is that sensuality became sinfulness. Sensuality meaning not only sexuality but also the human senses. It is not that sensuality is sin but that it became sinful. Sensuality becomes a new form of subjective anxiety when affected by the qualitative leap of sin (70) (Walsh 2009, 93). The sensual refers to the anxieties urged by the corporeal, where sin imbalances the whole body-mind relation, which now tends sensuously to the body’s satisfaction. All the external world starts to be interpreted by a sensuality affected by sin, thus becoming mistaken. The psychosomatic unity that is

the self no longer distinguishes sensuousness from sinfulness, perceiving everything now distorted (Dunning 1985, 16).

The subjective anxiety appeals to live in the aesthetic sphere of existence, where freedom collapses, since the psychosomatic self becomes fundamentally somatic (Kierkegaard 2011, 67). Sensuality becomes a condensation of anxiety in the body, turning sexual into sinful (Walsh 2009, 93). Nevertheless, Kierkegaard did not condemn sexuality as did Augustine (Aug. City., 14, 16, 26; Pannenberg 2009b, 350–351) but warned that it is a powerful instinct that leads people astray (Vardy 2008, 59). He argued that sexuality has its place authentically when the individual experiences a love relationship with someone, established spiritually through marriage (Kierkegaard 2011, 89; Watkin 2010 161–163).

2.4.1.2 The Subjectivity of Either Believe or Sin

Kierkegaard is correct to say that anxiety is not sin because even Jesus Christ experienced anxiety in Gethsemane but resisted it to the end (Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46). Christ was tempted but never sinned (Matt 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13). Anxiety is a phenomenon that affects humans because we exist in time as free creatures. Therefore, it is part of the human condition, for to be human means to be susceptible to anxiety. Consequently, the only solution is faith because it "renounces anxiety without anxiety", grounding the self in God (Kierkegaard 2011, 127; 2010, 55–58).

Evaluating his book "The Concept of Anxiety", Kierkegaard made a curious contrast between the terms, "anxiety" and "fear and trembling":

> Just as 'fear and trembling' is the state of the teleologically suspended person when God tempts him, so also is anxiety the teleologically suspended person's state of mind in that desperate exemption from fulfilling the ethical. When truth is subjectivity, the inwardness of sin as anxiety in the existing individuality is the greatest possible distance and the most painful distance from the truth (Kierkegaard 2013, 284).

He compared two different states with the same phenomenon, called the "teleological suspension" of the ethical. This suspension does not mean the abolishment of the ethical, but its relativization (Walsh 2009, 152). He better addressed the expression in

his book “Fear and Trembling”, where Abraham was caused anguish by God to “suspend” the ethic about murdering his son (Kierkegaard 1994, 45–48; Rae 2010, 120). In Abraham’s case, the teleological suspension was justified because God was the one requiring it, generating “fear and trembling”. However, in the case of anxiety, the one requiring the suspension is the proper individual. While I fear and tremble before God, who asks me to act despite my understanding, what makes me anxious is myself in the face of my attraction to acting despite my understanding. Anxiety always urges for a leap, either believing or sinning (Kierkegaard 2013, 284).

Kierkegaard (2010, 108) reasoned that the opposite of sin is not virtue, as the Greeks believed, but faith. Quoting the apostle Paul, who wrote that “everything that does not come from faith is sin” (Rom 14:23), he claimed that sin and faith are similar but dialectically opposed. Thus, for Kierkegaard, overcoming sin is not a merely human endeavor but an act of faith, because God is the only one who can do the impossible (Kierkegaard 2010, 56–57).

Nevertheless, the answer expected of Adam when he anxiously desired to eat the forbidden fruit, of either believing in God’s Word or sinning, satisfying his desire, is the same for today. However, today’s world is full of forbidden trees on every corner and several “serpents” everywhere. Objective anxiety in this world is greater than ever before, and subjective anxiety inherited from parents is also overwhelming. However, both the current human being and the innocent Adam are insufficient beings, for the authentic human lives by faith alone. By isolating from the relationship of trust with God, the man and woman abandoned themselves to a state of uncontrollable desires and overwhelming anxieties. A state of despair.

2.4.2 *Despair as the Unbalanced Self*

Kierkegaard, arguably, made his best contribution to the anthropology of sin through his concept of despair (Walsh 2015, 302). In the book “Sickness unto Death”, as presented before, he defined the self as a self-relating synthesis that is grounded in God (Kierkegaard 2010, 25–26). The lack of one or more relations causes the inward imbalance, which he called despair, grounding the self in different things other than God (Evans 2019, 13; Watkin 2000, 28). Despair is sin in its existential expression. While sin is a theological concept, abstract, despair is sinfulness in existential mode.

In a time where the very meaning of the word sin has been diluted, it is necessary to restore its accurate meaning from the very existential experience of all sinful humans. From the concept of human despair, where the individual is inwardly unbalanced, hostage to his countless uncontrolled anxieties, sin as a Theo-anthropological category acquires a new contour.

While Kierkegaard (2011) addressed anxiety as the "becoming" of sin, in the case of despair, he addressed the proper state of a sinner, reintroducing in the human category the theological idea of sinfulness (Dupré 2007, 88). Kierkegaard declared that "dizziness", a term referring to anxiety, "is for the soul as despair is for the spirit" (Kierkegaard 2010, 29; 2011, 67). That is, while anxiety disturbs the soul, despair disturbs the whole self, or spirit. It is a mix of different anxieties afflicting the whole person. While anxiety is the becoming of sin, despair is the becoming of death!

Kierkegaard (2010, 145–147) defined despair as the misrelation of the self with himself and God, for which the only solution is faith in Christ (Evans 2019, 13,19; Watkin 2010, 238). The human being is unable to alone achieve equilibrium for his imbalance. Kierkegaard (26–27) argued that the more the individual tries to suppress despair alone, searching for healing, or salvation by self-efforts, the more he sinks into despair. Even though Kierkegaard here is philosophical, his argument sounds very Pauline.

Hühn and Schwab (2015, 80) asserted that Kierkegaard's definition of despair means an internal betrayal of the self with itself. Despair is the conflict between what the self is and what it "ought to be" (81). There is always an imbalance in the self's internal relations, where a dialectic element is neglected. As Walsh (2015, 302) wrote, despair is a "disparity that occurs between the factors that make up the synthesis of the self when one factor is emphasized to the neglect of the other." For Watkin (2010, 64), Kierkegaard's concept of despair represents a state in which the individual finds himself failing to develop a relationship with God. Evans (2019, 11–12) affirmed that despair is the failure to synthesize its contrasting elements, a "failure to become the true self". Indeed, Kierkegaard's definition involves all these perceptions, for despair is the self's total failure, whether in relationship with himself, the other, or with God.

Kierkegaard (2010, 31) claimed that despair is a sickness unto death, where the person experiences the becoming of death without dying: "For to die signifies that it is all over, but to die death means to experience dying". Therefore, despair should

be understood as the wages of sin (Gen 3:3; Rom 6:23). Kierkegaard (2010, 21) wrote that “the Christian is the only one who knows the Sickness unto death”, referring to the self-awareness as a sinner in front of God. From this point of view, I argue, sin as despair is subjective evidence of God’s existence, because it reveals subjectively that every human being is insufficient in itself, needing a transcendent ground. Therefore, human despair cannot be solved by anything except God himself, which is why for Kierkegaard, to be an atheist, a person needs to self-alienate (Evans 2019, 52).

Sin is “the condensation of despair”, the disharmony between inward relations (Kierkegaard 2010, 101). Consequently, sin is not something alien that adhered to the self, rather, the proper self, disturbed and ungrounded. Since for Kierkegaard (27), the purpose of the self is to “rest transparently in the power that established it”, despair is the state of restlessness, which, as Rae (2010, 93) noticed, is an echo of Augustine’s famous statement: “Thou hast made us for Thee and our heart is unquiet till it finds its rest in Thee” (Aug. Conf., 1.1).

The following subsection will address the different types of despair, which will shed light on diverse expressions of sin.

2.4.2.1 Types of Despair

Despair is a universal condition of man, Kierkegaard (2010, 37–44) emphasized, following the biblical teaching about the universality of sin (e.g., Rom 3:10; 3:23). However, he argued, most people are unaware of their own state of despair (37). This is significant because the alienated self of his despair is as guilty as the one conscious of it. However, the conscious one is closer to God than the other.

Kierkegaard divided the types of despair based on his definition of the self. Besides, they also relate to the different stages of existence (Glenn 2007, 5). As the human being is a synthesis between the physical and the psychical, Kierkegaard first defined different types of despair based on the physical and psychical realities (Kierkegaard 2010, 46–97). These first types are related to the aesthetic person, a spiritless self (Davenport 2015, 245). This person is spiritless for lacking self-awareness and conscience of despair. Therefore, Kierkegaard first addressed despair considering the psychosomatic dialects between finitude and infinitude, possibility and necessity.

In terms of dialectics between finitude and infinitude, Kierkegaard wrote about the despair that lacks finitude, the bodily existence, when the person lives in the infinitude of imagination, a psychical existence (Kierkegaard 2010, 46–49; Evans 2019, 22). This person lives in fantasy, lacking will to concretize his ideals, a conformist who prefers his virtual reality rather than the real world (Watkin 2010, 64; Glenn 2007, 7–8). This person develops imaginary feelings, knowledge, wills, and even imaginary desires. The imagination is not the problem but becomes a problem when disconnected from his reality's finitude.

The other despair is the opposite, when the person lacks the infinitude of imagination, cloistering himself in his finitude, existing as a mere imitation of the crowd, copying the behavior of others (Kierkegaard 2010, 49–52; Glenn 2007, 7). This despair results from a self-castration,[15] where the person rejects not only his potential, but the proper role planned by God for him (Evans 2019, 24; Davenport 2015, 245). Kierkegaard (2010, 50) used a metaphor saying that everyone has a "divine name", with the existential task of remembering it. The name is the individual purpose, the personal vocation planned by God. Even though everyone shares with humanity its general purpose, each one also has a unique purpose planned by God (Kierkegaard 1993, 93). When an individual rejects, lacks, or is afraid to understand and fulfill this purpose, he is in despair of finitude, neglecting his infinitude.

Kierkegaard (2010, 52–60) also addressed the despair raised in the dialectic of possibility and necessity, another type of psychosomatic tension. The individual who lacks necessity loses himself in possibilities, also self-giving to the imagination (Evans 2019, 25–26; Glenn 2007, 8). He cannot listen to his own needs, the inward, physical, and emotional demands, suppressing them to follow his imagination (Kierkegaard 2010, 54). As he moves toward something possible, motivated by desire or nostalgia, he moves away from himself and his real needs, increasing despair intensely.

On the other hand, when the individual despairs in the necessity, what he lacks, is the possibility (Kierkegaard 2010, 55). For this person, there is no possibility. This person gives infinite value to things without value, considering everything necessary (Glenn 2007, 8). His focus and attention are on finitude, the immediate material world

[15] The word "castration" is used by Kierkegaard and has no connection with Freud (Kierkegaard 2010, 50).

before his eyes: the money, the pleasure, the praise of people, the honors and esteem of all. This kind of despair lacks hope, for the individual cannot free himself from his own needs and move to the possible. What the self lacks here, only God can solve, because: “for God everything is possible” (Kierkegaard 2010, 55). The self who despairs in necessity is a fatalist who believes he is determined by his context. He is a slave to the circumstances of his life, lacking the power to self-assert.

These four forms of despair mentioned so far, of finitude, infinitude, necessity, and possibility, are related to the psychosomatic synthesis of the human being. However, they do not relate to the synthesis self-related, that is, to self-consciousness. They, therefore, refer to unconscious despairs, different expressions of sinful states where the individual merely exists in the aesthetic dimension. The unconscious despair lives an aesthetic existence, a somatic self, where life orbits the body, the sensual, the finitude, the necessity (Kierkegaard 2010, 61). What unconscious despair lacks is self-consciousness and will (Davenport 2015, 245; Westphal 2007, 52).

Kierkegaard (2010, 63) included in the group of unconscious despair, the pagans and Christendom, criticizing the Danish church of his time. Differentiating Christianity from Christendom, he stated that many Christians are mere numbers in the crowd of the church, people who are not even aware of their sinful and desperate situation (Kierkegaard 2016:91). These individuals, like the pagans, are unconscious of their despair, in need of reaching self-consciousness in front of God.

Kierkegaard (2010:65) argued, agreeing with the Church Fathers, that the pagans do not recognize themselves as spirits in front of God. The idea that the pagan is unconscious of his despair, not aware of being a spirit in front of God, is a vital topic that I claim is related to the lack of guilt-conscience among them. I will later argue that this self-consciousness of despair is related to the biblical teaching of guilt, in which pagans have no conscience unless the word of God is revealed. I will elaborate on this concept in the theological-biblical examination in chapter four.

Kierkegaard (2010, 60–97) also described different types of despair regarding conscience, which deals with the ethical stage (Glenn 2007, 11). By looking at despair from the perspective of conscience, he proposed two different degrees: the despair of weakness and of defiance (Evans 2019, 29; Rae 2010, 94–95). While despair of weakness he called a “feminine despair”, the despair in defiance he called “masculine despair” (Kierkegaard 2010, 69, 89).

The despair of weakness is when the individual does not want to be himself. It is feminine despair, not because it happens only among women, because it also happens among men. He clarified that it refers to self-abandonment, surrendering, which for him was characteristic of women (Kierkegaard 2010, 69–70; Evans 2019, 32–33). Despite any gender stereotype Kierkegaard may have, I believe his description of conscious despair in masculine and feminine is very insightful.

In the despair of weakness, Kierkegaard (2010, 70, 82) also divided it into the despair of the temporal and the eternal (Rae 2010, 94–95). In the despair of the temporal, the individual surrenders to becoming someone different from whom he knows he was supposed to be. The individual fails to concretize the authentic self, given by God (Evans 2019, 31). This individual recognizes who he should be but is unable to break with the immediacy of his aesthetic existence (Davenport 2015, 247). There is something that holds him in his past, present, or even possible future, which he clings to, considering his authentic self as unacceptable (Glenn 2007, 12). A young man can, for example, be lost in unwavering hope's illusion and an elder in the recall of a memory. Neither of them lives in the present, rejecting their authentic self and choosing to be someone else (Kierkegaard 2010, 79). The young and the elder are lost in despair, self-abandoning themselves to the imagination of a poetic reality or memory. What they lack is the capacity to live the now, the moment.

Kierkegaard developed the concept of the moment, where the self relates to the present, past, and future simultaneously (Kierkegaard 2010, 79–80; 2011, 94). This concept is that the self is the synthesis of the temporal moment, where time flows through, allowing the individual to act or not, changing his own reality. The past is ever-present before him through memory, and the possible future equally, as imagination. How the individual deals with memory and imagination is how he deals with time. Accordingly, the moment is the real present, an instant in the blink of an eye, where the individual clings to the present without losing contact with the past and future. The imbalance of the self in the relationship with time increases anxiety and produces despair (Kierkegaard 2010, 70–89; 2011, 90–96). The individual only finds balance making the synthesis between the eternal and the temporal through a relationship with Christ, learning to incarnate eternity into the moment (Kierkegaard 2011, 96; Watkin 2010, 168). This incarnation of the eternal in the moment involves another

Kierkegaardian concept, of repetition. For the challenge of faith is the repetition of Christ in every moment of time that the individual lives.

Another type of conscious despair is defiance, which Kierkegaard (2010, 89) called masculine. It is masculine because the Danish thinker affirms that it has a "virility" posture in front of God. In this type of despair, the individual proudly refuses to become the self he was meant to be (Evans 2019, 31; Rae 2010, 95). Now, the individual wants to create himself, independently of what God planned for him. Kierkegaard admitted that the distinctions between the types of despair are not always very clear, because a person may be in despair of defiance, while also experiencing some degree of despair of weakness (Kierkegaard 2010, 90–92; Evans 2019, 31; Glenn 2007, 12).

Kierkegaard's description of despair in defiance perfectly portrays the atheist existentialism developed by later intellectuals like Sartre and Nietzsche (Glenn 2007, 12; Marsh 2007, 72). Therefore, it is ironic that Kierkegaard is considered the father of existentialism when they promoted the opposite of what he valued (Evans 2019, 11–12). While the existentialists emphasized total autonomy, Kierkegaard depicted the idea of total autonomy as the highest level of despair of defiance, a "self-idolizing" state that Kierkegaard (2010, 96–97) called the demonic (Watkin 2010, 63).

Only the despairs related to the aesthetical and ethical spheres of life were treated, which are related to the self, first as a psychosomatic synthesis, and second, as a self-related synthesis, which is consciousness. Now, what changes into the religious sphere is the conscience of God and to exist before him (Kierkegaard 2010, 103–108; Roberts 2007, 145). Immediately despair is perceived as sin. Thus, realizing that the third dimension of selfhood is the God-relation, all despairs discussed above must also consider God. Despair is always before God, whether a person despairs unconsciously or consciously in weakness or defiance.

One crucial point of Kierkegaard's reading of sin as despair is that it is not conceived merely as an objective act but as a subjective movement (Kierkegaard 2010, 140). Sin is like a train, he wrote (137), where the individual may have the illusion that sins are isolated, appearing from time to time, like locomotive wagons. What the individual must realize is the connection between wagons that moves the entire locomotive. Sins are not only the wagons, he wrote, but the whole train! Therefore, he

asserts that remaining in sin becomes a new sin; likewise, not repenting of one sin when it is perceived also becomes a new sin. They keep the locomotive moving!

Kierkegaard's description of sin as despair also leads to the conclusion that sin is not only man's rejection of God but also his self-rejection. Sin is not evil merely because God defined it but also because it injures human beings. Sin is despair, as man's becoming of death, man's self-degradation. Besides, as demonstrated in this subsection, sin is deeply rooted in man's imagination, memory, desire, and how he deals with his conscience. The man in despair needs to deal with his failure, conscient of his ideal self. The role played by imagination and will in the self-concretization is highlighted throughout Kierkegaard's descriptions of despair. These subjective dimensions are essential spheres of selfhood directly related to sin that theology should not neglect.

2.4.3 *Sin as Untruth*

Kierkegaard dialogued with Socratic philosophy throughout his writings. One of the Socratic concepts he repeatedly referred to was the idea that sin is ignorance, opposing it by claiming that sin is, in fact, untruth (Kierkegaard 2010, 114–115; 2019, 33–36; 2013, 219).

Reminiscence was a fundamental teaching of Socrates's and Plato's philosophy. According to Socrates, the soul is born and reborn numerous times, bringing possible recollections of other lives (Abbagnano 2007, 59; Plato. Meno., 80e–81e; Plato. Phaedo., 72e–76; Plato. Phaedrus., 249b–250b). Learning is, therefore, nothing more than remembering. Socrates believed that the individual needed to be reminded of the eternal truths that once his soul was in contact to be delivered from his ignorance (Plato. Meno., 85b–86c; Kierkegaard 2019, 28–30). Socrates's midwife job aimed to give birth to conscious individuals. For him, this job was a divine task of giving birth to knowledge in the ignorant (Kierkegaard 2010, 46–47). The Greek philosopher understood that evil was a problem caused by ignorance. Consequently, knowledge would immediately set the individual free from his ignorance and evil. For the Greeks, the eternal truth could be reached through knowledge, but Kierkegaard argued that the problem is not knowledge but appropriation (Vardy 2008, 23).

Kierkegaard rephrases the Socratic epistemological question, whether truth can be known, and the moral question, whether virtue can be learned, demonstrating that

the two are correlated (Kirkconnell 2012, 13). Kierkegaard (2010, 115–116) declared that Socrates was wrong to think that knowledge would resolve the problem of evil, for "sin is not present in knowledge but in the will". The problem is not the mere lack of knowledge but the lack of will. Kierkegaard (120) argued that sin is a logical contradiction because, even when a man knows what is good, he still decides to do wrong.

Kierkegaard departed from Socrates and all rationalists in this regard because Descartes' *cogito*[16] also identified the individual with thought. But, as already argued, knowing is not enough to free the human being from evil, as it is in his will. Contrary to Descartes and Socrates, Kierkegaard (2010, 120) affirmed that truth is not "I think, therefore I am", but "I believe, therefore I am", for the human becomes authentic only when exercising faith in Jesus. Faith, as a subjective dynamic, moves the human will beyond its reason. Kierkegaard argued that only in front of the truth, the God-man Jesus Christ, that one's state of untruth becomes evident, and faith becomes possible (Kierkegaard 2019, 44–50).

Kierkegaard developed this reasoning in greater depth in two important books: "Philosophical Fragments" and "Post-Script to Philosophical Fragment"', where he defined sin as untruth and developed the concept of subjective truth (Kierkegaard 2019, 33–36; 2013, 219). For Kierkegaard, untruth is the subjective inconsistency, the state of alienation from the one who is the Truth (Rae 2010, 90). Kierkegaard (2019, 34–36) argued that from the moment the individual sins, untruth becomes a reality in his will and desires, imprisoning his whole existence. Consequently, the individual needs a savior to free him from this captivity, reconciling him with the truth. Kierkegaard (2013, 283) emphasized that consciousness of sin is the decisive starting point for the religious stage because it is impossible to come to the truth without first acknowledging himself to be in untruth! Although he agrees with Socrates that subjectivity is truth, meaning that it is raised inwardly, Kierkegaard asserted that Christianity teaches that, because of sin, subjectivity is also untruth (218) (Walsh 2009, 42–43).

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[16] *Cogito ergo sum*; "I think, therefore I am" (Descartes 1999, 62).

Kierkegaard (2013, 30–32) maintained that the solution to untruth is not acquiring objective knowledge, as the Greeks believed, but the subjective appropriation of truth because subjectivity is truth (31, 218). The acquisition of knowledge, like understanding a mathematical theorem, or even recognizing historical facts, will have no eternal, ultimate, absolute value for the individual to solve his untruth (Westphal 2014, 126; Rae 2010, 52). Christianity is subjective because it is spiritual, not because it can be philosophically understood or scientifically constructed, he argues. Although historical and philosophical data have their value, they can only approximate the truth. Understanding the historical narrative of Abraham sacrificing Isaac, or Peter being tempted and denying Christ, or Jesus dying and resurrecting, will only have eternal value if the truths are subjectively appropriated by the individual, assimilated, and embodied by faith. The approximation to truth caused by knowledge requires the act of faith to make it a personal reality. Every time someone reduces Christianity to speculative thought, its power is removed. Because, as Kierkegaard (2013, 34, 35) claimed, by annulling the offense and scandal of Christ, the individual is prevented from either believing or rejecting God.

I strongly agree with Kierkegaard as a prophetic critic of our time, for in many ways and many places, Christianity has been reduced to objective knowledge. Instead of appropriating Christ, today's Church is focused on understanding Christianity historically. After a few lessons on doctrine and a rational acknowledgment of fundamental truths, a person is baptized and becomes a "Christian", as if faith were the mere recognition of Christian doctrines. Instead of focusing on the heart change, it is focused on reason and knowledge, just as the Greeks did. As already stated, the problem is not to be rational or value historical truths because they are indeed important. The problem, I claim with Kierkegaard, is the lack of subjective appropriation.

2.5 Final Considerations

As demonstrated in this chapter, Kierkegaard's thought is deeply theological though using a philosophical language. His life and thought intertwine in many ways; thus, understanding his biography helps comprehend his thinking. In this chapter, I argued that Kierkegaard's anthropology of sin results from his Kinetic perspective,

which conceives the human being as a movement. I claim that this perspective has much to add to the theological reflection.

Kierkegaard addressed sin in terms of anxiety, despair, and untruth. The terms sin, sinfulness and guilt are abstract theological concepts, but when treated as despair, anxiety, and untruth, they acquire a different human contour. I believe Kierkegaard paved the way to study the phenomenology of sin considering other subjective realities. This is important for theology because the anthropology of sin has been degraded in society. A lack of understanding of sin has been replaced, where society presents sin as a good thing. This may be evidence of how abstract terminology does not reach the heart of people. I, therefore, claim that theology needs to deepen the study of sin from a subjective perspective to recover its biblical teaching. I intend to demonstrate in the following chapters that human experiences like shame, fear, guilt, anger, and other emotions are human expressions of sin that need further attention.

To develop an anthropology of sin from the perspective of subjectivity is to treat the human being from its interiority and sin as a human category. Theological anthropology of sin should not merely define sin as missing the mark or disobeying God, although it is theologically accurate. It is necessary to bring theological abstractions into human existential categories. I do not claim that theology should be either objective or subjective, either from above or below, but both. The Bible is both from above and from below, and theology should take both perspectives as well. The book of Job offers a good example, where the writer moves the gaze of the story. In the beginning, he provides a glimpse of heaven and the nuances of Job's life from a divine perspective. Then he turns the attention to Job's distress and his suffering condition. The first looks from above and the second from below. One is objective, the other subjective.

Kierkegaard's opposition to rationalism in the form of philosophical and theological objectivism should not be understood as a rejection of rationality. Some Christian thinkers have wrongly interpreted Kierkegaard as teaching fideism, who supposedly renounced the need for reason, objective knowledge, preaching a blind leap of faith (Evans 2019, 49; Robert 2016; Mavrodes 2015, 193; Geisler 1999, 409). However, this interpretation is wrong, for it ignores Kierkegaard's argument and his whole thought. Kierkegaard emphasized the value of objective knowledge, mainly in the form of God's revelation in history. Nevertheless, he affirmed that such knowledge

is not enough for salvation and eternal happiness because faith is necessary, which is subjective. After all, if Christianity is only a group of doctrines and information that need to be reasoned, then it is reduced to speculative thought. However, Christianity is subjective because it requires the self-appropriation by faith (Kierkegaard 2013, 31, 218). I agree with Kierkegaard, for Christianity refers to the *logos* incarnated in Jesus Christ (John 1:14), not merely known. Now, God's *logos* as his revelation needs to be again "incarnated" in the Christian life through appropriation by faith.

In the next chapter, I turn to the history of Christian theology, assessing how the Church addressed the themes of sin, original sin, and subjectivity throughout history. I will do this in dialogue with what was presented in this chapter regarding the Kierkegaardian thought.

Chapter 3

The Anthropology of Sin in the History of Christian Theology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I study the anthropology of sin in the teachings of some of the leading theologians in Church history. It is not an exhaustive approach as it intends only to identify possible connections with Kierkegaard's anthropology of sin. Nevertheless, the methodology used is the same for every theologian. First, I briefly describe the theologian's biography. Second, I depict his primary thinking regarding the human constitution, freedom, sin, original and hereditary sin. Throughout the discussion, a dialogue is held with Kierkegaard's thoughts.

First, some prominent Church Fathers are discussed, starting with the apostolic father Ignatius of Antioch. The direct relationship between Ignatius and the apostolic age of the first century helps identify elements of the church's anthropology in its beginning. The Theo-philosophical thought of Justin Martyr as the leading apologist of this period is also addressed. Justin Martyr's thinking is analyzed, as well as his influence on the later Church. Irenaeus of Lyon is another Church Father who is studied here. Irenaeus's theology is of particular interest for its similarity to Kierkegaard's anthropology. The theology of Tertullian, an influential figure to the Latin Church is also addressed. Tertullian played an essential role in developing his doctrine of traducianism, later influencing Augustine's doctrine of original sin. Moreover, the theology of Augustine is also examined, who is the most influential theologian of this entire period. The repercussions of Augustine's thought on later theology are immeasurable, including on Kierkegaard's thought as will argued in this chapter.

Besides these Church Fathers, this chapter also analyzes the theology of Thomas Aquinas, as the prominent theologian who synthesized medieval scholasticism. Aquinas's theology is highly philosophical and has many points in common with Kierkegaard's view.

Another influential theologian studied is Martin Luther. The foundation of his Reformed theology and his radical distinctions with scholasticism are examined. Besides, the criticisms made by Kierkegaard of Luther's theology are also considered. In the modern, post-Enlightenment era, Karl Barth's influential theology is also studied. In Barth's thought, there is a particular interest in his use of Kierkegaard's thought, applying it to some extent to his own anthropology. Finally, the highly anthropological theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg is also studied.

Many other theologians could be studied here, such as Anselm, Abelard, Calvin, Zwingli, Paul Tillich, Bonhoeffer, who would bring precious value into the discussion. However, I think that their main arguments and debates about the anthropology of sin are already well represented by the theologians here chosen.

3.2 Church Fathers

3.2.1 *Ignatius of Antioch (AD 35—108/117 AD)*

Ignatius of Antioch is one of the apostolic fathers, immediately connected to the apostles (Frame 2015, 86–87; Schoedel 1992, 313). Even though the apostolic fathers did not write any profound theological or philosophical treatises, they were concerned with testifying to Jesus's deity and his bodily incarnation. In Syria, Ignatius was bishop of the Antioch church and wrote seven letters before his martyrdom in Rome (Pierce 2016; Holmes 1999, 128). He wrote them on the road to Rome after having been arrested and taken by Roman soldiers (cf. Ign. Eph., 21; Ign. Magn. 14,15; Cairns 2008, 63; Champlin 2013e, 14). Some church fathers held his letters in high esteem; they were quoted by Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and others (Cross and Livingstone 2005, 822; Pierce 2016).

In his letters, he addressed three main problems: false teachers within the church, unity and structure of the churches, and his near martyrdom (Champlin 2013c, 300; Holmes 1999, 128). Ignatius thanked the churches for their kindness shown to him on the way to Rome and expressed a deep desire for martyrdom, even asking Roman believers not to try to prevent it (Cairns 2008, 63; cf. Ign. Rom., 2, 4).

Ignatius's desire for martyrdom has been criticized as a mental pathology (Haykin 2007, 28). However, his letters do not reveal any evidence of depression or suicidal inclination, only a will to glorify God. His will was to imitate Jesus and the

apostles to the end. He connected his martyrdom to his desire to glorify God by expressing his faith in action (Ign. Rom., 2). He believed that his martyrdom would authenticate his faith, where he could be proved inwardly and outwardly as an authentic disciple of Christ (3). Kierkegaard (2011a, 85) valued Ignatius's coherence between teaching and doing, objectivity and subjectivity. Ignatius, however, never taught martyrdom as a way for every Christian in any of his letters (Haykin 2007, 37). His view on martyrdom recalls the apostle Paul, who also longed to join Christ (Phil 1, 23–24; Ign. Rom., 7.2).

3.2.1.1 Ignatius's Anthropology

Ignatius refuted Docetism in his letters, which helps us understand his anthropology. Docetism was a late first-century heresy that claimed that Jesus only looked human but was not (Brown 2016; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 496; Geisler 1999, 202). It was believed that Jesus's body had only the appearance of a body, therefore, denying Christ's humanity while affirming his divinity. For this reason, Ignatius emphasized the bodily state of Christ, articulating that Jesus suffered everything in his body for our salvation (Ign. Smyr. 1).

Ignatius claimed that Jesus was both "in the flesh and in the spirit" (Ign. Eph. 10), and that the Christian must diligently obey the Lord and the apostles also "in the flesh and in the spirit" (Ign. Magn. 13). Ignatius used the same expression at the beginning of his Epistle to the Trallians (Ign. Trall. 1), saying the believers in that church were "elect and worthy of God, having peace in the flesh and the spirit through the passion of Jesus Christ". This continual emphasis was to avoid any Docetic misunderstanding, making clear that it was with the whole human self that Jesus suffered.

The only expression which looks trichotomic in his letters is when he wrote: "The Lord Jesus Christ shall reward them, on whom they hope in flesh and soul and spirit, in faith, in love and in harmony" (Ign. Phil. 11). However, Ignatius was neither a trichotomist nor dichotomist because his use of the terms "in the flesh" and "in the spirit" followed the Pauline vocabulary, in terms of interiority and exteriority. His repeated emphasis on the flesh and spirit was intended to remind those churches that Christianity involves not only the spiritual realm but the entire existence (Vall 2013, 121). Ignatius emphasized in his letters that Christ's suffering has eternal meaning

only if it happened both in his body and spirit, and that the believer should obey Christ and the apostles also in the flesh and spirit. Thus, flesh and spirit are part of the same whole human being in Ignatius's letters. He, claimed, for example, that he would give his soul to martyrdom, and in another moment, that would be his body (Ign. Eph. 21; Ign. Rom. 5).

McCormick (2015, 89–90) stated that Ignatius was influenced by platonic philosophy, but this impression is caused because Ignatius responded to a Neoplatonic heresy, using Pauline language. There is no reason to consider Ignatius's theology a Platonic one. His vocabulary was much more Pauline than Platonic, as demonstrated in this text he wrote to Polycarp, speaking in terms of visible and invisible things:

> Be prudent as the serpent in all things and pure as the dove forever. For this reason, you consist of flesh and spirit, that you may deal tenderly with the things which appear visibly; but pray that the invisible things may be revealed to you, that you may lack nothing and abound in every gift (Ign. Poly. 2).

Vall (2013, 121) argues that for Ignatius, the spiritual was not merely immaterial, but the dimension "brought to life," including the corporeal, transforming the individual into Christ. In this sense, Ignatius and Kierkegaard seem aligned. Moreover, the way Ignatius addressed Jesus's incarnated nature and the general human nature seems consistent with the idea of synthesis between body and soul, interiority, and exteriority.

In his journal, Kierkegaard directly quoted Ignatius of Antioch, referring to his letter to the Ephesians (Kierkegaard 2011a, 85). He valued the words of the apostolic father, who emphasized the coherence between what a Christian says and what he does. Ignatius taught about being consistent with what is spoken, for "it is better to be silent and be real than to talk and to be unreal. Teaching is good if the teacher does what he says" (Ign. Eph., 15). Kierkegaard esteemed Ignatius's teaching about coherence between being and acting, speaking and doing.

Ignatius distinguished two types of people: those who live by the flesh and those who live by the spirit (Ign. Eph., 8). His approach seems to resemble Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, since the flesh for Ignatius is synonymous with man, and spirit synonymous with the divine (Vall 2013, 122, 124; 1 Cor 3:1–4). For Ignatius, those who walk in the flesh cannot do anything spiritual, and those who walk in the

spirit, even what they do in the flesh is spiritual (Ign. Eph. 9). To live by the flesh is to live according to human nature and live by the spirit is according to Christ's Spirit.

Regarding sin, there was no direct approach by Ignatius, only quotations from Scripture. However, as previously stated, he gave importance to the coherence between interiority and exteriority in his letters, also expressed in his personal search to demonstrate his faith as an authentic Christian through martyrdom. In his writings, the concept of sin appears as the inconsistency between speaking and doing, the visible and invisible things. Therefore, I argue, sin appears as speaking but not doing, believing but not obeying, knowing but not acting. A very similar concept of Kierkegaard's teaching about untruth.

It should be noted that Ignatius's theology, which emphasized the unity between Jesus's body and spirit, whose life and sacrifice took place in both body and spirit, seems to have been devalued by later theology. Although some Church Fathers indeed valued the incarnation of Christ, their attitude towards Jesus's bodily existence was generally neglected. In practice, through history, theology slowly assumed a Docetic perspective. Their theology sometimes seemed conditioned to what Christ said much more than to how Jesus lived or what he did as a human. However, I claim, Jesus's actions are as crucial as his words.

3.2.2 *Justin Martyr (AD100—165)*

Justin Martyr was an apologist and arguably the foremost of the apostolic fathers (McGrath 2005, 44; Abbagnano 2007, 74). There is not much about him in history, only what he wrote: his two apologies and his dialogue with Trypho (Dulk 2018, 13). He defended the Christian faith against pagan criticism and attacked Christian heretics who believed in a demiurge god. His philosophical reading led him to find evidence of Christian truth in many pagan and Jewish writers. A clear association with Greek thought is evident in his texts, mostly Platonic (McGrath 2005, 45; Champlin 2013c, 54). Justin Martyr identified himself as a philosopher and proclaimed Christianity as the perfection of philosophy (Just. Dial. 8, 1, 2; Karamanolis 2013, 29). Although he intended to answer the attacks on Christianity by making it understandable to the pagans and Jews, Justin Martyr's philosophical reading of Christianity mixed Hellenistic ideas with biblical truth, which directly influenced Tatian,

Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and indirectly many others (Karamanolis 2013, 31, 41, 46; Minns and Parvis 2009, 70; Dulk 2018, 101–102).

3.2.2.1 Justin's Anthropology

Justin Martyr affirmed the resurrection of the dead in terms of union between the same body and the spirit (Just. First. 8). He emphasized that the righteous and the unrighteous will receive their bodies in the resurrection (18). He stated that the human being was created from the elements of the earth by God only, and not by angels, as some Jews claimed (Just. Dial. 62, 2, 3).

For the apologist, the soul was intimately related to the body, connected to the senses (Just. First. 18). He argued that after death, the soul still feels. He had a platonic perspective, stating that the soul can exist outside the body, achieving what it has always longed for (Just. Dial. 4:5). Justin Martyr did not develop his anthropology in depth, but he addressed the man in terms of body, soul, and spirit a few times (6, 2; 40, 1). He was against the platonic idea that the soul was uncreated and eternal, claiming that God created it, but the soul dies if he withdraws his spirit (Gavrilyuk 2018, 8). Justin also argued that philosophers and poets took their doctrines about the soul's immortality from the OT prophets (Just. First. 44:9).

Justin followed the Neoplatonist[17] philosophy of his time, with trichotomic nuances (Just. Dial. 6, 2). The soul for Justin Martyr was not the higher part of man, but the spirit, because man has the soul in common with the animals, he wrote (4, 2). In death, the soul leaves the body, ceasing the existence of man. Similarly, the soul ceases to exist when the spirit leaves the soul. However, this tripartite existence of body, soul, and spirit is not addressed in more detail by the apologist.

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[17] Justin himself admitted the influence of Plato's philosophy on him (Just. Dial., 2–8) and quoted Plato many times (e.g., Just. First., 8, 4; 20, 4; 44,8; 59, 1–5; 60, 1–7; Just. Sec., 12, 1; 13, 2). At the beginning of his dialogue with Trypho, he described his encounter with an older man who led him to understand that happiness could only be achieved by recognizing Christ as God (Just. Dial. 8, 2). For this reason, he should abandon Plato's philosophy. However, the idea that he supposedly abandoned Plato's philosophy does not mean that Platonism was not present in his thought. The entire dialogue with Trypho was presented by Justin Martyr in a very similar fashion to the Platonic dialogues, as noted by Edwards (1991, 17–21). Minns and Parvis (2009, 59–60) argue that Justin Martyr showed affinities with some "middle-Platonists," such as Alcinous, Numenius, and Plutarch, and a certain admiration for the teaching of the Stoics. McGrath (2013, 73) also affirmed an influence from "middle-Platonists." Goodenough (1923, 68–71) claimed that Justin Martyr's anthropology was deeply influenced by the Platonists and Aristotle and stoics like Marcus Aurelius.

One teaching that Justin Martyr promoted, and I believe influenced negatively later theology, was his confusion with the Greek concept of *logos*. Jesus, as the Johannine *logos* (cf. John 1:1, usually translated as “Word”), was associated by Justin with the concept of *logos* as the reason that Greek philosophy developed (e.g., Just. First. 44, 10; 46, 2–6; 59, 1; Just. Second. 13, 5; Craig and Moreland 2005, 698–699).

The concept of *logos* in Greek philosophy probably started with Heraclitus of Ephesus (Frame 2015, 55; Kunz 2019, 262; Tobin 1992. 348; Coenen and Brown 2000, 1510–1511) and received a broad meaning in philosophical thought. It may even have different possible words for translation (e.g., word, reason, speech, fire, conscience; Kunz 2019, 266). However, in general, it is related to a rational principle in everything and everyone. Heraclitus’s concept was related to his theory of the one, where the *logos* governs a world as an impersonal force in constant change, providing it a rational unity (Frame 2015, 55). Heraclitus’s *logos* was the rational principle that brought meaning to the world and rationality to the human being.

For Plato, however, *logos* was associated with rational discourse, or reason itself, not so much with a unifying force of reality, as it was for Heraclitus (Coenen and Brown 2000, 1513; Tobin 1992, 348). Plato’s *logos* is the internal dialogue that takes place in the mind before it is spoken. Similarly, Aristotle also conceived *logos* differently, almost always as rational discourse or rationality. For the Stoics, *logos* approached the concept of Heraclitus, where nature and God are one (Coenen and Brown 2000, 1513–1514; Tobin 1992, 348–349). For stoics like Cicero, only human beings have the *logos* as a constituent part of themselves, therefore we are superiors to animals because of a rational soul

Justin Martyr was influenced by these concepts and said that Socrates had known Jesus, for as Christ is the *logos*, he is present in all inspiring poets and philosophers of the past (Just. Sec. 10 8). For Justin, as the *logos* was the reason permeating all things, living according to reason is to live according to Jesus himself (Frame 2015, 91). Consequently, Justin’s confusion between the Johannine *logos* and the philosophical ended up confusing faith and reason.

He taught his concept of *logos spermatikos*, where God’s seed of reason (or knowledge) is present in all human beings. He believed that these seeds of *logos* in history prepared the way for the coming of Christ (McGrath 2013, 24; Pabst 2012, 61). He openly expressed this by saying:

> And so, too, Plato, when he says, “The blame is his who chooses, and God is blameless,” took this from the prophet Moses and uttered it. For Moses is more ancient than all the Greek writers. And whatever both philosophers and poets have said concerning the immortality of the soul, or punishments after death, or contemplation of heavenly things, or doctrines of the like kind, they have received such suggestions from the prophets as have enabled them to understand and interpret these things. And hence there seem to be seeds of truth among all men; but they are charged with not accurately understanding [the truth] when they assert contradictories (Just. First. 44, 8–10).

Justin probably took the concept of *logos spermatikos*, either from the Stoics (Marques 2016, 210–211; Karamanolis 2013, 39) or from Philo of Alexandria (Frame 2015, 100; Goodenough 1923, 167). He used this concept to explain why truths are found in other philosophical thoughts and some poets before Christ (McGrath 2013, 42). Justin Martyr explained that people without Christ have only seeds of *logos*, so they contradict themselves and find limited truths. Only the Christians have the entire *logos*, and therefore are holders of the truth. Those who before Christ lived according to the precepts of the seed of *logos* are considered Christians by the apologist because they supposedly resembled God by using their reason (Just. Sec. 13,6; Marques 2016, 214; McGrath 2013, 74; Karamanolis 2013, 38).

For Justin Martyr, Christ embodied rationality in “body, reason and soul” (Just. Sec. 10, 1), putting reason as the superior faculty of man, apparently synonymous with spirit. Precisely because Jesus was for him the incarnated reason (Just. First. 5, 4), the reason is what resembles humans with God. It does not mean that humans do not need divine revelation, but for him, the reason is sufficient to know and contemplate God (Just. Dial. 4, 1, 2, 5). However, if Jesus is the incarnated reason, Christianity becomes a type of rationalism.

However, I claim, Justin Martyr’s thought seems to have projected a Hellenistic lens over theology, conditioning the Church to unidimensional anthropology. If only in the reason humans resemble God, then the body and emotions have no real value. Knowing becomes more important than believing or doing. Nevertheless, Jesus was not the Hellenic *logos* confined to rationality; instead, he was the Word of God in the flesh. Henry (1999c, 173–188) unpacks the Johannine *logos*, not in Hellenic terms, but as the Hebrews understood the *logos*. The distinction between the

Johannine *logos* and the Greek involves what the whole OT has to say about revelation, God's Word, law, and prophecy. As the LXX used the word *logos* to translate the Hebrew correlates, and John probably used the LXX, he was undoubtedly speaking about Jesus as the incarnation of God's words, where revelation became a man. There is no evidence that the apostle John spoke in any Neoplatonist fashion, but as a Jew who had the OT as his source. While the *logos* was immanent for the Greeks, the OT presents God transcendentally speaking to his people (174). Jesus was not merely the incarnation of reason, but the incarnation of God's Word, the embodiment of his whole revelation.

It is because the Word became flesh (John 1:14) that the mystery behind Jesus's incarnation, who is the eternal who became temporal, the infinite who became finite, reveals the authentic man for inauthentic humans. It was Jesus's embodied life that reveals a coherent embodied existence. As Jesus was God's incarnation, man and woman were also needed to incarnate God's Word through the embodiment of the divine will, concretizing in the whole self, not only in reason, his revelation.

3.2.2.2 Justin's Concept of Sin

For Justin Martyr, sin is not only the act but the intention to sin (Just. First. 15, 5), affirming that God knows what man does and what he wants to do. For him, sin is more a matter of internal incoherence with God, manifesting outwardly in sinful acts. Sin is also spiritual blindness, making it impossible for a person to understand God's Word (Just. Dial. 55, 3). Like Kierkegaard's concept of sin as untruth, for Justin Martyr sin affects the mind, producing a false reading of everything. In this sense, sin is subjective, for it affects reason. Justin Martyr asserted that those who stand in sin become susceptible to the seeds of the devil, which promote various ungodly teachings (82, 2–3). Sin is the breaking of God's law, putting the whole human race under a curse (Just. Dial. 45, 3; 95, 1).

Justin Martyr compared Eve with Mary, saying that Eve conceived sin from the word (*logos*) of the serpent, whereas Mary conceived Jesus from the word (*logos*) of God (Just. Dial. 100, 5, 6). Just as Mary believed the angel's word and the Spirit begot Jesus in her womb, so Eve believed the serpent's word, and her spirit gave birth to sin. For Justin, the serpent's evil word was the reason for the pregnancy of sin, giving birth as an act. Saying this, Justin Martyr made some good points.

First, his statement that sin was only inseminated in humanity because it was sown by the serpent (Just. Dial. 100, 5, 6). The serpent was not an allegory of Adam's mind, but an important character not overlooked by Justin[18] or other Apostolic and Church Fathers.[19]

Second, Justin Martyr's insight that the conception of sin and the birth of Christ had "faith" in common, whether in God's or the serpent's word. He shows that faith plays a vital role in the inception of life or death. Faith appropriates truths or untruths, with the capacity to incarnate them. I will return to this concept when approaching the Fall narrative in the next chapter (Gen 3).

Justin Martyr broadly talked about demons and their impact on humanity, but nowhere excused men from their responsibility. For him, demons are primarily accountable for the numerous gods venerated in the world, saying they imitate them (Just. First. 9; 41, 1). For the apologist, demons are responsible for sowing into the hearts of men "murder, wars, adultery, vices, and other evil deeds" (Just. Second. 5, 4); however, these seeds do not necessarily germinate, for they depend on the person allowing them. He stated that Satan is a liar and a manipulator (Just. First. 28, 1), responsible for the whole sins of humanity (25, 3), although, man is also entirely responsible for his actions (28, 3–4).

Justin Martyr emphasized men and angels' freedom and never wrote about the inheritance of sins (Hillar 2012, 162). He stated that "all men are without excuse before God" (Just. First. 28, 3), for all were created rational and capable of perceiving truth. Justin called men "children of necessity" (Just. First. 61, 10). Men became accustomed to evil, sinning by necessity and ignorance, and only through the second birth, men became able to choose what is right.

However, he claimed that humanity's freedom is not determined because it would exempt from the responsibility of their sins (Just. First. 43, 1–3). Justin argued that if God predetermined someone to do good, he would not be able to do evil, and if someone were destined to do evil, he would not be able to do good. Nevertheless,

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[18] e.g., Just. First 28, 1; Just. Dial. 45, 4; 70, 5; 88, 4; 100, 5.
[19] e.g., Math. Diog. 12; Barn. 12; Iren. Ag. 1.27, 4; 3.23, 3; Theo. Apol. 2, 28; Clem. Inst. 2, 13; Tert. Ans. 2,10; Tert. Soul. 16, 21; Tert. Marc. 3, 18; 4, 24; Tert. Prax. 1; Orig. Princ. 3.2, 1; Orig. Celc. 6, 28; Aug. City. 14.11, 2; 14,13, 1.

people change from one to the other all the time (4–6). In this way, he claimed (Just. Dial. 141, 2), the wicked and the righteous were not determined but predicted by God, who saw them in advance.

3.2.3 *Irenaeus of Lyon (AD 130—202)*

Irenaeus grew up in Smyrna when Polycarp was the bishop and was directly influenced by the martyr (Iren. Ag. 3.3, 4; Eus. Ecc. 5.20). Later, Irenaeus went as a missionary to Gaul, becoming bishop around AD 177 to 180 (Hoekema 2018, 46; Meeks 2016; McGrath 2013, 24; Cairns 2008, 94). Irenaeus's most significant work was the theological treatise "Against Heresies", where he systematically presented and refuted the primary Gnostic heresies of his time. Irenaeus's relationship with philosophy differed from Justin Martyr's, assuming a more antithetical stance, knowing Platonic and Gnostic teachings, but opposing them (Frame 2015, 93). While the Gnostics claimed to have private knowledge of occult teachings, Irenaeus confronted speaking about the public Christian truths available in every church worldwide (Frame 2015, 95; McGrath 2013, 38). Irenaeus stressed the teaching of the recapitulation, where Jesus takes the place of Adam and restores all things to God's original destiny (Hiestand 2019, 19; 2018, 66; Clark 1999b, 456).

To refute the Gnostic doctrines, Irenaeus's theology emphasized the materiality of creation, the value of human physicality, and the role of free will for salvation (Hiestand 2019; Karamanolis 2013, 79; Donovan 1992). However, he never reduced his theology to a materialist perspective, always including the spiritual.

There is no evidence that Kierkegaard ever read Irenaeus's writings, but his theology was possibly known through indirect sources (Martens 2016a, 105). Although it is difficult to affirm how Irenaeus influenced Kierkegaard, their thoughts have many points in common. I believe, and this is open to discussion, that there is more in common between Kierkegaard's and Irenaeus's thoughts than the Dane had with Augustine.

3.2.3.1 Irenaeus's Anthropology

To refute Gnostic and Docetic doctrines, Irenaeus stressed the importance of the material world created by God, out of nothing (Iren. Ag. 2.1, 1; 2.10, 4; Hiestand 2019; Pannenberg 2009b, 43; Donovan 1992; Clark 1999b, 456). His anthropology

was very Christocentric, announcing that it is in Christ that the meaning of who the human being is can be correctly understood. For him, Jesus is the embodiment of God's perfect image and likeness, restoring what was lost by the fall (Iren. Ag. 5. 16, 2; Hiestand 2018, 60). Irenaeus asserted that Adam was made in the image and likeness of God but lost his likeness through sin, requiring Jesus to come and restore it (Iren. Dem. 22, 55; Hoekema 2018, 46). God intended Adam to grow and become Christlike, but the fall prevented him from reaching his potential. Therefore, for Irenaeus, Christ is God's intention for man, humanity's original purpose, the true pattern for biblical anthropology, not Adam.

Irenaeus stated that God created man with a mortal body and an immortal soul (Iren. Dem. 2; Pannenberg 2009b, 267–268). Irenaeus opposed the Greek idea of the pre-existence of souls and the Socratic doctrine of reminiscence. The fall at Eden, he said, affected both body and soul, requiring attitudes for both dimensions. Irenaeus emphasized man's creation from the dust as an autonomous and free being created like God, both physically and spiritually (Iren. Dem. 11). Although some scholars considered him a Trichotomist (e.g., Karamanolis 2013, 190; Hoekema 2018, 48), I believe they have misinterpreted him, based on the texts where he addressed the human in terms of body, soul, and spirit (e.g., Iren. Ag. 2.33,5). However, these texts should not be read in isolation, but in the light of the whole context of his writings. Irenaeus declared that the soul gives form to the body (2.19, 6), therefore, a hylomorphic perspective. Besides, the spirit for him is nothing more than the very Spirit of God in man, who shapes man's soul and body, resembling him to God (5.6, 1). I believe that Irenaeus's anthropology was not trichotomist or dichotomist, but more like Kierkegaard's kinetic approach.

The human being for Irenaeus is not a static creature, for it develops, progresses (Hiestand 2018). He believed that man "gradually progresses and rises to perfection," which is Christ (Iren. Ag. 4.38, 3). For Irenaeus, Adam was not created complete but in a "seminal" state, with an existential trajectory aimed at Christ (Hiestand 2018, 56; Pannenberg 2009b, 313). For the "man who is in God will always progress toward God," declared Irenaeus in a similarly Kierkegaardian expression (Iren. Ag. 4. 11, 2). In this sense, Irenaeus's anthropology does not present an idea of Adam's perfection before the fall because it is accomplished only in Christ.

Irenaeus believed that the terms “image” and “likeness” were distinct. For him, man was created after God’s “image”, and towards God’s “likeness”, denoting movement (Iren. Ag. 5.6, 1). When Adam sinned, he lost his “mantle of holiness”, which was the Holy Spirit, the proper likeness of God, keeping only his image (3.23, 5; Hoekema 2018, 48; Pannenberg 2009b, 300). For Irenaeus, the “image” is the human reason, responsibility, and freedom, while “likeness” is recovered only through redemption. Adam’s progress towards perfection in Christ was interrupted by the serpent; however, God did not curse humanity, only the earth and the serpent (Iren. Ag. 3.23, 3).

The idea of Adam’s imperfection should not be misunderstood, for Irenaeus did not state that God created humanity flawed. Instead, Adam was a sketch under construction with Christ as the model (Hiestand 2018, 58). Besides, Irenaeus’s teaching that Jesus recapitulated Adam does not mean a mere return to the garden, but a movement towards a new level of human existence (59) (Pannenberg 2009b, 303). For Irenaeus, Christ’s incarnation was God’s original idea and not an adjustment to solve the problem of sin (Iren. Ag. 4.38, 1–3; Hiestand 2018, 67). Jesus was the primary plan to shape humanity after God’s likeness in a progressive way.

The NT authors indeed spoke of Jesus as God’s perfect image, the model for every human being (1 Cor 15:45–49; Col 1:15). I agree with Irenaeus that Christ reveals God and the authentic human to humanity. Therefore, if Jesus’s whole life should be central to anthropology, theology needs also to give attention to his human actions, not only divine. If any action of Jesus Christ in his incarnation is interpreted only considering his divine nature, theology lacks the revelation of whom humanity is supposed to be. Thus, Jesus ends up portrayed as the savior but not as the model, where theology falls in a different type of Gnosticism.

I believe that theology has been more concerned about how to die than how to live, precisely because Jesus’s humanity has been neglected. If Jesus’s incarnation aims to solve only the problem of death and eternal condemnation, then his life has no meaning besides his act on the cross. However, if every aspect of his life is essential, then Jesus was also teaching how we are supposed to live and whom we should become.

3.2.3.2 Irenaeus's Concept of Sin

Irenaeus claimed that Adam was immature and childlike, and because of this his reason had not fully developed (Iren. Dem. 12; Clark 1999b, 456; Hiestand 2018, 60; Pannenberg 2009b, 424). That is why the serpent easily fooled him, Irenaeus claimed. Adam and Eve walked naked and were not ashamed before they sinned because they were still innocent and infants (Iren. Dem. 14). Irenaeus claimed that they kissed and hugged themselves without shame because of their innocence, implying a kind of erotism without malice (Hiestand 2018, 63). Their thoughts were pure because they could not imagine evil (Iren. Dem. 14). The Church Father argued that sin was born in the mind when evil was imagined and desired. That is why the guilt of sin lies in Satan, Irenaeus wrote (16) because it was the serpent who persuaded Adam and Eve to sin, exciting their imagination. After the fall, sin propagated because the human being became able to imagine evil by himself. Therefore, like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus also emphasized the importance of imagination in the conception of sin. This is strong evidence that Kierkegaard's aesthetic thinking about imagination, sin, anxiety, and despair is aligned with the early Church's thought.

For Irenaeus, sin was an incident which did not change God's original plan (Pannenberg 2009b, 426). However, what is not clear is whether for Irenaeus Adam and Eve were indeed children, or if they had only a childish mentality.

Irenaeus blamed the fall on Satan, although Adam and Eve were also held accountable (Iren. Ag. 3.23, 5). For him, it was out of compassion that God drove the first couple out of paradise to protect them from eating the tree of life and therefore becoming immortal and irredeemable (3.23, 6). Death was, according to Irenaeus, a blessing, a limit to their sins (Hiestand 2018, 56, 65).

Irenaeus also proposed that the original integrity was lost when the first couple sinned (Iren. Dem. 14). The idea of lost integrity, or holiness, is related to the Holy Spirit. When Jesus "recapitulates" humanity, he restores what was lost, the Holy Spirit as man's mantle of holiness (32) (Donovan 1992). The concept of original integrity played an influential role in later theology, mainly in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (Aug. City. 13.14; Thom. Sum. 2.82, 1–4).

Irenaeus declared that humanity was created free, able to choose good or evil (Iren. Ag. 4.37, 1; Karamanolis 2013, 162–163). Humanity was created so that it could consent to God's will without being coerced! Irenaeus criticized Valentinus's doctrine

of predestination, arguing that there is no basis for the idea that God separates people into categories as if he showed favoritism. At this point, Irenaeus's argument resembles Justin Martyr's, arguing that, if some people were created good by nature and others evil, neither the former could be praised, nor the latter be condemned (Iren. Ag. 4.37:2). He also stated that God's will could be resisted, and the Gospel can be rejected because of human freedom (4.37:4). For Irenaeus, the Spirit's action is not irresistible. This was how Irenaeus protected God from the responsibility of the sins of men, valuing man's freedom without jeopardizing God's sovereignty.

There is no suggestion in his writings that men inherit Adam's sin or guilt. According to him, each person is responsible for his own sins. Nevertheless, later, Augustine quoted Irenaeus claiming that he allegedly taught the doctrine of original sin before him (Aug. Jul. 1.3.5; Clark 1999b, 456). Augustine cited a statement by Irenaeus, who wrote that "men could not be healed from the ancient wound of the serpent except by believing" (Iren. Ag. 4.2, 7). However, in the text mentioned by Augustine, there is no reference to inheritance of sin or the concept that all were in Adam, much less the idea of hereditary guilt. As I will demonstrate later, the doctrine of original sin was developed by Augustine and had no basis in Irenaeus's theology.

There is considerable similarity between Irenaeus's theology and Kierkegaard's thinking. Both put great weight on human responsibility, the role of imagination, the becoming of men focused on Christ, and the subjective unfolding of man's progressive existence. Therefore, I believe that Irenaeus is one of the most important Church Fathers for contemporary theology, because he offers a better view of creation and human existence. Also, by addressing sin in the realm of imagination and thought, he humanizes the problem of sin. Furthermore, he offers a more optimistic view of what it means to be human from a Christological approach.

3.2.4 *Tertullian (AD 160 to 225)*

Tertullian was born in Carthage, North Africa, yet there are many uncertainties about his life and origin. Although it is claimed that he was the son of a Roman officer and probably a Christian priest in Carthage (Bühler 2016, 131; McGrath 2013, 24; Groh 1992, 389), Hillar (2012, 194–196) argues that Tertullian was neither the son of a soldier nor even a priest, instead, he was a lay Christian in Carthage, a professor of rhetoric who wrote in defense of Christianity. Tertullian became a theologian who

defended Christianity against the philosophical and pagan forces of his time (Cairns 2008, 93–94). Tertullian was a keen connoisseur of the Greek and Latin texts and strove to produce a Western theology able to answer the questions and demands of his day, and he was considered the “most learned Christian writer” of his time (Groh 1992, 389), having read most of what previous Apostolic and Church Fathers had written. He was probably the first Christian thinker to write in Latin, representing the beginning of Latin Theology (Frame 2015, 96; González 2006a, 323).

Tertullian rejected Greek philosophy (Frame 2015, 97; Garrett 2014, 24, 81), but paradoxically made ample use of it (González 2006a, 323; Hagglund 1981, 44). For example, he was the one who first used the terms “substance”, “form” and “nature”[20] to explain the Trinity and the nature of Christ, using important concepts from Aristotle’s metaphysics (Arist. Metaph.: book V; Frame 2015, 99; Craig and Moreland 2005, 700; González 2006a, 323; Bethune-Baker, 1903). Likewise, Tertullian coined the theological term Trinity,[21] influenced by the Greek concept of *logos* (Litfin 2019; McGrath 2013, 54; Garrett 2014, 315).

Kierkegaard mentioned Tertullian in his journals, referring to his phrase *credo quia absurdum*, probably not read directly from Tertullian’s texts, since Tertullian never wrote these words in Latin as far as we know (Frame 2015, 98; Geisler 1999, 721), but from an indirect source (Law 2015, 173). Tertullian never used the word *absurdum* or “contradiction”, but rather the word *ineptum*, which means “foolish,” (Bühler 2016, 132; Frame 2015, 98–99). Tertullian affirmed Christ’s death and resurrection, declaring that he believed because it was “foolish”, likewise Kierkegaard used the same logic. The Danish thinker was influenced by this statement and explored it differently in his texts (Law 2015, 175; Walsh 2009, 118–119; Abbagnano 2007, 742; e.g., Kierkegaard 2013, 37; 2019, 75; 2011b, 323; 2010a, 9; 2008, 35, 292). Besides, another idea Kierkegaard learned from Tertullian, even associating him with Socrates, was that knowledge cannot be merely learned but must be appropriated (Law 2015: 179).

[20] e.g., Tert. Prax. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.
[21] Trinitas in Latin. e.g., Tert. Prax. 3; 11; 12.

3.2.4.1 Tertullian's Anthropology

For Tertullian, the soul was the highest part of man, essentially rational because, for him, it was God's image in man (Tert. Soul. 16; Osborn 2001, 164). He followed Justin Martyr, attributing more value to the rational because Jesus was the *logos*, the incarnation of reason. Moreover, following Irenaeus, Tertullian understood there to be a difference between image and likeness in the creation of Adam and Eve, arguing that humanity lost God's likeness when they sinned (Tert. Prax. 12; Karamanolis 2013, 165). For Tertullian, Jesus was part of the world's foundation and human creation model as the second person of the Trinity. Like Irenaeus and Justin Martyr before him, Tertullian also emphasized man's freedom and responsibility (Tert. Soul. 22; Karamanolis 2013, 163–165).

For Tertullian, the soul was a corporeal substance, rejecting the gnostic teaching that it was divine (Tert. Soul. 5; Frame 2015, 99; Abbagnano 2007, 28). He claimed that even though the soul is spiritual, it always manifests physically (Osborn 2001, 164). He had a dualist perspective, which saw soul and body inseparably, but distinct (Tert. Soul. 27; Pannenberg 2009b, 267). He firmly rejected Hermogenes's Greek teaching that the soul came from matter and shared with it the same nature (Tert. Soul. 3).

Tertullian supported the concept of soul immortality as well as the resurrection of the dead. Some physicalists today argue that this idea is Greek, which Church Fathers like Tertullian absorbed (e.g., Green 2008, 52–54; Murphy 2011, 13–14), perhaps because they taught, like the Greeks, that death is the separation between body and soul (Tert. Soul. 51; Pannenberg 2009b, 384). However, this physicalist argument is incorrect, because it ignores the fundamental concepts raised by Greek philosophers. What is Greek is not the idea of the soul's immortality but that it is uncreated and eternal. Tertullian argued against these Greek concepts (Tert. Soul. 3), such as the Platonic teaching that the soul is uncreated and eternal (4) (Frame 2015, 99) and the idea of transmigration souls. He also opposed the idea that everything is only matter, and there is no soul, even though for him, it manifests physically. In his treatise about the soul, Tertullian rejected any reductionism to materialism (Tert. Soul.).

One of Tertullian's most significant teachings was his Traducianism, where he taught that a child's soul and body are generated from the parents' souls and bodies (Frame 2015, 99; Garrett 2014, 509; Abbagnano 2007, 968). Tertullian defended this idea by refuting the platonic theory that the soul formerly lived and was uncreated (Tert. Soul. 23–41). Thus, Tertullian was the first to formulate the idea of spiritual inheritance passed from father to child, which influenced Augustine's doctrine of original sin. Furthermore, Tertullian believed that all souls were potentially in Adam and within him were corrupted when he sinned (Tert. Soul. 19). Therefore, according to Tertullian's thought, all human souls are related metaphysically, part of the same Adamic substance, providing the foundation for Augustine's theory (Farris 2020, 150). I will address the problems related to this view when discussing Augustine's doctrine of original sin.

3.2.4.2 Tertullian's Concept of Sin

As the soul for Tertullian was essentially rational, sin was conceived in terms of irrationality, "instigated by the serpent" (Tert. Soul. 16). Thus, for Tertullian, there is no sin in God precisely because he is entirely rational. For him, sin destroys reason in the same way it destroys nature (Osborn 2001, 166). Unfortunately, influenced by Justin Martyr and Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian also treated the Johannine *logos* in terms of reason, encouraging a biased interpretation which influenced the whole Latin Church (Litfin 2019, 86–88; Frame 2015, 99; Garrett 2014, 252). This confusion is evident in this text:

> For God is rational, and Reason was first in Him; and so all things were from Himself. This Reason is His own Thought (or Consciousness) which the Greeks call λόγος, by which term we also designate Word or Discourse and therefore it is now usual with our people, owing to the mere simple interpretation of the term, to say that the Word was in the beginning with God; although it would be more suitable to regard Reason as the more ancient; because God had not Word from the beginning, but He had Reason even before the beginning; because also Word itself consists of Reason, which it thus proves to have been the prior existence as being its own substance (Tert. Prax. 5).

Tertullian's concept of sin as irrationality (Tert. Soul. 16) seems compatible with Kierkegaard's definition of sin as untruth (Kierkegaard 2019, 34; 2013, 219). However, I argue, this similarity is only apparent. Kierkegaard rejected the Greek concept that humanity's vital problem was ignorance, while Tertullian reinforced the Platonic idea using Christian terminology (Kierkegaard 2019; 2010, 115–116; Vardy 2008, 23). Tertullian's concept of irrationality is more aligned with Plato's view of ignorance than the biblical teaching about sin (Plato. Meno. 85b–86c; Tert. Rep. 1–5). Besides, Kierkegaard emphasized that the problem of sin is not knowledge but the human will. Tertullian spoke of repentance in terms of reasoning, for it is only through rational repentance that man can be saved (Tert. Rep. 1). In very Hellenist terms, he even stated that after recognizing Christ as Lord, a person could not sin anymore because he is no longer ignorant and therefore has no reason to sin (5).

Tertullian introduced the term *liberum arbitrium* (free will) into Western theology, which means that man is free and is not obliged to sin (McGrath 2013, 68; Karamanolis 2013, 163–164). Even though Tertullian taught Traducianism, he never taught the inheritance of guilt from the parents (Osborn 2001, 167). He claimed the transmission of sin was hereditary; however, he stated that the decision to sin is rational, for everyone has free will (Tert. Marc. 2.8–11; Frame 2015, 99). No human being is so corrupt that he has nothing good, because everyone came from God; equally, no one is so good that he has no sin because every person is also a sinner (Tert. Soul. 41).

Tertullian's theology was much more metaphysical than any other theologian before. Even though he questioned, "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" and called the philosophers "patriarchs of all heresies" (Tert. Heretics. 7; Tert. Hermog. 8; González 2006a, 323–324; Geisler 1999, 721), what he wrote was well aligned with the philosophical thought.

3.2.5 *Augustine of Hippo (AD 354 – 430)*

Some scholars consider Augustine the most important figure of patristic Christianity (Champlin 2013a, 78; Cairns 2008, 120; Hall 2007, 132). He was born in Hippo in AD 354, a son of Patrick, a pagan Roman officer, and Monica, a devout Christian. Augustine experienced Manichaeism, Neoplatonism and finally converted to Christianity (Champlin 2013a, 78; Geisler 1999, 60). He was baptized in AD 387 by

Ambrose, was ordained in AD 391, and became bishop in AD 395 (Puchniak 2016, 11).

Augustine read Cicero and was awakened to philosophy and religion, albeit initially a Neoplatonic one (Cross and Livingstone 2005, 129; Puchniak 2016, 11). Cicero's influence was marked in Augustine's interest in Neoplatonism and his approach to the question of passions, which is very present in Augustine's anthropology (Curley 1999, 190; Brachtendorf 1997). As O'Connel (1968, 2) stated, to understand Augustine properly it is necessary to see that he became who he was "by passing through a provisional set of identities, each of which shaped his final being".

Augustine was converted to Christianity by hearing Ambrose's preaching in Milan, which used the allegorical method (Frame 2015, 109; Hall 2007, 119, 135–139). Ambrose taught Augustine to read the Bible, looking for three meanings: the literal, the moral, and the mystical. Ambrose used the same reading Origen made of Paul's statement that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life", also absorbed by Augustine (2 Cor 3:6; Orig. Princ. 1.2; Aug. Conf. 5.14; 6.4). Called by Bernard of Clairvaux as the "hammer of the heretics", Augustine refuted Manichaeism, Donatism, and Pelagianism (Puchniak 2016, 11).

Kierkegaard had many of Augustine's books; nevertheless, it is difficult to trace the real influence the Church Father exerted on him (Puchniak 2016, 11,12). Kierkegaard criticized Augustine's teaching that favored celibacy while also praising the Church Father as one of the few with the quality of "reduplication" (11,12). It was probably from Augustine that Kierkegaard took the idea of existence in three stages (Law 2015, 173). Besides, Kierkegaard rejected Pelagianism, which emphasized man's free will, and rejected Augustine's solution to the problem (Puchniak 2016:15). Kierkegaard, in this regard, assumed an Arminian stance on grace and free will, where grace is "indispensable" but not "irresistible" (Jothen 2018, 71; Jackson 1998, 236–238).

However, Kierkegaard's most controversial reference to Augustine was a harsh reproach he made in one of his journals, criticizing the Church Father for the "incalculable harm" he caused to Christianity because "the whole system of doctrine through the centuries relies essentially upon him—and he has confused the concept of faith" (Kierkegaard 2017, 437; Puchniak 2016 14; Watkin 2000, 95). Kierkegaard accused Augustine of turning Christianity into a doctrine, a philosophical assertion,

reducing faith to a Platonic-Aristotelian conceptualization (Law 2015, 182; Thiselton 2002, 36).

Kierkegaard's criticism raises a very relevant point regarding the consequences of Augustine's thought in his time, which I believe also applies to ours. Faith in Augustinian theology was acquiescence to biblical truths, not acts in response to revelation. Augustine defined: “for what is believing but consenting to the truth of what is said? Moreover, this consent is certainly voluntary” (Aug. Spir. Let. 54). For the Church Father, faith was a rational consenting to a truth (Aug. Spir. Let. 54). For Kierkegaard, faith is an act of self-involvement, which involves appropriation in existence (Kierkegaard 2017, 437; Thiselton 2002, 36). For Augustine, the proper response to faith was understanding (Aug. Free. 1.2.4), related to his concept of truth. After all, he was influenced by Plato through his reading of Plotinus, Cicero, Porphyry, and others (Aug. Conf. 8.2.3; Frame 2015, 112; Bowery 1999, 655; Curley 1999, 190; Fleteren 1999, 651; Harrison 1999, 852; O'Connel 1982). Throughout Augustine's theology, Plato's concept of truth is directly reflected in his rational concept of faith as acquiescence to biblical truth. While accepting biblical truth is essential, it is not enough, for faith is appropriation, embodiment, and I agree with Kierkegaard that Augustine's confusion harmed the Church.

3.2.5.1 Augustine’s Anthropology

Augustine was a dichotomist and used the terms spirit, soul, heart, and mind as synonyms many times (e.g., Aug. Gen. 10.6.10; Aug. Free. 1.7.16; 1.8.18). He stated that he desired to “know God and the soul” (Aug. Soli. 1.2.7), evidencing a platonic interpretation of soul throughout his writings (e.g., Aug. Gen.; Aug. City.; Aug. Soli.; Aug. Soul.; Aug. Trin.; Aug. Free). He used the Latin word *anima* to refer to the soul in general, including animals but used *animus* and *mens* when referring to the rational souls (Teske 2001, 116).

Augustine defined the soul in Platonic terms as the “substance endowed with reason, able to rule the body”, therefore as the higher part (Aug. Soul.13.22; McGrath 2013, 59; Fredriksen 2012, 117). He also defined humans as souls with mortal bodies (Aug. Cath. 27.52). Although Augustine stated the human being is one, with body and soul (Aug. John. 19.15; Aug. Trin. 15.7.11), his Platonic dichotomy overvalued the soul over the body, as if they were disconnected (Pannenberg 2009b, 291; Teske 2001,

116). He declared that the body was “the least noble part of man” (Aug. Free. 1.16.34), a thought that influenced later theology.

When he was a Manichean, Augustine believed that everything real needed a body; therefore, the soul and God had a bodily form (Aug. Conf. 5.10.20; Teske 1999, 808). As he approached Ambrose’s Neoplatonist theology, he conceived the spiritual as the incorporeal, rejecting, therefore, any idea of a bodily soul. For Augustine, the souls of humans were equal to the souls of angels, yet with different functions (Aug. Free. 3.11.32). For him, the human soul was essentially rational (Aug. City. 5.11; Aug. Free. 1.7.16; 1.9.19; 1.10.21; Garrett 2014, 457–458; Teske 1999, 809). He stated that it is in the soul where man resembles God; therefore, the soul is also a trinity divided in memory, intelligence, and will (Aug. Trin. 11.11–12; McGrath 2013, 59).

Augustine proposed four possible origins for the soul (Teske 1999, 809): (1) God created only one soul, and from it, the others were generated (Aug. Free. 3.20.56). (2) every soul is created by God for every child born. (3) All souls exist in some secret place from where God sends them to the bodies of newborns (957). (4) Souls come by themselves, “spontaneously”, to inhabit bodies (958). After some years, he revisited this subject, proposing only three possibilities for the origin of souls (Aug. Gen. 10.3.4): (1) All souls were in the soul of Adam. (2) New souls were generated from the soul of Adam (Traducianism). (3) God would continually create souls for every person born. However, the third option was rejected because it seemed to contradict the biblical claim that God created everything in six days and then rested (10.3.5). As it was inconceivable for Augustine that soul and body are intrinsically related, he also rejected the idea of spontaneous generation of souls through human reproduction (10.4.7). He rejected it because, for him, the soul could not be bodily transmitted. There remained, therefore, only the first option, which was the presence of all souls in Adam’s soul.

3.2.5.2 Augustine’s Concept of Sin

Augustine’s view of sin arises from his reflection about the origin of evil, one of the subjects which had most troubled him since childhood (Aug. Free. 1.2.4). For him, sin occurs when evil passions dominate reason, where the body subdues reason (1.4.9; 1.8–11). The Church Father argued that sinning is an individual decision and is not determined by God (Aug. City. 5.10; McGrath 2013, 68; Pannenberg 2009b,

381). Although man has free will (*liberum arbitrium*), he does not have freedom (*libertas*), because the man lost the ability to do what is right, being captive of sin (Frame 2015, 115; Garrett 2014a, 29; Fredriksen 2012, 125; Djuth 1999, 881). For Augustine, man and woman could not sin before the Fall, but after sinning, became incapable of not sinning (Hoekema 2018, 149–150; McGrath 2013, 70).

For Augustine, evil is the deprivation of good, the lack of God (Aug. Conf. 7.9–17; Aug. City. 11.11; Frame 2015, 110; Hochschild 2012, 9). Augustine borrowed this idea of deprivation of good from Plotinus (Aug. Conf. 7.9.13; Plot. Enn. 2.4.16; 1.8.5; Pannenberg 2009b, 249). For him, as God is the source of all good and the basis of existence, sin is the movement of the will to turn away from God (Aug. Free. 2.20.54; Thiselton 2002, 86). He treated sin in terms of “nonbeing” or “nothingness”, because “one cannot know what is simply nothing” (Aug. Free. 2.20.54). Thus, Augustine made an ontological shift, denying objective existence to sin (Thiselton 2002, 86). Frame (2015, 111) stated that Augustine’s definition was too metaphysical, and sin is a moral evil; therefore, his concept should be abandoned. Even though I agree with Frame that Augustine’s idea is too metaphysical, I am not convinced that it should be abandoned. For sin and evil are moral realities, they are also metaphysical, and I will address this later.

For Augustine, sin as an absence is a kind of love, for the sinner’s soul loves to move away from God, as a movement from being to non-being. This is evident in Augustine’s account of his personal sins when young, when he stole pears and wasted them, throwing them to the pigs (Aug. Conf. 2.4). He took pleasure in the simple fact that it was forbidden, for he loved his sin as a desire for “not being”, a deprivation of the good that he called *privatio boni* (Hoekema 2018, 188).

For Augustine, the original sin was at the same time Adam’s sin and the one inherited by his offspring. The subject is broad because Augustine’s thoughts in this regard changed throughout the years (Lamelas 2012, 58–59). He recognized free will as the cause of the first sin (Aug. Free. 3.17.47–49). Besides, because of Adam’s sin, humanity was born in concupiscence, where our sins draw their strength from that first sin committed (3.19.53–54). For Augustine, every person sinned in Adam because all souls were present in him (3.20.56). Adam’s guilt is, therefore, everyone’s guilt. His doctrine of original sin was a new concept he developed.

To answer Manicheism and Pelagianism, Augustine searched the teachings of previous Church Fathers but found no sufficient answer, consequently formulating his doctrine of original sin (Lamelas 2012, 131–133; Rigby 1999, 607–608). Some Apostolic and Church Fathers claimed the exact opposite of Augustine's teachings, such as Justin Martyr, who asserted that everyone is responsible only for his own sins (Just. Dial. 88). Likewise, baptism serves only for the forgiveness of the individual's sins, not for the sins committed by Adam or any parent (Just. First. 61.9–13). Tertullian attributed uncorrupted qualities to the soul, which was fully capable of choosing between good and evil, even though salvation could only happen through faith in Christ (Tert Soul. 16.41; Tert. Bapt. 18; McGrath 2013, 68; Karamanolis 2013, 163–164). In this regard, Origen and Augustine were on opposite sides. While Origen overemphasized God's mercy, where at the end even Satan would be saved, Augustine overemphasized divine justice, condemning to hell even newborn children who died without baptism (Orig. Princ.1.6.3; Aug. Mer 1.30; Fredriksen 2012, 99–100).

Augustine's concept that all souls were in Adam is not very different from Origen's teaching that all souls fell before creation (Orig. Celc. 4.37–40). What these two different ideas have in common is the thinking of a fall in a pre-existential realm. The idea that humanity inherits the guilt of a decision not made consciously in a supposed pre-existent soul is more Platonic than biblical.

Plato's presence in Augustine's texts is immense. Augustine stated that "no doctrine is closer to ours than Plato's doctrine" (Aug. City. 8.5). Augustine directly quoted Plato and Platonism 252 times (Fleteren 1999, 651). He cited Plato's and Plotinus's works (e.g., Aug. Harm. 1.35.53; Aug. City. 1.22; 11.21; 11.27; Aug. Conf. 7.9.13) and demonstrated knowledge regarding many of his teachings (Hochschild 2012, 9; Fleteren 1999, 651). Furthermore, Plotinus profoundly influenced Augustine, which reinforced and reformulated several of Plato's teachings (Bowery 1999, 655; Hochschild 2012, 45; Fredriksen 2012, 142). It is clear that Augustine was strongly influenced by Platonism regarding the idea of pre-existence of the soul, reminiscence, and other philosophical concepts which permeate all his theological production (Stróżyński 2016; Garrett 2014, 562–563; Hochschild 2012, 62–66; Bowery 1999; O'Connel 1980; 1969; 1968).

Augustine's doctrine of the presence of all souls in Adam, I argue, replaced Plato's teaching concerning the pre-existence of souls (Plato. Phaedrus. 248–250;

Pannenberg 2009b, 367). Augustine rejected the Platonic and Pythagorean ideas that explained reminiscence through reincarnation (Aug. Trin. 12.15), but this did not stop him from reframing the idea in Christian terms. Augustine's doctrine of original sin replaced the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence (Plato. Meno. 85b–86c). Plato's "world of ideas" became Adam's soul for Augustine. The truths that the Platonic soul recalls from its pre-incarnational existence in Augustine become the guilt that must be remembered from when we were Adam. Therefore, in this regard, I believe Augustine's solution is not satisfactory to explain the problem of sin, for inserting alien elements into the biblical narrative.

Before the fall, men and women lived in a state of perfection, which, according to Augustine, did not even affect their sexual libido (Aug. City. 14.26; Fredriksen 2012, 121). For the Church Father, all their will was directed to love God as they only wanted what God wanted. Nevertheless, by sinning, man and woman were abandoned to themselves, and they started to seek their satisfaction in their libido. Augustine stated that it would be excellent if it were possible to have children without sexual libido (Aug. City. 14.16). Consequently, concupiscence became libido, the self-love that directs the self towards itself. For Augustine, it was connected to the original sin because it is transmitted to the fetus through sexual intercourse (Nisula 2012, 46; Pannenberg 2009b, 350–351; Clark 1999a, 70). Augustine mixed concepts and created confusion in theology based on this idea. By equating sexual libido with concupiscence, he ended up demonizing human sexuality and the entire corporeality.

Kierkegaard also struggled with the subject of sexual libido and concupiscence, but he did not treat them as the same (Watkin 2010, 161–163). For him, the libido was naturally given by God, the purpose, or task of which was marriage, the divine target for its satisfaction. The demonization of sexuality by Augustine may have been one of the reasons why the medieval church gradually developed an increasing asceticism, a life for the soul but not for the body.

However, regardless of Augustine's views on sexuality, his definition of concupiscence as self-love was insightful, demonstrating that sin had a relational character (Jenson 2006, 17). The love-relationship that man had with God was lost with the fall, and his drive to love turned to itself egocentrically. Therefore, for Augustine the origin of all sins was pride, a perverse appetite (Aug. City. 14.13; Hoekema 2018, 193; Pannenberg 2009b, 352; Jenson 2006, 7). Pride is man focused

on himself, not recognizing his dependence on God but living autonomously. Pride is the man willing to be a god, a truth even perceived by the atheist Sartre (2012, 693), who stated that “man is fundamentally the desire to be God”.

Augustine argued that no one should seek the cause of the evil desire because it would be the equivalent of hearing silence or seeing darkness (Aug. City. 12.7). He argued that, as evil is the absence of good, sin occurs only in the absence of a relationship with God. Nevertheless, as Kierkegaard stated, Adam is put outside history, for he sinned while he had a relationship with God (Kierkegaard 2011, 28; Walsh 2009, 84). If sin is a lack of relationship with the Creator, how can one explain Adam’s sin? Besides, concupiscence did not appear out of nowhere but in the face of an object offered to be loved. Human free will and desire are not enough to explain sin if the human imagination is not considered. The serpent instigated Adam and Eve’s imagination, and offered them the idea of being loved. Therefore, I believe that Justin Martyr’s and Irenaeus’s interpretations are more coherent with the biblical account of the fall, arguing that through the serpent’s intrusion into Eve’s creative imagination, sin was inseminated as an idea (Just. Dial. 100:5,6; Iren. Dem. 14–16). This inseminated idea became an object to love, arousing anxiety, as Kierkegaard (2011) argued, urging for the concretization of sin.

3.2.5.3 Augustine’s Concept of Subjectivity

To find God, according to Augustine, is through interiority (Aug. Trin. 8.2:3; Aug. Rel. 39.72; Aug. Conf. 3.6:11; Fredriksen 2012, 117). He supported asceticism, intending to free the soul from the body’s imperfections, usually addressing the problem in terms of sexuality (Clark 1999a, 69). Augustine proposed a seven-degree gradation for the soul, where the lowest degrees involved a more profound dependence on the body and the higher ones when the body is ascetically subdued by the soul’s virtues (Aug. Soul. 33.70–76). Augustine’s subjectivity was, therefore, a dichotomic one in terms of the conflict between body and soul.

Regardless of his bodyless theology, Augustine anticipated Kierkegaard in many aspects. He, for example, wrote about inward passions (Aug. Free. 1.9.19), talked about man as a movement toward or away from God (2.18–20). He also conceived the soul as a temporal flow where past, present, and future meet

simultaneously (Aug. Conf. 10.17.26). Thus, Augustine provided many insights for theology and philosophy, anthropology, and psychology in many ways.

For the Church Father, the passions disturb the soul and must be subdued by reason (Aug. Free. 1.9.19). Passions were viewed as movements of the soul opposed to reason, and only by dominating them man becomes ordered (8.18). This was the influence of Cicero, who believed that the passions imbalanced the soul, arguing that a wise mind is freed from such turbulence (Brachtendorf 1997, 290). For Cicero, the stillness of the soul, his idea of *apatheia* could be reached only by mastering reason by a wise man. Although Augustine absorbed this idea, he rejected the idea that any wise man could become entirely free of passions (Aug. City. 9.3–5). He argued that even though passions can be subdued by reason, involuntary desires still arise, and only in eternity will man reach *apatheia* (Aug. City. 14.9).

Augustine also conceived the human as a “diachronic being”, where the self does not have a past or a future, but is his past, present, and future at the same time (Fredriksen 2012, 118; Duffy 1999, 25). For him, memory is part of the soul’s trinity, conceiving man as a temporal continuum in time (Aug. Conf. 10.17.26; Aug. Trin. 11.11–12). The memory provides knowledge to the mind, helping it to decide about the future and how to concretize it in the present. This continuum of time happens in the self through consciousness, which is distended through time (Aug. Conf. 11.14–27; Fredriksen 2012, 118–119; Pannenberg 2009b, 145–146). Thus, for Augustine, man can concretize his future in the present, always facing his past.

Now I turn to the most significant theologian of the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas. Although between Augustine and Aquinas there lived numerous theologians who are not quoted here, Aquinas tried to synthesize all theological thinking before him, including Augustine.

3.3 Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225 — 1274)

Known as the angelic doctor, Thomas Aquinas was born in a wealthy family in Aquino, part of the kingdom of Naples. He was first educated in a Benedictine monastery and then at the University of Naples (Fernández 2006, 328; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1625; Geisler 1999, 725). There he was introduced to Aristotle’s philosophy which influenced him profoundly. He became a Benedictine monk and then a theologian. In his theology, his attitude was always as a philosopher-theologian,

apparently with the Bible in one hand and Aristotle's writings in the other, continually constructing a synthesis between them (Frame 2015, 144; Cairns 2008, 212; Thiselton 2002, 13). His most outstanding contribution to theology was his *Summa Theologiae*, one of the greatest classics of Christian dogmatics of all time. Considered the leading figure in scholastic philosophy, appropriately called Thomistic, his teachings became official in all Catholic schools, and are still today, when Pope Paul (1879) commended it (Cairns 2008, 203; Thiselton 2002, 13).

The most significant criticism of Aquinas's theology came from Martin Luther, who also passed an inevitable rejection for Thomist theology to Lutheranism, which probably affected Kierkegaard in his time (Bøgeskov 2016, 188). Thomas Aquinas rationalized indulgences, attracting understandable opposition from the reformer (Cairns 2008, 213). Furthermore, Aquinas taught that man's will was not totally corrupted by sin, affirming a partial autonomy of human reason, unlike what Augustine taught (Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1626; Cairns 2008, 255; Hagglund 1981, 157). Luther attacked Thomas Aquinas, saying that he was a "sophist", a "heretic", a "blind cow", a "beggarly paunch", and "not worth a louse" (Bøgeskov 2016, 188). This fierce criticism came because of Aquinas's association with Aristotle's philosophy (189). Instead of making theology from Scripture itself, Luther accused Aquinas of engaging with Aristotelian thought, producing a theology more philosophical than biblical. However, maybe Luther's rejection was also because Aquinas, in many points, distanced himself from Augustine's thought, for Luther was an Augustinian.

However, as I already argued in the last section, Augustine can also be accused of producing theology with the Bible in one hand and Plato's teachings in the other. If Thomas Aquinas's theology is rejected for engaging Aristotle's thinking, then Augustine's theology should also be. In this sense, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas seem to agree about engaging philosophical thinking for a theological purpose. Augustine quoted the apostle Paul (Rom 1:20, 21) to justify the role of philosophy as part of the general revelation of God accessible to all men through reason (Aug. City. 8.10). Aquinas also declared that philosophers came to conclusions about God using only their reason (Thom. Gent. 1.3.2); nevertheless, for him, philosophy was suitable but not sufficient for man's salvation since it requires divine revelation (Thom. Sum. 1.1). Still, Aquinas's epistemology does not seem to be very different from that of Augustine and Luther. Marshall (1999) makes an interesting comparative study

between the epistemology of Aquinas and Luther, arguing that their thoughts were not so different at all.

3.3.1 *Thomas Aquinas's Anthropology*

Thomas Aquinas examined the human being in practically every part of his *Summa Theologiae* (Wawrykow 2005, 5). In the first part, he introduced the human being as a creature of God composed of body and soul. In the second, he developed his moral theology, viewed as a movement of man towards God, and in the third presented Jesus as the "true man", pointing to him as the human everyone was meant to become.

Thomas Aquinas conceived the human being as constituted of body and soul, but not like Augustine, instead, like Aristotle, who advocated hylomorphism (Thom. Sum. 1.76; Petri 2016, 199–200; Pasnau 2012, 351; Craig and Moreland 2005, 325–326). Hylomorphism is the union between form and matter, where the soul is the form, and the body is the matter (Thom. Sum. 1.76.1; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 814; Thiselton 2002, 289). Soul and body are inseparable because "the soul is for the body as ideas are for words" (Geisler 2010, 42). For Aquinas, the soul is action, while the body is potentiality because, without the soul, there is no action in the body (Thom. Sum. 1.77.1; Petri 2016, 200–201). Thus, for Aquinas, the body is moved by the soul in a movement of actualization of potentiality (Thom. Sum. 1.3.1).

Some physicalists have adopted Aquinas's anthropology (e.g., Jensen 1997; Murphy 2011, 56); however, the association of his anthropology with physicalism seems to be a mistake, because even though he considered soul and body as inseparable, he also treated them as distinct (Petri 2016, 202; Pasnau 2012, 358–359). Thomas Aquinas was not monist, but dualist. Aquinas explained that the soul is not the body (Thom. Sum. 1.75.1), nor matter (1.75.5). For the angelic doctor, the human is a fusion of two compounds, physical and spiritual, where the body is bound to finitude, mutability and can be corrupted,[22] and the soul is related to the infinite, which cannot be distorted (1.75.6).

[22] In Aquinas's vocabulary "corruptibility" is not related to sin but material deterioration.

The human soul for Aquinas is made up of powers: the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual (Thom. Sum. 1.77; Pasnau 2012, 359). By describing these powers of the soul, Aquinas also described them in their relation to the body (Petri 2016, 204). They are part of the same soul, but with different functions, where the sensitive power is superior to the vegetative, and the intellectual superior to the sensitive (Thom. Sum. 1.77.4). Each higher dimension governs the lower ones, providing a hierarchy in the self. The vegetative potency has the body as its object, linked to nutrition, growth, and generation (1.78.2). The sensitive relates to the sensations apprehended by the body's senses, building knowledge, and how things are spiritually seen and perceived (1.78, 3–4). As for the intellectual power, unlike Augustine (Aug. Trin. 9, 10), who considered the intellect to be the essence of the soul, Aquinas considered only one of its powers (Thom. Sum. 1.79). The intellectual power is responsible for reason, which assesses sensations, understanding the surrounding reality mentally. The intellect does not feel or perceive but knows the universal essences, having the universal ideas as its object.

Since the soul has three powers, it also has three different appetites for Aquinas: the natural, the sensitive, and the intellectual (Thom. Sum. 1.80–82). An appetite is an inclination of the soul, a potency that may move the individual. The natural appetites include the inclination for food and safety, essential to life, while sensual appetites involve the search for pleasure, called concupiscible appetite, and the drive to escape from pain, called irascible (1.80–82; 2.31–35; Pasnau 2012, 359). The intellectual appetite is the will (Thom. Sum. 1.82–83), which is not necessarily conditioned by lower appetites because "we are masters of our acts", according to Aquinas (1.82.1), able to choose differently to what the lower appetites demand.

For Aquinas, knowledge happens through the process of interacting with mental "phantasms" through thinking (Thom. Sum. 1.84.7; 1.89.1; Petri 2016, 211; Pasnau 2012, 364). The concept of "phantasm" for Aquinas refers to the mental image generated by the inner senses, which humans have in common with animals. It involves the soul's ability to see what one thinks internally, such as the fantasy of a triangle, or an animal, for example. These images are created by the mind but are fed by the senses. Without the information provided by the senses, the intellect is unable to imagine, meaning that thinking is a process involving the whole self, not only reason (Thom. Sum. 1.89.1; Petri 2016, 209; Pasnau 2012, 365). For Aquinas, man's "phantasy" is superior to the animals because he can mix mental ideas, combining

and creating new “phantasms” (Petri 2016, 208). This concept is indispensable to understanding imagination’s creative role and relationship with the senses and passions, analogous to Kierkegaard’s approach.

Nevertheless, like the Church Fathers before, Aquinas also associated God’s image as the rational soul (Thom. Sum. 1.93.6; Hoekema 2018, 49; Petri 2016, 220–221). For him, man lost God’s similitude, but not his image (Garrett 2014, 458; Pannenberg 2009b, 316). Quoting Augustine, Aquinas stated that God’s image is not the same in everyone, for in unbelievers it is “deformed”, and in the Christians, it becomes “clear and beautiful” (Thom. Sum. 1.93.8; Aug. Trin. 14; Hoekema 2018, 51).

3.3.2 *Thomas Aquinas’s Concept of Sin*

Thomas Aquinas studied Augustine but developed a different approach to the problem of sin. While Augustine believed that man’s will was utterly corrupted by sin and became unable to approach God, Thomas Aquinas argued that human will was limited by sin but not entirely conditioned for evil (Cairns 2008, 212, 255; Walsh 2009, 83). Like Augustine, Aquinas affirmed evil as the lack of good, the absence of God, with no objective existence (Thom. Sum. 1.5.48; Thiselton 2002, 86; Walsh 2009, 106). He dealt with sin from two perspectives, one of God, which is objective, and the other of man, subjective. Objectively, sin is an offense against God, a failure to accomplish the divine will. While subjectively, sin is a disposition of habit contrary to the person’s purpose as a human being (Wawrykow 2005, 142). Sin prevents man from fulfilling his existential goal as God’s image and is an offense against the divine will. Objectively, sin is defined in its exteriority as the breaking of relationship with God, while subjectively, it is understood within the human being, an inward condition.

Aquinas divided sin in terms of actual and vice (Thom. Sum. 2.71). Actual sin is an act against the nature of the person and God’s will, while vice is the habit of sin, a disposition towards sinful acts. Sin is both the external act, performed through the body, and the internal act, made by the mind, like the sin of omission, which is the internal act that chooses not to do what should be done (2.71.5). Aquinas also divided sins into venial and mortal, which still today is the prominent perspective in the Roman

Catholic Church[23] (2.88-89). For Aquinas, venial sins are those committed in weakness or ignorance, which do not deserve death (88.2), while mortal sins are committed consciously against God, which deserves death.

Aquinas also blamed Satan for instigating sin, not only on Eve but on the whole of humanity (Thom. Sum. 2.80). He argued that although Satan does not have the power to force a person to necessarily sin, he does have the power to induce (2.80.2–3). Satan may seduce, but it is up to the person to decide whether to sin. Aquinas is very aligned with Augustine, Irenaeus, and Justin Martyr on this point. The importance of this is that Aquinas, together with the mentioned Church Fathers, neither reduced the problem of sin to the immanence of the human being, as in a fatalistic posture, nor reduced it to the demonic transcendence, as if humans were mere victims. I argue that this balance between immanence and transcendence, freedom and determinism was more natural to the Church Fathers and Aquinas than for modern theologians. Today, while many reject any demonic action on humanity, others attribute everything to Satan. The same imbalance is seen in the theological reading about God's sovereignty and human freedom. Theology tends to fall into different mistakes when neglecting any side.

Thomas Aquinas reaffirmed the Augustinian doctrine of original sin, claiming that sin was transmitted through generation to the descendants (Thom. Sum. 2.81.1). Hereditary guilt is spread to everyone (2.81.3), through semen (2.81.1), not as an act but virtually. For Aquinas, as it was for Augustine, humanity was in Adam; therefore, every person sinned in him (Aug. City. 13.14). Nevertheless, Aquinas differed from Augustine by distinguishing hereditary guilt, considering it the potential nature polluted by sin, which only becomes actual when performed by the individual (Thom. Sum. 2.81.1-5).

Besides, quoting Anselm, Aquinas stated that original sin is a habit, a “disorderly disposition arising from the disappearance of that harmony in which the essence of original justice consisted” (Thom. Sum. 2.82.1). In other words, original sin

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[23] The Catholic Church’s Catechism states that mortal sin involves the complete knowledge and consent of the person who sins. Venial sin, however, is defined as holding less gravity, committed without the person’s complete knowledge and consent (c.f., Vatican 2021. “IV. The Gravity of Sin: Mortal and Venial Sin.” Vatican, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P6C.HTM

is the lack of original justice (Petri 2016, 226). It is the deprivation of the original justice that causes a lack, a disorder, a longing for what has been lost, leading the soul's powers to be disordered (Thom. Sum. 2.82.3). With the loss of original justice, humanity lost the supernatural grace that God gave, losing the power to control the lower faculties through reason, and the human being became disordered (2.109.6; 2.164.1; Hoekema 2018, 52; Petri 2016, 229). This concept of the lack of original justice relates to what Kierkegaard wrote and is essential to understanding sin's subjectivity. After all, the feeling of absence is inevitably present in all human beings, expressing existentially in different ways. This absence is an existential thirst, addressed throughout Scripture, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter.

3.3.3 *Thomas Aquinas's Concept of Subjectivity*

As demonstrated above, Aquinas's anthropology of sin is very philosophical and objective, without neglecting man's subjectivity. He treated man as a multidimensional being whose soul is made up of powers, different inward spheres, like layers in the same human being. For Aquinas, the human self's purpose (its teleology) is oriented towards God (Thom. Sum. 2.1.8). Therefore, the human being is existentially oriented to know and love God, and nothing else can satisfy the thirst caused by sin, declared Aquinas (2.2.1–8). The angelic doctor used the concept of purpose (*telos*) from Aristotle's ethics (Arist. Ethic. 2004a, 1.1–2), reframing it in theological terms. As man is an arrow aimed at God, missing the target is a life of unhappiness, sin. However, unhappiness is not only reaching the wrong destination but the going is also unhappiness, a state of despair. Aquinas treated sin in terms of despair, considering it the separation between God and man, which directly influenced Kierkegaard (Thom. Sum. 2.20.1–4; 2.40.4; Hühn and Schwab 2015, 81).

Aquinas's anthropology is profound, objective, and subjective, where contemporary theology can take great advantage. I believe he developed a more wholistic approach to anthropology than Augustine. His study about virtues, vices, and sin, as act and potency, is relevant today. However, it is essential to highlight his mistake of giving preference to the reason, as if it were always correct (Hoekema 2018, 54; Frame 2015, 151; Thiselton 2002, 259). This idea can lead to the understanding that the body is not essential and confuse revelation with reason. Related to this,

Aquinas considered metaphysics the superior science (Thom. Sum. 1.1.8), misinterpreting its applicability, employing biblical revelation. Metaphysics is essential; however, it should be restricted to the rational realm and not applied to God's revelation. The term metaphysics comes from the Greek τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, which was given to the cataloged works of Aristotle (Arist. Metaph.) positioned after (μετὰ) his works on physics (φυσικά), that is, the name had an organizational meaning, not intended to affirm any superiority over other works (Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1083). Heidegger (2018a, 37) accused Christian thought of misrepresenting this concept of metaphysics, attributing it as the study of God and spiritual beings. Indeed, theology should not be reduced to metaphysics since revelation is transcendent to man's entire reality, and even though revelation affects metaphysics, it will never be fully understood by reason.

3.4 Martin Luther (AD 1483—1546)

Martin Luther was the son of a Saxon miner from Mansfeld and studied Arts at the University of Erfurt, where he studied Aristotelian philosophy (Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1013; Hagglund 1981, 180). After graduating with a master's degree in arts, he began to study law and teach at the arts college. However, a personal crisis led him to abandon everything and become a monk. He entered the Augustinian monastery also at Erfurt, where he was consecrated as a priest in 1507. In the following year, Luther was sent to teach moral philosophy at the newly founded university in Wittenberg. In 1511, after returning from a trip to Rome, he began his Doctorate in Theology with the help of his superior, Johannes Von Staupitz, acquiring the grade in October 1512 (Schuetze 2015, 9; García 2006, 226).

Based on Augustine's theology and re-reading Paul's texts (e.g., Rom 1:16–17; 5:1–2; 8:31–39), Luther restored the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone, rediscovering the Gospel and breaking with scholasticism (Frame 2015, 169; Garrett 2014a, 294; García 2006, 227; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1013; Hagglung 1981, 181). He emphasized that humans cannot justify themselves through their merits and works (Luther 1976, 89). On October 31, 1517, Luther fixed the renowned ninety-five theses against indulgences on the church door in Wittenberg, an event that has been celebrated as "the moment when Protestantism was born" (Madureira 2017a, 12). Indulgences were ways of acquiring forgiveness for sins, even for the dead in

purgatory, which the church used in Luther's days to finance the construction of St Peter's Basilica (15–17) (Schuetze 2015, 19).

In 1518 Luther was "meticulously" questioned in the Augsburg diet by Cardinal Thomas Cajetan, a specialist in the theology of Thomas Aquinas (Madureira 2017a, 22–23). The options for Luther, in the end, were three: retraction, prison, or fire. Luther chose to flee (24) (Schuetze 2015, 31). In 1520 Luther appealed to the German people to reform the church by preaching theological treatises not in Latin, the academic language, but in German (Madureira 2017a, 25–26; Hagglund 1981, 183). On April 17, 1521, Luther appeared before Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms, facing possible banishment from the empire (Schuetze 2015, 40; Kim and Rasmussen 2009, 173). When asked to deny his writings, he asked to pray and think. The next day he made his statement ending with the phrase: "I cannot and will not retract anything, for it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience." His speech and posture impressed many, including the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, soon to become King Christian III of Denmark. In 1536 the king would bring Luther to Denmark and establish the Lutheran church as the official state church. Three centuries later, Kierkegaard was born, a son of Lutheranism and one of his greatest critics.

Kierkegaard explicitly referred to Luther more than a hundred times in his published books, without considering his journals (Kim and Rasmussen 2009, 184). Luther and Kierkegaard had some similarities. While Luther dealt with the Catholic Church whose clergy was immersed in immorality and abuse of power,[24] Kierkegaard ironically dealt with the Lutheran church, deviated from the true Gospel because of its marriage with the Danish state (Kiecker 2016, 88–89; Kim and Rasmussen 2009, 174). While Luther presented the doctrine of justification by faith to combat a theology that served itself and created obstacles to salvation, Kierkegaard claimed that Christianity no longer existed, because no one understood what faith was. Luther at the Diet of Worms gave his conscience greater authority than that of the Catholic Church; Kierkegaard emphasized that each person's conscience has greater authority than the Lutheran state church.

[24] For a more in-depth study of the church's decay in the centuries before the Protestant Reformation and the complex elements that permeated Luther's time, see Kiecker (2016).

Kierkegaard criticized the role Luther played in theology (Ferreira 2001, 11). Kierkegaard claimed, three centuries later, that Luther's emphasis on faith in contrast to works generated a society of antinomianists[25] (Kierkegaard 2012, 162). He emphasized that Luther was right to preach justification by faith but failed to preach Christ as the supreme prototype of the works that Christians need to imitate because this "is the very thing that teaches human beings to take refuge in grace"(162). Kierkegaard concluded that in the dialectic between Christ as a gift and Christ as the prototype, Luther accentuated Christ as a gift but failed to stress him as the model. Kierkegaard emphasized Christ as the pattern precisely because his Lutheran readers knew Jesus only as the redeemer (Evans 2019, 114). Christ as the prototype does not deny Christ as a gift but takes on the critical task of appropriating, concretizing, and embodying Jesus in the process of becoming an authentic Christian (Kierkegaard 2012, 162; 2011b, 307–308; Kim and Rasmussen 2009, 181–184; Ferreira 2001, 11).

Luther was correct, admits Kierkegaard (2012, 162), but his followers did not understand him correctly. Consequently, with the advent of Protestantism, people stopped striving, fighting the struggle of faith, as they were only interested in the gospel of grace, not of suffering (Evans 2019, 112–114; Kim and Rasmussen 2009, 194). Thus, when Luther wrote that all who were assured of their salvation because of a letter of indulgence would be condemned (Luther. Ind. 32), he did not realize that his doctrine of justification by faith would eventually become another indulgence letter used by people. Thus, the concept of a saving faith gradually became a conceptual one, which merely recognized Christianity's truths without embodying them.

Kierkegaard's criticisms of Luther's example were not focused on what he taught but on what he failed to teach or emphasize. It was a political criticism of Luther for the consequent commitment of the church to the state. The reformed church that emerged mainly in northern Europe should have continued to reform itself; however, it started to validate the choices of the sovereigns of the individual countries. In practice, Protestantism exchanged a pope for several others.

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[25] Antinomianism is the idea that Christians are free from the law and observe any moral law, where the Christian can sin with impunity because of grace (Cross and Livingstone 2005, 78; Cairns 2002, 31). In his journal, Kierkegaard (2011b, 307) wrote, "the Lutheran emphasis on faith has now become a fig leaf for a highly unchristian evasion (of the truth)".

The proof of the ineffectiveness of the church as the soul of protestant nations was the European colonialism that for centuries explored Africa, Asia, and the Americas, born precisely in the period of Reformation. Protestant nations must not deny the real oppression perpetrated on their colonies, even with Protestant Reformation principles as their own core. Protestant kings and queens who sanctioned inhumane acts perpetrated by their military and explorers, evidence that the marriage between church and state was a total disaster. The state's mercantile interest accommodated the state church's theology, which validated slavery and violence, a position only questioned by movements that later broke away from the state churches. Today, the church is paying the price for this disaster with the gospel's rejection in many former colonies that suffered from Christian imperialism.

Even amid criticism, Luther was very much admired in the writings of Kierkegaard, who stated that "after the New Testament, Luther is the truest figure" (Kierkegaard 2017, 222). Therefore, Kierkegaard's criticism should be understood as directed at Lutheranism, more than at Luther himself. Kierkegaard admired Luther for having "restored faith to its rights", and whose personal faith was expressed in works (Kierkegaard 1990, 16; Evans 2019, 163).

3.4.1 *Martin Luther's Anthropology*

Luther was not a systematic theologian and left no formalized anthropological system; however, he addressed the subject in many of his writings (Raunio 2010, 27). Even though Luther criticized philosophy several times (e.g., Luther. Schol. 41–50; Luther. Heid. 28; Luther. Bab.), especially Aristotelian, at the same time, he used it when he needed it (Raunio 2010, 31). For Luther, philosophy could not understand God's reality since revelation can only be seized by faith (Raunio 2010, 30; Hagglund 1981, 182). For Luther, philosophy should be a tool of theology, not the opposite, risking being corrupted by selfish love that drives human wisdom (Kopperi 2010, 171; Hagglund 1981, 185). Reason for Luther was wholly captive to sin, always turning to idolatry, as the mind always draws false conclusions (Pannenberg 2009a, 162). However, over time it became challenging to reconcile Luther's position with Paul's statements regarding God's knowledge available to man (Rom 1:18–25; Pannenberg 2009a, 164). These and other texts of Scripture (Psa 19:1–3; Rom 2:14–15), indeed

point to the opposite of what Luther wrote, declaring that there is a general revelation, albeit limited, but present in nature and grasped by reason.

Luther affirmed that man is a creature of God, constituted of body and soul, made after God's image, initially without sin, created to procreate and dominate over all things, destined not to die (Luther. Hom. 21). However, after sinning, humanity was subjected to the devil, sin, and death, becoming unable to resist Satan's strength (22). Luther opened this *Disputatio* about man with Aristotle's claim that man was a rational animal (1). He used this statement because it was the joint declaration used by scholastics who used Aristotle as the foundation, like Thomas Aquinas.[26].

Luther fiercely opposed the ethical concept behind the Aristotelian teaching that man could reach happiness by developing virtues (Luther 2006, 128; McGrath 2015, 95). Because many scholastics taught that justice was an achievement reached by merit (McGrath 2015, 95), Luther's objections to works need to be understood not only with the scholastics in view, but Aristotle's ethics, as that was the background. However, while on the one hand the scholastics overemphasized the ethical and the rational, I claim that Kierkegaard later placed the ethical in its proper place.

Kierkegaard captured the distinction between the ethical and the religious when talking about the stages of the self, putting the ethical as essential to bring consciousness of sin (Farago 2011, 124–125; Rae 2010, 86; Kierkegaard 2004, 561). The search for happiness in Aristotelianism is indeed not capable of leading man to salvation; however, Aristotle never addressed happiness in terms of eternal salvation, because he did not have the Judeo-Christian revelation. Kierkegaard's depiction of the ethical stage argues that a person seeking happiness through the cultivation of virtues finds himself incapable of overcoming his subjective incoherence, sin, slowly reaching the self-conscience of despair (Oliveira 2016, 78; Farago 2011, 125–126; Glenn 2007, 11–13). The culmination of the ethical stage for Kierkegaard is the conscience of despair. Therefore, ethics is not the answer for eternal happiness, but is the path that leads to self-awareness as a sinner. Self-awareness as a sinner is necessary to repent

[26] The idea that Aquinas taught that human merits could achieve salvation is a superficial and wrong reading of his theology. Aquinas taught that Adam before the fall could love God naturally, without special grace, but now, because of the corruption of sin, it is impossible for humanity to love God without the help of divine grace (Thom. Sum. 2.109.3; Houck 2020, 88).

and believe, which only occurs through revelation and faith. After all, the apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 3:24 that the law was our “guardian” (NIV), “schoolmaster” (LEB), “tutor” (NKJV), leading to Christ.

Therefore, ethics has its place in the process of self-conscience as a sinner. In the face of ethics, the “schoolmaster” of the law teaches justice, right and wrong, where sin becomes evident. Without the law, there is no conscience of sin, and without sin, there is no need for faith. Furthermore, the religious stage does not nullify the ethical, but accomplishes it by faith.

Luther’s anthropology was quite soteriological, emphasizing God’s sovereignty and annihilating man's free will. This theme is central not only to his anthropology but to his entire theology. Luther emphasized that man’s will is totally enslaved by sin (Luther. Hom. 25–30). As early as 1517, in his dispute over scholastic theology, he made it clear that man “can only desire what is evil” (Luther. Schol. 4), because his will is captive to sin (5), innately conditioned to evil (9), unable to love God (16), only producing acts contrary to him (21–22). Luther spoke of this theme in several of his writings and devoted two entire books to it: “A Treatise on Christian Liberty” (1520) and “On The bondage of the will” (1525). In his treatise on man (*Disputatio de homine*), Luther’s anthropology was quite soteriological, emphasizing God’s sovereignty and annihilating man’s free will. This theme is central not only to his anthropology but to his entire theology. Luther emphasized that man’s will is totally enslaved by sin (Luther. Hom. 25–30). As early as 1517, in his dispute over scholastic theology, he made it clear that man “can only desire what is evil” (Luther. Schol. 4), because his will is captive to sin (5), innately conditioned to evil (9), unable to love God (16), only producing acts contrary to him (21–22).

Luther created a dichotomy between the realm of man and the spiritual realm in his dialogue with Erasmus about free will. For him, there were two kingdoms, one of man, where there is free will, and the other being the spiritual kingdom, where man is subject to God, without free will (Luther. Bond. 51; Hagglund 1981, 197). The fact that Luther was suspicious about reason and free will, ended up creating a fatalistic perspective regarding reason and freedom, as Craig and Moreland (2005, 630) argue. This dichotomy restricted reason to the kingdom of man and faith to the kingdom of God, which may have been an influence on William Occam’s thoughts on Luther (Frame 2015, 159; Hagglund 1981, 169, 180). Occam affirmed epistemological

empiricism, which restricted reason to the philosophical and scientific realm and faith and revelation to the theological realm. Luther's suspicion produced an excessive mistrust of reason, producing an almost irreconcilable relation between reason and faith, secular and sacred, science and theology, objectivity, and subjectivity.

Although Luther, in his *Magnificat*, addressed the man as a trichotomist (Raunio 2010, 42–43), he seemed to abandon this perspective assuming the Aristotelian hylomorphism. He understood man as constituted of a body and a soul as its form (Luther. Hom. 35; Raunio 2010, 29). Luther ridiculed the "metaphysical theologians" for separating the body from the soul as if everything were not the same (Luther 2006, 214). He tended to see the human being wholistically, calling the man "a mere matter of God" (Luther. Hom. 35), and the Christian as the one who receives its form from God, something that is only realized in the future (36–38).

Image and likeness for Luther meant the same, which involves living a divine, immortal life, without fear or danger, totally satisfied in God, a condition only for after death (Raunio 2010, 35–36). For Luther, Adam was God's image in the beginning but lost it with the fall (Garrett 2014, 459). Luther (1904, 114) rejected Augustine's concept that the image was a trinity of memory, mind and will, because the idea raised the error that humanity has free will.

For Luther (1904, 124), only Adam was made after God's image, not Eve. In his commentary on Genesis 1:27, he wrote that Eve was made after Adam's image with a weaker man's mind (27). He stated that men's glory is like the sun, and women's is like the moon, inferior to men. His exegesis on this point is weak, for Genesis 1:27 says that both man and woman were made according to God's image. Besides, Luther (1904, 115) seems to contradict himself, writing that "we can never fully attain to the knowledge of what it was," God's image, but at the same time affirmed that woman was not God's image. How can he know that woman was not God's image if "we can never fully attain" what it is? Besides, while he rejects Augustine's idea that God's image involved reason (Luther 1904, 114), he affirmed women's inferiority based on a supposedly weaker mind (124). By making this comparison in terms of a weaker mind, Luther ended up equating the image of God as man's mind, admitting that the image is not entirely lost. In theory, Luther claimed that man lost the image of God, but in practice, he still identified elements of this image in the fallen man. In theory, he

rejected that God's image is the reason, but in practice, he judged God's image in women in terms of reason.

Luther (1904, 108) also claimed that if Adam had remained faithful for some time and not sinned, he would have been moved from animal life to a spiritual one, where he would no longer need to eat, drink, or procreate. Therefore, he concluded, "we can believe and with all assurance look for a spiritual life after this present life." Luther's comment on Adam's change to a spiritual state, and his declaration that one must look only for future paradise, strongly resembles the Platonic world of ideas, an idealistic reality. The here and now, the temporal world, even before the fall, looks flawed and imperfect in Luther's view, as a shadow of the perfect spiritual realm. Once again, Luther dichotomized reality. For the Christian, Luther (2017, 139) says, should begin "to leave this life in the body and cling to the future life so that it is a true and corporeal transition from this world to the Father." In other words, a theology concerned with how to die but not on how to live. I believe that the Lutheran idealism was imprinted on the Protestant mentality, which seems to look towards the future paradise, the ideal tomorrow in heaven, disconnecting the Christian from today's physical and temporal reality. I believe that Luther's idealism generated a theology very distant from the reality of the people, producing a less empathic and more individualized society. He may have paved the way for secularism in Kant and Hegel's thoughts, providing the seeds of suspicion to the so-called masters of suspicion, Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx.

3.4.2 *Martin Luther's Concept of Sin*

For Luther, the root of sin is disbelief, the denial of faith (Luther 1976, xv; Brakemeier 2002, 65). For him, Adam's sin passed to all humanity, following Augustine's original sin doctrine (Luther 2006, 140; Raunio 2010, 39). Before someone does anything, he is already a partaker of Adam's original sin and guilt, corrupted by evil (Jenson 2006, 54; Hagglund 1981, 195). For Luther, baptism does not remove original sin or the works of sin, but only guilt, differing from Augustine and Scholastics (Luther 2006, 128; Pannenberg 2009b, 347). For him, the complete removal of sin is a promise that the believer must trust will happen after death.

Original sin causes man to be "curved in upon itself" (Luther 2006, 159). This curving upon itself is so profound that it corrupts even the gifts given by God to man

(159). Sin is, therefore, self-love in Luther's perspective, who at this point distances his thinking from Augustine, because the Church Father sustained that some self-love was not sinful, but natural, part of human desire for happiness (Jenson 2006, 15; Cavadini 1999, 680). With this perspective, Luther equated the Adamic man with sin; after all, nothing in the Adamic man is without sin for him. If everything in the fallen man is sin, as Luther affirmed, consequently, the fallen man becomes sin itself, for there is nothing in fallen man that is different from sin. This was the logical conclusion that the Lutheran theologian Matthew Flacius (AD 1520 to 1575) achieved, stating that man's substance became the original sin (Kiecker 2016, 154). By radicalizing the power of sin in humans, Luther ended up demonizing human nature. Luther's emphasis that man should self-hate eventually generated a repressive evangelicalism that paved the way for Nietzsche and Freud in the Church.

Luther distanced himself from Augustine in this matter, as he claimed the need for Adamic amputation, the self-annihilation, while Augustine affirmed the self's healing (Aug. City. 11.2; Jenson 2006, 56). For Augustine, the healing comes by subtracting the evil nature within man through faith (Aug. City. 14.11.1), but for Luther, nothing in man was good, for everything was corrupted and needed to be hated (Lutero 2017, 38, 80). Thus, Luther's perspective is fatalist, transforming the human being, as Jenson (2006, 56) stated, "into something other than God's good creature". Jenson also warned that Luther's perspective leads to a soteriology that involves a new creation *ex nihilo* where God does not heal the creation but wipes out everything and starts over. This negative stance towards man's nature and creation is a disembodied spirituality, which forged Protestantism to become indifferent to the body's needs and, consequently, towards the whole creation.

Unlike Augustine, who understood justification as inwardly, Luther defended an external justification (Luther 1976, 83; McGrath 2015, 157), inverting the concept of interiority in the Gospels and the Church Fathers. Jesus accused the Pharisees of being beautiful outwardly but full of death inwardly (Matt 23:27–28); of cleaning the glass and plate on the outside while the insides were evil (Luke 11:39). Luther, however, claimed that believers inwardly are sinners, but outwardly are justified, and the hypocrites are righteous on the inside but sinners on the outside (Luther 1976, 83).

Besides, in Luther's view, sin was man's juridical state of unrighteousness, who in nakedness lacks the garments of justice once given by God outwardly to Adam

(Luther 1976, 83). Luther emphasized sin as a mere juridical state, neglecting it as a break in the relationship between God and man. Assuming sin strictly in juridical terms, I argue, Luther turned salvation as merely synonymous with justification by faith, and sin was reduced to guilt. However, sin is more than a legal debt, but also the broken relationship with God which affects the whole self. What happened over time is that the proper doctrine of justification by faith took the place of Christ. Instead of believing in Jesus, who restores the broken relationship with God, theology emphasized faith in the doctrine of justification by faith. Consequently, Luther conditioned later theology to a monochromatic lens, conceiving sin strictly in terms of guilt.

3.4.3 *Martin Luther's Concept of Subjectivity*

For Luther, the Christian has two natures, one animal and the other spiritual, experiencing an inner battle between them (Luther 2017, 79, 80,138; Raunio 2010, 47). While the unbeliever lives curved upon himself, egoistically engaged, the Christian needs to learn to live outwardly, living in Christ by faith (Raunio 2010, 47–48). For Luther, salvation does not change the human essence but moves to a new status with God. Ontologically, the fallen man and the Christian are the same for him.

Luther used the concept of *communio idiomatum*, borrowed from Christology, whose idea refers to the communication between Jesus's divine and human natures, assuming that what is valid for one of the natures should be valid for the whole person (Luther 2006, 204, 205; Hodge 2010, 786). Luther claimed that in the case of man, he has two natures only when saved; however, this union between the two is not perfect as it was with Jesus. While the fleshly man is inclined towards evil, the spiritual is towards God, although still facing inward struggle with the flesh (Luther 2006, 56–57).

One might argue that Kierkegaard was also influenced by Luther when he developed his concept of despair. After all, Luther wrote that man needs to "despair of himself to be prepared to receive the grace of Christ" (Luther. Heid. 18). For just as Luther's despair prepared him for faith (Luther 2017, 62; Pannenberg 2009a, 103), so Kierkegaard's concept of conscience of despair does the same. For Luther and Kierkegaard, faith is the only way to reach peace (Luther 2017, 131; Kierkegaard 2010, 56, 108). Luther wrote that sin "disturbs the conscience", and faith must be used to face "the dread of death and judgment" (Luther 2017, 134).

Therefore, Luther's despair in his self-awareness of sinner and his inability to save himself would never happen if the law preached by medieval theology had not reached him. Luther's conscience was troubled by the law, both the biblical and the moral present in his conscience. Therefore, through the rediscovery of the Pauline teaching about justification by faith, he surrendered to Christ by faith. Luther's recovery of the teaching regarding justification by faith was the greatest gift he gave to us, which would never happen without his self-conscience as a sinner and his experience of despair.

Luther also developed the concept of conscience. Several theologians worked the term before him, such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (Aug.City.1.19; Thom. Sum. 1.79.13; 2.19.5; Svensson 2013). However, Luther made history with his famous response in the Diet of Worms, stating that he could not renounce his writings because it is not good to "go against conscience" (Schuetze 2015, 40; Kim and Rasmussen 2009, 173). In his writings, Luther used the term "conscience" in different ways, but the most common meaning understood it as a divine evaluation of the entire person and his actions (Raunio 2010, 56). By confronting the Catholic Church's authority at the Diet of Worms, Luther placed himself above the Roman Catholic Church, and his conscience as a judge for his decisions. He made himself superior since his conscience did not accept the wrong decision required of him. His action was analogous to Socrates in his judgment, who appealed to the authority of his inner *daimonion (*Kierkegaard 2015, 131; Plato. Apol. 31c–d, 40a–c, 41c–d). Like Socrates, Luther brought judgment to his subjectivity, making his conscience the highest authority.

Calvin and Zwingli followed this idea about conscience, influencing others (Harries 2017, 253). Even King Henry VIII, when he justified his separation from the church of Rome, declared it was a "matter of conscience", probably quoting Luther. Although this was possibly not Luther's objective; however, the concept of conscience got different importance after the Diet of Worms. Luther's conscience emancipated the individual from prevailing institutional power, establishing the roots for modern individuality.

3.5 Karl Barth (AD 1886—1968)

Karl Barth was a Swiss theologian who served as a professor of theology in Göttingen (1921 to 1925), Münster (1925 to 1930), Bonn (1930 to 1935), and Basel (1935 to 1968; Frame 2015, 364—365; Barrett 2016, 3; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 163). Barth studied in Berlin, Tübingen and Marburg, where he learned from Wilhelm Herrmann (1846 to 1922) and Adolf Von Harnack (1851 to 1930; Barrett 2016, 1; Frame 2015, 364). Barth was influenced by the liberal theology that was dominant in his time, assimilating some of its teachings (Galli 2017, 19; Webster 2000, 2–3).

After studying theology, Barth began to minister in Geneva in 1909. In 1911 he started pastoring at Safenwil, Switzerland, for ten years (Guretzki 2016, 19; Webster 2000, 3; Geisler 1999, 69). During this period, the First World War occurred, raising a series of questions in his pastoral work. In that period, Barth studied Plato, Paul, and Kierkegaard (Guretzki 2016, 19). In Kierkegaard's Christian thought, he found an excellent ally to understand the demands of a world between wars where man seemed no longer to know his meaning (Barrett 2016, 7–8; Cairns 2008, 487). Barth, therefore, refused liberalism because it did not offer comfort to those suffering during the war, leading him to develop a theology called dialectical for dealing with opposing truths that should be accepted by faith (Galli 2017, 53; Frame 2015, 363–364; McGrath 2013, 193; 2005, 144; Galli and Olsen 2000, 47; Geisler 1999, 69). He wrote his influential "Commentary on Romans" during those years, breaking with liberal theology, searching for an orthodox reading of Scripture. Adam (1926, 276–277) described this publication as a "bombshell in the playground of the theologians" (Guretzki 2016, 103; Frame 2015, 364–366).

Barth is considered one of the leading theologians of the twentieth century, when he wrote his monumental work, *Church Dogmatics* (Garrett 2014, 12; McGrath 2005, 144). His theology has diverse interpretations because of its depth and the amount of writing (Barrett 2016, 1; Frame 2015, 366). On the one hand, a group of conservatives rejects Barth's theology, considering him liberal. On the other hand, some theologians claim that his liberal elements do not undermine his value (Galli 2017, 6–12). The most important points of controversy in his theology include his rejection regarding general revelation and natural theology, his concept of the Word of God, the claim that he was a universalist, and his excessive emphasis on God's

transcendence and lacking immanence (Garrett 2014, 55; Ferreira and Myatt 2007, 32; McGrath 2013, 199–200; 2005, 145; Geisler 2010, 301).

Barth appropriated some of Kierkegaard's concepts in his first writings but later distanced them from his thought, approaching Calvin's theology (Barrett 2016, 4, 7; Champlin 2013a, 449). Barth's understanding of God as the "wholly other", was probably borrowed from Kierkegaard, who wrote about the "infinite qualitative distinction" between God and humanity; also, his use of terms like "paradox", "the divine incognito", "the moment", "offense", "repetition" and "indirect communication" (Barrett 2016, 9; Martens 2015, 159; Bühler 2013, 317). The extent of Kierkegaard's influence on Barth is unknown, and as Bühler (2013) argues, Barth had an ambivalent reading on Kierkegaard.

Barth interpreted Kierkegaard as a relentless iconoclast who fought with all his strength for transcendency in opposition to the immanence of God, and not the Kierkegaard who emphasized subjectivity (Barrett 2015, 535). Barth's reading of Kierkegaard seemed tempered by his reading of Kant, and Barth was more Kantian than Kierkegaardian. Besides, there is evidence that Barth owned only a few of Kierkegaard's books and had not much knowledge about his whole thinking (Barrett 2016, 9–19; 2015, 535; Walsh 2009, 201).

For Kierkegaard, no one has a true understanding of oneself without having a proper concept of God; still, in the same way, no one can have a proper understanding of God without first having a good concept of oneself (Kierkegaard 2009f, 63; Walsh 2015, 295). This makes the individual need to turn inward and know the Lord personally as a transcendent subject supporting his existence, to whom he must relate in devotion and adoration. Thus, transcendence and immanence are paradoxically related in Kierkegaard's thought because the individual's existence is grounded in God, who is transcendent.

Therefore, the concept that God is the Wholly Other in Barth is not precisely the same as Kierkegaard. For Barth, God as the Wholly Other means the unreachable, beyond this world (Galli 2017, 43; Frame 2015, 379; Thiselton 2002, 33). Barth intended to move the anthropocentric focus given by liberal theology, placing it entirely on God. But doing this he banned general revelation (Barth 2004b, CD I.2,187, 398; Garrett 2014, 55; McGrath 2013, 256; Geisler 1999, 71). His theology emphasized God's transcendence so radically that Barth neglected his immanence.

Contrary to Barth, Kierkegaard believed in God's general revelation (Kierkegaard 2009e, 291; Evans 2019, 50). What Kierkegaard rejected was the attempt to prove the existence of God through objective data, as if God were not subjectively evident. Later in his life, Barth rejected Kierkegaard, accusing him of continuing Schleiermacher's liberal program (Bühler 2013; Walsh 2009, 201). He also accused Kierkegaard of teaching a "holy individualism", supposedly neglecting the role of the church, and social responsibility (Miller and Grenz 2011, 22). However, Barth's interpretation is inaccurate, probably because he did not have access to many of Kierkegaard's books that show the opposite.[27] Walsh (2009, 202) states that Barth identified faith as a rational knowledge of God, producing an objective theology of the same type that Kierkegaard contested. However, no one has probably applied Kierkegaard's philosophy better than Barth, generating one of the greatest masterpieces for theology in his *Christian Dogmatics*. The dissonance between the two thinkers was, I believe, partly because of the lack of other writings of Kierkegaard, but mainly because other philosophers also influenced Barth.

3.5.1 *Karl Barth's Anthropology*

As mentioned earlier, Barth's theology is framed by his Christology, and his anthropology is no different. Barth devoted an entire section to study the man Jesus as the real man's model (Guretzki 2016, 191; Jenson 2006, 135; Bromiley 2001, 124). Barth's anthropology was built on what it means to be human in Christ. For Barth, any construction of theological anthropology that does not start from this point of view is incorrect because speaking of Jesus addresses all other men (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,132; Jenson 2006, 136).

Like Kierkegaard, Barth's anthropology also deals with the human being in terms of multiple relationships: relationship with God (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,§44); with others (§45); with himself (§46); and with time (§47) (Bromiley 2001, 127). In the relationship with God, Jesus is the real man, the model that every human must become (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,132; Jenson 2006, 145–146). Barth conceptualizes sin as the

[27] Kierkegaard (2009i) developed a Theo-sociological approach in his book "Two Ages", which Tyson (2019) calls appropriately "doxological". The social role of the "other" is present throughout Kierkegaard's books.

absence of this relationship in acts of offense to God and injures the proper self. Sin is a danger to every man, for man ceases to be human, moving towards nonexistence.

Barth also emphasized that man was created in a relationship with others, exemplified in man and woman's relationship (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,203; Pannenberg 2009b, 328). As the authentic man, Jesus is the perfect prototype of a human being in service of all men, observing God's will serving others (Jenson 2006, 148; Bromiley 2001, 128). Barth defined God's image in terms of relationships with others. Barth refused to recognize God's image and likeness as capacities, like reason, or structure, like threefold (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,195; Hoekema 2018, 63). For Barth, humanity possesses God's image and likeness because it was created as male and female in confrontation. According to him (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,184), man was created in genuine confrontation with others and with God himself. The dialectical confrontation between man–woman, self–self, man–God, for him mirrors the divine relationship within the Trinity. According to Barth, God sought to create someone who, even though distinct, could become his faithful partner, "capable of action and responsibility in relation to Him" (184–185). Humanity, therefore, is a "repetition", a copy of the harmonious relationship existing within the Trinity (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,184–185; Garrett 2014, 461), as Jesus is both the perfect man and the perfect image of God (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,203).

Barth (2004e, CD III.1,195) contrasted his *analogia relationis* with the *analogia entis*, rejecting the latter. The primary defender of the *analogia entis* in his time was Erich Przywara (2014), who wrote an excellent book about the subject. In comparison, the *analogia entis* defined God's image in terms of analogies between God and man based on Patristic and Thomistic theology (Davie et al. 2016, 24–25). Barth's *analogia relationis* conceptualized relationship and confrontation. I agree with Barth that the relationship is part of God's image in man, also with his critique regarding the overvalue given by former theologians to reason as God's image (Hoekema 2018, 65). However, I disagree with his rejection of *analogia entis*, because a confrontational relationship between God and man or between man and woman is only possible if the man has some given potentiality to do so. The *analogia entis* needs to be true for the *analogia relationis* to be correct. Besides, there is evidence that Barth has misread the *analogia entis* (Betz 2014, 83–115), and I do not find his proposal to abandon it convincing.

For Barth, humanity did not lose God's image in the fall because there was no historical fall (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,200; Hoekema 2018, 64). In his "Commentary on Romans", Barth (2009, 265) stated that "Adam's position in history is entirely irrelevant". However, Barth spoke about a fall many times—it is difficult to understand his concept of fall. For Barth, the Genesis account was not historical because it occurred before history, and it is not a myth because it did occur, so he defined it as a saga (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,82–87). However, I claim, if the creation and fall narratives were only sagas, then the whole biblical account is unreliable because a saga contains mythical elements (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,87). Therefore, the Bible must be read with suspicion. Barth's distrust towards Genesis affects reading the whole Scripture, a seed of liberalism that remained in his thought. His theory contradicts the Bible because all Scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16).

Barth conceived the human as constituted of body and soul as man's self-relation, a psychosomatic unity (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,372; Guretzki 2016, 50; Bromiley 2001, 130–131). Man is one, but twofold, whose relationship between body and soul occurs as a "differentiation". The use of the word differentiation points to the same concept developed by Martin Heidegger (2018). One can see several elements of Heidegger's thought influencing Barth's theology (e.g., Webster 2004, 59; Oshima 1973). Barth defined the unity between body and soul in Heideggerian terms (differentiation), not in Kierkegaardian terms (synthesis), indicating his departure from Kierkegaard's thought and approach to Heidegger's. For Barth, soul and body exist as one; however, they are not the same (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,367). He rejected the Trichotomist theory, arguing that the spirit is not a third part (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,355), but God himself operating in the person (III.2:433; Bromiley 2001, 131).

In terms of man's relationship with time, Barth declared Jesus as the Lord of time, which as a man lived in temporality and was limited by it (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,437–440; Bromiley 2001, 134). According to him, it is good that man's existence is limited by time because otherwise, it would be harmful, bringing endless pain, the equivalent of hell on earth (Barth 2004f, CD III.2, 558, 562). Therefore, the time limit for existence must be used to fulfill God's purpose (566).

Barth criticized traditional positions regarding the origin of souls, such as creationism and traducianism (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,573–575). For him, the idea that humanity was in Adam and sinned with him is unacceptable because every person

arises from nonexistence and lives towards nonexistence, having no memory of anything before, he argued using Heideggerian terminology (574). For Barth, death is natural and a blessing for humanity, which was always part of nature (Barth 2004f, CD III.2,574, 761; Pannenberg 2009b, 390–391).

Regardless of Barth's liberal elements in his theology, his anthropology is rich in capturing elements of human existence previously untreated by theology. I believe that theology is immensely benefitted by his writings if read critically.

3.5.2 *Karl Barth's Concept of Sin*

Barth did not believe in a literal fall or hereditary sin, but only in a symbolic fall, understanding Adam as a symbol of humanity (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,501; Hoekema 2018, 130; Jenson 2006, 146–147; Webster 2004, 72–73). He affirmed that Adam's sin has no relation to today's sins (Barth 2009, 265, 272–273).

Barth stated that sin is alien in the world because it was not created by God and has no chance against his redemptive plan (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,139). For Barth (2009, 260), sin is so connected to human existence that it does not depend on Adam's fall, for being "inherent and the foundation" of every man. In other words, sin is always a possible reality for a man who was created free, leading man to be "necessarily and inevitably corrupt" (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,501). For Barth, the doctrine of original sin is nothing more than a "historical-psychological falsification" of Paul's preaching (Barth 2009, 265). With this declaration, Barth went beyond Kierkegaard's censure. Even though Kierkegaard criticized the Augustinian and Reformed doctrines as fantastic, he affirmed original sin in terms of objective and subjective anxiety, sustaining Adam's historical importance. Therefore, Barth denied the inheritance of sin, denied a historical fall, and claimed that sin is a natural tendency in every person because of freedom (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,501; Webster 2004, 73–74). With this, I argue that Barth is more Kantian than Kierkegaardian (Barth 2004g, CD III.3,14; Rae 2019, 133; Frame 2015, 265).

In his *Dogmatics*, Barth called "God and nothingness", his doctrine of sin, dealing with nothingness as evil (Barth 2004g, CD III.3, §50; Guretzki 2016, 81). Nothingness is "that which God does not will", therefore distinct from both the Creator and the creation (Barth 2004g, CD III.3, 302, 351). Describing evil as nothingness was possibly assimilated from Heidegger (2018, 2018a) and Sartre (2012), who he quotes

and shows familiarity with (Barth 2004g, CD III. 3, 334–335). He also followed the Augustinian definition that, as evil, sin is the absence of good, and therefore has no objective existence (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,139–140). The sin “can only say no, where God says yes” (139–140), as the denial of God. For Barth, sin’s existence always aims to destroy, deny, dissolve, depending on something positive to exist. For him, sin is the “self-contradiction”, where the individual lives for himself instead of living for God (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1, 500–501; Jenson 2006, 151). In essence, it is disbelief, highlights Barth, following Luther (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1, 414; Luther 1976, xv; Jenson 200, 157; Brakemeier 2002, 65). As inward disbelief, it denies the “yes” of God, concretized in three different expressions: pride, sloth, and falsehood (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1, 142–146).

As pride, man wants to be like God because, while Christ humbled himself, sin causes man to self-exalt (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1, 142; Jenson 2006, 158). Pride is the opposite of what was done by Jesus, who humbled himself. As for sloth, sin is the denial of fulfillment, an act of “culpable negligence”, where man refuses to meet God’s will because of laziness (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,143; 2004i, CD IV.2, 407, 450, 455, 458, 470; Jenson 2006, 173). Regarding falsehood, as God is truth, sin is the denial of truth, where reason is corrupted, and man lives in falsehood (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,144; Jenson 2006, 163). While sin as pride is the denial of divine self-humiliation in Christ, sin as sloth is the denial of man’s exaltation in Christ (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,145–146). The paradox of exaltation–humiliation finds its synthesis in falsehood: the refusal to recognize Jesus as the truth that reconciles us to God (Barth 2004j, CD 4.3.1, 434, 436; Jenson 2006, 164).

Barth’s perspective is creative and very useful. Besides, his definition of sin as pride and sloth seems to be related to Kierkegaard’s (2010) approach about conscious despair of weakness (sloth) and despair of challenge (pride). Besides, Barth’s concept of falsehood resembles Kierkegaard’s definition of untruth. However, Barth’s approach is limited by not considering other aspects of sin. For example, he did not approach what sin is in terms of Kierkegaard’s concept of unconscious despair, man’s relationship to time, or in psychological terms, man’s relationship with himself as anxiety and anguish.

3.5.3 *Karl Barth's Concept of Subjectivity*

Barth's theological approach is exceptionally subjective, as demonstrated, for treating the human in terms of relationship with himself, with God and others, and for defining sin as pride, sloth, and falsehood. However, Barth's anthropology's most crucial element in terms of subjectivity is his teaching that man is "the neediest of all creation" (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,143; Dorman 2018, 196–197). The human being needs everything previously created to live; consequently, the proper human self is thirsty (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,177; Dorman 2018, 197), because it needs God, other humans, and a purpose in life. These needs drive the individual and are only satisfied by God.

3.6 Wolfhart Pannenberg (AD 1928 to 2014)

Pannenberg was a German Lutheran theologian who was a student of Karl Barth in Basel (Davie et al. 2016, 647; Pedraja 2006, 270; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1222). While doing his doctorate in Heidelberg, he acquired a great interest in Hegel, starting to develop a systematic and historical theology, which led him to write in company with other theologians the book "Revelation as History" (Davie et al. 2016, 648; Schwöbel 2005, 129). He became a professor of theology in Munich at the Protestant Faculty of Theology, where he taught until retiring.

Pannenberg was also a student of Karl Jaspers and Gerhard von Rad, inheriting an interest in a more philosophical approach to the Bible (Thompson 2016, 242–243). Pannenberg criticized the theological method that saw divine revelation strictly in Scripture, denying its presence in nature and history (Davie et al. 2016, 648; Miller and Grenz 2011, 147; Schwöbel 2005, 130). He claimed that the approach produces a dualism of faith and reason, isolating the Church from the emerging subjects of a secular world. Consequently, he moved away from Barth, placing greater emphasis on God's immanence than transcendence, defending God's revelation in history (McGrath 2013, 195; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1222).

As Kierkegaard emphasized subjectivity rather than objectivity, and Pannenberg was primarily interested in the objectivity of faith as rational, he viewed the Danish philosopher with suspicion (Thompson 2016, 241). Pannenberg's thought was indeed more aligned to Hegel than to Kierkegaard. For the German theologian,

the complete truth is in the future, not in the past, as history develops in a type of evolutionary revelation (245). Pannenberg assumed a rationalistic perspective, conceiving revelation in terms of God's acts and events, as divine indirect communication in history, where through reason, man grasps God's existence (Frame 2015, 432; Cairns 2008, 491; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1222; Thiselton 2002, 127, 222).

Pannenberg's theology is called "from below", underlining God's immanent aspect in contrast to Barth's and Brunner's theology, which are "from above", transcendent (Garrett 2014, 610; Schwöbel 2005, 131; Macleod 2000, 20). Unfortunately, I believe that Pannenberg's emphasis on immanence was at the cost of transcendency, for he treated Jesus's virgin birth as legendary, considering it irreconcilable with the incarnation, claiming that the man's union with God took place only at the resurrection (Frame 2015, 433; Garrett 2014, 621, 681; Macleod 2000, 21). Thus, as Pannenberg intended to answer atheist criticism, he ended up not only producing a theology "from below" but fell into the mistake warned of by Kierkegaard in removing the offense of Christianity, turning it into something else (Schwöbel 2005, 143; Grenz 1990, 80; Kierkegaard 2013, 34, 35; 2016, 300). Thus, in a way, he is Barth's antithesis, emphasizing immanence over transcendence yet retaining elements of Barth's remnant liberalism. I judge his theological work to be extremely valuable for its highest erudition and precious insights, but it needs to be read with caution because of this residual liberalism.

3.6.1 *Pannenberg's Anthropology*

Pannenberg wrote extensively on theological anthropology, and this section cannot do justice to the depth of his writings (e.g., Pannenberg 2004; 2009a; 2009b; 2009c). He argued about a dynamic concept towards God's image in man, closer to Irenaeus's theology. For him, God's image cannot be found at the beginning of the world, but in the end, in the eschatological man (Echeverría 2013, 748; Pannenberg 2009b, 316–317). For him, man's nature is unfinished, as it is in a process, needing to be clothed with Christ to become God's image (Echeverría 2013, 749). He rejected the distinction that Irenaeus made between image and likeness (Pannenberg 2009b, 304–305); however, he agreed that the human is in a process with destiny being God's

proto-image, Jesus Christ (313). Pannenberg's approach seems to resemble Irenaeus's and Kierkegaard's concepts in this aspect.

For Pannenberg, body and soul are intrinsically united and inseparable, for the soul does not function without a bodily expression (Pannenberg 2009b, 266–267; Goldingay 2006, 552). For him, the soul is embodied and should not be conceived as incorporeal. The German theologian criticized the teachings of Church Fathers, like Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Origen, regarding the body–soul relationship, stating that although they have corrected some aspects of Platonism, they were significantly influenced by it, distancing from biblical anthropology (Pannenberg 2009b, 267–269). Pannenberg argued that they considered the soul and body different substances, stating that the Scriptures do not support this idea (269).

Moreover, he criticized the Aristotelian and Aquinas's hylomorphism, stating that it shifts the importance from man's integrality, emphasizing the soul (Pannenberg 2009b, 270; Grenz 1990, 91). What sustains man is not the soul, but his breath, the spirit, he declared. However, the spirit is not part of man but is God himself working on creatures from the outside (Pannenberg 2009b, 272). Thus, Pannenberg's approach is Panentheistic, following the Hegelian idea that the spirit is the world, creation, developing through history, where everything is in God (Ochoa 2017; Grenz 1990, 210–211).

Although Pannenberg criticized the Hellenization of patristic theology, he rationalized the human being and theology itself. He argued that God has been conceived in anthropomorphic terms by theology and that it is necessary to disentangle the idea that God has a will (Pannenberg 2009a, 506–517). This is a dangerous view that leads to the idea of God as an impersonal being. Pannenberg based his thought on Spinoza, Hume, Fichte, and Hegel's arguments, evidencing how their epistemological thought influenced him. He agreed with them, claiming that the OT lacks the concept of God's will (515). What explains God, for Pannenberg, is Faraday's concept of the force field, an impersonal force (517) (Grenz 1990, 85, 235). His analogy between the Spirit and a force field raises more questions than answers. God's impersonality is a concept closer to pantheism than to the Biblical revelation. Pannenberg's theological approach is incomparably innovative; however, he tried to explain the inexplicable, treating the transcendent as immanent and reducing faith to the rational.

3.6.2 *Pannenberg's Concept of Sin*

Pannenberg raised the importance of man's consciousness, where man sees himself always bodily, for "the soul and conscience are deeply rooted in the corporeality of man" (Pannenberg 2009b, 265–266). For him, the self is constructed through its personal bodily history and its relation with other people. Some of his anthropological assumptions come from Freud and Nietzsche (Pannenberg 2008, 134–136).

The German theologian agrees with Nietzsche's accusation that the doctrine of sin in Christianity generated a "bad conscience" (Pannenberg 2008, 134), responsible for repressing human instincts, redirecting inwardly the pressures that should be expressed outwardly. He based his concept of sin on the criticisms made by philosophical thought, eventually denying the doctrine of original sin and its hereditary transmission (Pannenberg 2009b, 378–380; Peters 2014, 378; Buckley 1995, 367). He followed Barth in understanding that the fall was not a historical event; and followed Nietzsche and Freud, arguing that aggressivity, when repressed, leads to internalization, driving self-aggression. According to Pannenberg (2008, 137), Augustine's doctrine was marked by the stigmatization of sexuality, repressing the body, producing a self-hatred that is also sin. This understanding of self-aggression as sin is an excellent contribution to theology, where sin is not conceived as self-love but exaggerated (*superbia*) self-love. His approach helps to correct the established theological neglect of the body.

Pannenberg (2009b, 336) argues that "especially in the piety of the awakening", the subject of sin became problematic by assuming coercive traits. According to him, the revivalist emphasis led people to a "story of suffering under spiritual oppression" and "inauthentic feelings of guilt" (336). As a result of the growing psychic oppression caused by the revivals, many people moved away from Christianity, searching for freedom of self-aggressivity. One of them was the son of pastor Friedrich Nietzsche, he claims (Pannenberg 2009, 336; Grenz 1990, 96, 239).

Pannenberg (2009b, 340) affirms that the concept of sin decayed, and theology failed to demonstrate the universality of sin based on heredity. He claimed that sin's theological teaching fell on a moralist and "biophobic" expression, always relating sin

with sexual impulses. For him, this projected a repressive and neurotic character on Christianity.

As evil's responsibility has been projected to something outside man, either another person or social structures exerting anonymous pressure, Pannenberg (2009, 343) argued that the Christian teaching is different from others in defining the root of evil within man. He argued that the decline of the doctrine of hereditary sin led to a weakening of conviction about sin's universality. As a result, people became moralists, searching for evil in others and self-harming by generating guilt (345).

Even though I agree with Pannenberg's criticism regarding the growing moralism and the "biophobic" character Christianity has assumed, I am afraid he confused the biblical concept of guilt with that of Freud. While the Bible reveals guilt as a legal state in front of God's law, Freud defined it as an inward tension between man's ego and superego (Freud 1990, 582, 590). In the Bible, guilt is both immanent and transcendent, declared by God's law and experienced by the human being. For Freud, it is entirely immanent, as a tension disturbing the body's homeostasis. Therefore, Freud reduced guilt to the subjective, ignoring its objectivity. However, Pannenberg's warning is valid because he identifies that the church's preaching, which brought great awareness of sin, did not lead people to freedom from their subjective guilt, their inward self-aggression. Two dangers are evident here: reducing guilt to its legal objectivity, generating a neurotic Christianity, or reducing it to the subjective, ignoring that the foundation of guilt is not the self but the divine law that is transcendent. I will return to this subject later.

Moreover, according to Pannenberg (2009b, 346), the OT's association of sin with the human heart was a fundamental step towards the biblical understanding that sin is an anthropological condition. For him, the summary of all the prohibitions is, "you shall not covet" (Exod 20:17, NIV), referred to by the apostle Paul (Rom 7:7) as the evil desire, instigated in man by the knowledge of the law (Pannenberg 2009b, 347; 2004, 87). For Pannenberg, the law reveals latent sin as part of human nature, declaring that for the apostle Paul, evil desire was not a consequence of sin, as many Church Fathers believed, but sin itself.

Pannenberg declared the significance of Kant's "Radical Evil", where man has the natural ability to voluntarily deny his own moral law (Pannenberg 2009b, 355; 2004, 86; Hocknull 2016, 91). Kant's "Radical Evil" points to a distortion in man's

nature. According to Pannenberg, it does not depend on the doctrine of hereditary sin for an explanation since it is part of humanity (Grenz 1990, 104). Pannenberg equated Kant's teaching with Augustine's theory of evil (Pannenberg 2009b, 355). However, I argue that this association is a mistake, for Augustine did not attribute evil to the original condition of humanity. The problem in Kant's concept is that it implies that free will is in itself evil, naturally conditioned to wickedness (Frame 2015, 265; Hocknull 2016, 92). This is problematic because it makes evil a necessary reality, with the ultimate responsibility falling on God.

Pannenberg also misread Kierkegaard's concept of despair as man's state of existential imbalance (Pannenberg 2009b, 360–361; 2004, 102; Grenz 1990, 95). Kierkegaard (2010) argued that this imbalance resulted from the lack of the God-relation, where the self finds balance only when relating to God through Christ. However, Pannenberg (2009b, 373) understood it as a state of original imbalance, where man's will is originally entangled by evil. While for Kierkegaard (2013; 2016), human subjectivity could not be reduced to reason, refuting Hegel's rational dialectic, Pannenberg reaffirmed Hegel's concept that paradoxes are mediated through rational reflection, reducing the human subjectivity to rationality (Thompson 2016, 254).

According to Pannenberg (2009b, 354), the apostle Paul spoke of Adam's sin in a "mythical" sense (Rom 7:7), and the apostle was supposedly claiming that both sin and desire are sinful. For him, concupiscence is raised by knowing God's law because the conscience of law produces the conscience of sin and the attraction to it (379). Consequently, Pannenberg's thought leads to the idea that every temptation is already sin, which is a significant theological mistake. Kierkegaard (2011, 45–46) demonstrated the character behind anxiety as temptation, as the middle term between innocence and guilt, which Pannenberg ignored. If Pannenberg's argument is correct, it also places Jesus as a sinner because he was also tempted, contradicting Scripture (Heb 4:15). This was how Pannenberg applied Kant's "radical evil" to his hermeneutics.

Kierkegaard assumed some truth from Kant's "radical evil" without abandoning the hereditary sin (Kierkegaard 2011, 62–69; Barret 1985, 35–37). For Pannenberg, human freedom was evil in itself, while for Kierkegaard, evil lies in the disconnection between God and man. Pannenberg's anthropology of sin considers sin a necessary

condition of human nature. As Pannenberg reduced man to the rational, following Hegel, he made the same mistakes Hegel did, denounced by Kierkegaard.

Pannenberg's main contribution to the anthropology of sin was his approach to Nietzsche and Freud's arguments. He demonstrated that sin is also self-aggression (Pannenberg 2008, 134–137; Grenz 1990, 96). He agreed with the Augustinian idea that pride is the root of all sins but added that it manifests in self-aggression, anguish, anxiety, fear, and self-hatred (Pannenberg 2009b, 361–362; Hocknull 2016, 90). According to Pannenberg, pride does not refer to self-love, or self-centrality, as this is part of man's nature, but rather in exaggerating this focus, *superbia.* He asserted that self-aggression is also an expression of pride because it uses any means for the self, even if it is aggression against the other or himself.

3.7 Final Considerations

This chapter demonstrated how sin and subjectivity was addressed throughout Christian history by different theologians. In the writings of the apostolic father Ignatius of Antioch, he treated the human being in terms of interiority and exteriority. However, by studying the development of the subject through history, a movement away from this thought can be perceived. First, a departure from the apostolic anthropology and an approach to the Greek. From Justin Martyr, through Irenaeus, Tertullian, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, the Hellenization of theology was a growing process. Man became dichotomized and trichotomized, and the soul was reduced to reason as the rationale was treated as the superior aspect. Second, came a movement away from the Hellenized theology. Luther rebuked scholasticism for using Greek philosophy as a theological lens, proposing a return to the biblical revelation, restricting theology to a different sphere from the philosophical. Barth and Pannenberg also rejected the Hellenized theology, but approached the German idealist thought, bringing liberal elements to their theology.

In the first movement, a gradual change happened with the understanding of faith. The apostolic fathers had an incarnational approach to faith, like Ignatius of Antioch, who longed to be a martyr to evidence his inward faith. However, the concept of faith gradually changed to a rationalized one, pictured as acknowledging Christian truths. Fundamental to this development was the misunderstanding between the Johannine *logos* and the Greek philosophical *logos*, slowly Hellenizing theology.

Justin Martyr introduced his doctrine of *logos spermatikos*, assuming that God as reason is present in every person to some degree. By making this association, he treated the rational soul as man's highest part, to the detriment of the body. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas followed the same thought, gradually bringing to Christianity a rationalist approach, assimilating the Greek concept of faith as a logical assertion. Consequently, a dichotomy between soul and body, reason and passions, was established, producing an unbalanced Christian anthropology.

The second movement emerged from Luther's separation between faith and reason. This separation, I argue, also dichotomized reality, restricting theology to its ghetto, which created the conditions for the consequent theological liberalism that took place later. Even though it was not Luther's intention, he paved the way to the secularization of Protestant countries and to German idealism, which in turn offered the basis for the theological liberalism that later sprouted. Since Luther, the relationship between faith and reason has been troubled, and in some ways, different liberal and neo-orthodox theologies reflect different readings of this relationship. While liberalism reduced the faith to its immanency, addressing Christianity strictly rationally, Barth bombed liberalism by teaching a strikingly transcendent concept of God as the "Wholly Other". While the first movement produced the association of faith as reason, Pannenberg made the association of reason as of faith, bringing to the theological reasoning subjects like science, world history, and philosophy as essential as a biblical revelation.

While in Ignatius of Antioch there was a balance between objectivity and subjectivity, it started to unbalance when the Church Fathers began to tend towards objectivity as reason, soul, and logic. As a result, a type of despair gradually established in the Church due to ignoring the body, passions, and demonizing sexuality. Kierkegaard addressed the concept of despair, defining it as the imbalance between one or more elements that constitute the human being, and I believe it happened with the Church. As patristic and medieval theology increasingly valued the soul to the detriment of the body, it produced a Church in despair of finitude, neglecting the finite, the bodily and worldly aspects of life (Kierkegaard 2010, 46–49). As Kierkegaard asserted, this despair falls into alienation, ignoring the real world. The devaluing of human beings' temporal, finite, and corporal aspects gradually made passions, desires, and emotions synonymous with sin. Besides, as Augustine

connected concupiscence to sexual libido, he influenced the stigmatization of sexuality and bodily desires as always sinful.

This theology paved the way for Nietzsche and Freud's atheist thoughts, opposing the Christian stigmatization of the body. I believe that if theology had not lost its balance, maintaining its subjective dimension, the hyper-subjectivism and moral relativity that took root in society would never have happened. Today, the established hyper-subjectivism is an error that must be resisted, but without committing the mistake of falling into another type of objectivism.

Concerning the *imago Dei*, theology also moved to a rationalist definition in the first centuries, where only the rational soul resembled God's image because God was the reason. Irenaeus distinguished the terms image from likeness, considering the image as the rational aspect of God in man and likeness as the Holy Spirit, which fulfills in man God's similitude in Christ. Luther considered that God's image was lost, and it is impossible to know what it was. Barth, however, considered God's image in terms of confrontation as a differential relation between God and man, rejecting any analogy between man and God different from the relational. Pannenberg, however, reframed Irenaeus's insight, considering God's image a process in which man should develop and become Christlike.

Each theologian used a different metaphysics. Augustine conceived the soul in rational terms, using Platonic metaphysics. He and Thomas Aquinas defined the human being as analogies of God, being finite and temporal, but bringing something analogous to the Creator. On the other hand, Barth rejected this analogy, appropriating a Heideggerian metaphysics, conceiving God's image in differential terms. The relationship of confrontation between human beings and others is what, for him, resembles man to God. I believe that Augustinian metaphysics is more immanent[28] and the Barthian is transcendent,[29] and when combined with Irenaeus's approach, provides a better definition for the subject. I will return to this topic in the next chapter.

Regarding sin, for Justin Martyr, it was a kind of faith. For him, Eve conceived sin by believing in the *logos* of the serpent, and Mary conceived Jesus by believing in the *logos* of God. Therefore, sin and salvation came into the world through different

[28] Where the human being is immanently analogous to God's being.
[29] The image is defined transcendentally through a confrontational relationship.

faiths. Faith has not been addressed as the root of sin by later theology, but only as disbelief by Luther. However, I argue, disbelief also means believing in something else. This is what I will call a “negative faith”, directed to something different to God.

Augustine, however, considered pride as the origin of sin, as an exacerbated self-love (*superbia*), a concept that influenced later theology. Pride is man focused on himself. Luther followed Augustine in this, saying that sin is man curved upon himself, but I argue that he went beyond Augustine, affirming the need of self-hatred for the Christian. Pannenberg denounced the self-aggression generated by the Church, agreeing with Freud and Nietzsche’s critics concerning the repressive and moralist Christian teaching of their time. While Pannenberg agreed with Augustine regarding sin as pride, exacerbated self-love, he argued that self-love is not a sin, as Luther affirmed. Pannenberg’s concept of sin as self-aggression, I argue, is similar to Kierkegaard’s definition of unconscious despair

Barth, however, defined sin in three ways: pride, sloth, and falsehood. He described pride in the Augustinian way as self-assertion, but sloth he portrayed as self-negligence, as a lazy refusal to fulfill God’s will. Falsehood he rendered as the proper state of self’s untruth, an incoherent existence. While his concept of pride is similar to Kierkegaard’s definition of despair of defiance, the concept of sloth is like Kierkegaard’s definition of despair of weakness. Falsehood, however, is similar to Kierkegaard’s definition of sin as an existential untruth.

The depictions of sin as a “negative faith”, as pride or self-assertion, as sloth or self-negligence, as falsehood or self-incoherence, and sin as self-aggression provide a multidimensional approach to sin. All these dimensions of subjective sin are studied by Kierkegaard under the category of despair. I argue that these, and other subjective definitions of sin, provide the essential categories to address the problem today. These and other terms are self-evident subjective truths that cry out within the human being, like a voice in the human wilderness, preparing the way to understand the theological concept of sin. With them, every individual can subjectively self-recognize as flawed, as a sinner.

Now I turn to the Theological and Biblical perspective, addressing some essential texts regarding the subjects raised before. The intention is not to produce a theology from a philosophical approach but to construct a theological and biblical approach to the anthropology of sin from a Kierkegaardian perspective.

Chapter 4

A Theological-Biblical Examination of Human Subjectivity

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter traced the anthropology of sin in Church history, identifying how some leading theologians interpreted the human being, sin, and subjectivity throughout history. In this chapter, the anthropology of sin is approached theologically, exploring the dynamics of sin and its relationship to human subjectivity from biblical revelation.

This chapter identifies and explore the relationship between subjectivity and sin, deducing from the biblical revelation guiding principles to develop a new approach to theological anthropology. It demonstrates that biblical anthropology must also consider the human subjective aspect, using some of Kierkegaard's insights. A comprehensive approach is made in texts related to the anthropology of sin. This chapter demonstrates how the Scriptures approached the theme both objectively and subjectively.

The intention is not to exhaust the study, addressing all biblical texts that deal with the anthropology of sin. Instead, the chapter exhibits the biblical understanding that sin is a subjective dynamic in the human being, highlighting its central teachings from the revelation. Thus, although Kierkegaard is in continuous dialogue with the biblical texts, the theological perspective assumed here is the biblical judging the philosophical, not the opposite.

The chapter is fundamentally divided into two parts, one dealing with the topic in the OT and the other in the NT. In the OT, greater importance is given to the creation of the human being, the theme of God's image, the fall, and the subjective consequences of sin in humanity. The Kierkegaardian perspective on the spheres of aesthetic, ethical, and religious are also studied in this section. Furthermore, the fall of the human being and the subjective disruption caused by sin are analyzed carefully.

The chapter raises the argument that sin can be studied biblically in its subjectivity, in terms of “negative faith”, anxiety, sloth, and pride. Furthermore, the subjective ethical repercussions of sin should also be addressed in terms of fear, shame, anger, and guilt.

The NT section pays special attention to the way Jesus dealt with human subjectivity, addressing his indirect communication. The subjectivity of sin is also evaluated in light of Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount. Moreover, Jesus’s personal experience with anxiety in his agony in Gethsemane also receives special attention. Finally, the section studies the aesthetics and ethics of sin in some of the apostolic letters.

4.2 The Old Testament’s Anthropology of Sin

4.2.1 *Introduction*

Sin is a reality presented in the Bible from its very first chapters, making it impossible to dissociate the subject of sin from human history itself. Throughout the OT, one can see the movement of sin through humanity and the movement of faith produced by God through Abraham’s descendants (Gen 12:1–3). There are, therefore, two movements in constant conflict throughout the OT: the subjective movement of sin and the subjective movement of faith, which is opposed to it. This section addresses these two movements and how they relate to human subjectivity.

This section demonstrates: (1) God created man and woman in his image, addressing the *imago Dei* and its unfolding for human subjectivity from Genesis 1:26–28; (2) The creation of the human being as a self, considering his inward dimensions, or layers of existence, as the aesthetical, ethical, and spiritual self from Genesis 1:26–28 and Genesis 2:7,18–25. (3) Sin has subjective effects on humanity. Finally, it deals with the story of the fall in Genesis 3:1–7, studying the subjective reality of sin and its consequences.

4.2.2 *Creation of Humanity*

Critics suggest different sources for the Pentateuch, proposing it was composed from different documents (Champlin 2018, 21; Leonard 2016; Friedman 1992, 618–619). Although these are only theories, one must consider the literary

complexity in forming these books without underestimating their structural unity (Shepperd 2016; Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush 1999, 11–15; Mathews 1996, 127; Pury 1992, 1013). Though there may indeed be some truth in documentary criticism, one should not approach the Pentateuch without bearing in mind that for the rest of the Scriptures, Moses was its primary author (Exod 24:4–8; Num 33:2; Deut 31:24; Ezra 3:2; 7:6; Luke 20:37; 24:27; Acts 3:22; 2 Cor 3:15). Although Moses possibly used other sources, and an unknown final editor united the whole narrative, Moses's authority as its writer is convincing (Hawthorne 2009, 34–35; Friedman 1992, 618–619).

It is known that there are many parallels between the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 and the myths found in ancient cultures, especially Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Canaanite (Heiser 2015, 16, 44,101; Miller and Soden 2012, 77–144; Walton 2009; 2016; Mathews 1996, 134; Dockery 1992, 123). Miller and Soden (2012, 73) state that this is expected, considering that Israel emerged from Abraham's offspring who left Mesopotamia, staying in Egypt for centuries, before migrating to Canaan to become a nation.

However, the ancient myths should not influence the reading of the biblical narrative. It is not a matter for conjecture about who influenced who, as the essential point is that the biblical narrative is validated as divine revelation assured to Moses (Unger 2006, 41). Besides, Adam and Eve are real characters cited throughout Scripture.[30] In addition, Jesus himself cited Genesis 1 and 2 (Matt 19:4–5; Mark 10:6), which means that the narrative is not figurative, and Adam's historicity is crucial to understanding a historical fall and its consequence in humanity.

Authors like Heiser (2015) and Walton (2009; 2016) re-read the Genesis narrative from the perspective of ancient myths, which I claim is a mistake if it leads to inserting alien elements into the Bible. The idea that Moses wrote the Genesis narrative under the influence of Egyptian myths reverses the biblical truth. Poythress (2019, 38) and Unger (2006, 41) correctly state that Christian Theology should not read Genesis through an ancient Near East lens but read the myths through the biblical revelation.

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[30] 1 Chron 1:1; Job 31:33; Hos 6:7; Luke 3:38; Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22; 1 Tim 2:1314; 15:45

The biblical narrative of creation disregards the existence of any gods from the ancient myths, presenting creation through the hands of the unique God[31] (Miller and Soden 2012, 77–96; Johnston 2008, 182–184; Dockery 1992. 123). Contrary to the idea that the Hebrew readers would interpret these accounts influenced by their time's mythology, seeing other divine beings partaking with God in the creation, the scripture shows the opposite, presenting creation as an act of a unique God. As it was with God's intention in Exodus's plagues, Moses intended to demote the Hebrew mind's mythology (Miller and Soden 2012, 95). Therefore, any attempt to insert other deities into the creation account should be viewed as wrong.

This is important regarding the plurality in Genesis 1 and 2 associated to God. The word אֱלֹהִים (Elohim, God, deities, Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 52), which can be singular or plural, and נַעֲשֶׂה (let us make, Koehler 1994–2000, 890) which is plural (Gen 1:26), have raised different interpretations throughout history. Who is God talking to, to other gods, to angels, or himself? By considering the radical monotheistic distinction of the biblical narrative concerning other polytheistic narratives of Moses's time, as stated before, one ought to reject any polytheistic or angelical reading of a co-participation with God's creation. The unique God acts alone in Genesis 1 and 2, and I will argue about this below.

Some have proposed that the plurality of "let us make" is a plurality of majesty; however, the plurality of majesty is usually applied to nouns, not verbs, not found anywhere in the Bible (Hoekema 2018, 24; Harris, Archer and Waltke 2017, 72; Cotter 2003, 17; Berkhof 2001, 168; Hasel 1975, 63). There is no grammatical basis for saying that "us" is a plural of majesty, which is why this interpretation has generally been abandoned. Another concept is that God addresses an assembly of angels, or "lesser gods" (Heiser 2015, 39; Champlin 2018, 31; Ellison and Payne 2009, 157; Wenham 1994, 61). However, the supporting texts in favor of this perspective are full of controversy (e.g., 1 Kgs 22, 19–22; Psa 82), and the main arguments are based on non-canonical books. The reading of Genesis in the light of ancient myths (e.g., Heiser

[31] For example, in Egyptian myth, the god Amun (of the wind) moves over the water, while Atum, or Ptah, speaks and creates (Miller and Soden 2012, 85–90; Johnston 2008,183–184). Compared to other myths, the Egyptian myth is the one that has more parallels with the biblical narrative, yet the differences are immense. For more details on this, see Miller and Soden (2012) and Johnston (2008).

2015, 103; Wenham 2015, 14), and interpreting angels cohabiting with women, the land divided by God to the angels, assume concepts alien to the Scripture, utilizing texts rejected by the Church. Such interpretations are only possible with pseudo-epigraph, apocryphal and mythical literature in support, primarily quoted by these authors.

Although some texts suggest that God presides over heavenly courts or councils (e.g., 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Job 1:6–12; 38:7), in Genesis 1 and 2, there is no reference to angels. To say that “let us make” is God addressing an assembly of angels inserts alien elements into the text, different from the patristic interpretation which reads the Trinity in this text, because the NT indeed offers a trinitarian view which is not alien. As argued, Moses’s narrative is distinguished from the myths precisely by his monotheistic emphasis, making no sense adding a conversation with other divine beings. As early as the second century, Justin Martyr (Just. Dial. 62, 2, 3) refuted the idea that angels participated with God in the creation of man and woman, showing that the early church was aware of this teaching and rejected it.

I argue that “let us make” refers only to God because man and woman were not created according to angels’ image (Hoekema 2018, 24; Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 38). Although one could claim that the “let us make” is merely communicative, between God and his angelical assembly, one must realize that God’s statement calls upon his listeners to create man and woman with him (Hasel 1975, 63). It is not a mere rhetorical expression since it did not happen in the creation or anywhere in the whole Biblical revelation. Whomever his listeners were would participate with him in the conception of man and woman. Hence, I argue that the simplest contextual evidence in Genesis 1:26 is that God was speaking to himself, without any reference to a “royal we”.

The expression “let us make” refers to God speaking to himself, a plurality of persons speaking as a singular one, which is more consistent with the context of Genesis 1 (Bowers 2016, 28–29; Murphy 2013, 176–177; Atkinson 1990, 39; Hasel 1975, 65). The expression וַיֹּאמֶר (And God said, Gen 1:26), is in a singular masculine, revealing a single person speaking. Nevertheless, the plurality present in נַעֲשֶׂה (let us make), is spoken by the singular God, pointing to a multiplicity. As Barth (2004e, CD III.1,182) said, the plurality “is a summons to intra-divine unanimity of intention and

decision". Hasel (1975, 65) calls this a "plural of fullness", a geminal idea of a multiplicity of persons within the Godhead. This interpretation is more coherent with the context of Genesis 1 and 2 and the rest of the Bible (John 1:1; Matt 28:18–19). Evidently, one cannot state that Moses was teaching the Trinity in Genesis 1, as this is a concept fully revealed only later. What Genesis reveals is a mysterious plurality in the singular God, which the rest of the revelation points to the Trinity.[32] This has also been the interpretation throughout history, for example, by Augustine of Hippo (Aug. Trin. 7.6, 12), Luther (1904, 110–111), and others (Champlin 2018, 31; Unger 2006, 39; Louth 2001, 27). I argue that the apparent contradiction between God's singularity and plurality in this text is because of God's indirect communication to human beings. This type of indirect communication was widely explored by Jesus, who spoke indirectly to those who "had ears to hear" and therefore understood what he communicated. I will argue about this later.

God's creation expresses his plurality in the singularity also by making the human male and female. Not only do men reflect God, as Luther (1904, 124) claimed, but women also (Gen 1:27; Carpenter and Comfort 2000, 421; Ellison and Payne 2009, 157–158). Both were made after God's image. It means that man and woman are different expressions of the same unique God. God's plurality is expressed in the gender difference, where masculinity and femininity come from the Creator (Wagner 2019, 151; Gudbergsen 2012). Man and woman are representations of the same God, revealing different aspects of him. Only together, man and woman provide a better understanding of God's image. The next subsection will address the subject of God's image in humanity.

4.2.2.1 God's image and likeness

In the following investigation I will tackle the subject of God's image and likeness by analyzing Genesis 1:26, which reads,

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[32] In Genesis, Trinity can be seen through the NT's eyes. The Father was creating (Gen 1:1), the Spirit was hovering over the water (Gen 1:2), and the Word was acting in the creation (Gen 1:3). The NT presents it, as Jesus is the verb that was with God at creation (John 1:1), talked to the Father (Matt 17:5), and was filled with the Spirit (Mark 1:10).

> Then God said, Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, *so that* they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground (Gen 1:26; NIV)

The NASB renders the same verse as,

> Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; *and* let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth' (Gen 1:26; NASB)

In the NIV translation man was created in the image of God "so that" he can rule over animals, but the NASB gives the idea that the image and likeness are one aspect, while the task of subduing is another. The NIV translation seems to suggest that the image is expressed by subduing and ruling over the animals. However, other translations follow the NASB, for example, NLT, LEB, NRSV, ESV, KJV, CSB, ISV, NHEB. The NET, though, follows the NIV. The difference between translations is regarding the conjunction ו (and, but, so, then), translated as "so that" by the NIV. The conjunction appears five times in the verse, which may be evidence that it only means "and", as the versions translated:

> *Then* (ו) God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; *and* (ו) let them rule over the fish of the sea *and* (ו) over the birds of the sky (ו) *and* over the cattle and over all the earth, (ו) *and* over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth' (Gen 1:26; NASB).

The idea that man's image is defined strictly as the task of subduing and domaining, I argue, is not convincing. Commenting on this verse (Gen 1:26), Kidner (1967, 56) stated that the dominion over other creatures is not the content of God's image but its consequence. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown (1997, 18) argue that God's image could not be anything other than the human moral disposition, its original justice. Dockery (1998, 8) declared that humanity was created to represent God in front of nature, ruling over all things in God's name. Ellen and Payne (2009, 157) affirmed that God's image is the mastery over creation and the ability to have fellowship with God. Wagner (2019, 157) stated that humans were created to represent God;

however, not as a static image but as a living one, imbued with the capacity to represent and act like the Creator. Frame (2013, 784–791) and Hoekema (2018, 81–118), in turn, claimed the need to integrate different approaches, for there is ample evidence that the image of God is expressed in different ways. Jančovič (2019) points out that there are three main interpretive lines regarding the image of God in Genesis 1:26–28: essentialist, relational and functional. However, I believe these are three different angles of the same truth, as there is a broad theological basis for each one. I argue that only a kinetic concept regarding God's image can capture the dynamic behind what the entire biblical revelation teaches about the subject.

God's image has three angles revealed by Genesis 1:26–28. (1) Man and woman were made according to God's image; therefore, God is the pattern, and humanity is his theomorphism. In essence, every human resembles God to some degree. (2) Humanity was created in God's image for God himself and each other, which means that humanity resembles God also for being relational. Man reflects God only if he is in a direct relationship with him; otherwise, he will reflect something else. The mirroring relationship between man and God gives man an existential task. (3) Humanity was empowered to dominate and subdue the earth.

Man and woman were created according to the image (צֶלֶם, image; cf. Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 1028) of God. The word image, in addition to the references of God's image (Gen 1:26–28; 5:1–3; 9:6), appears twelve more times in the OT, ten of them referring to a representation, usually an idol (Num 33:52; 1 Sam 6:5,11; 2 Kgs 11:18; 2 Chr 23:17; Ezek 7:20; 16:17; 23:14; Amos 5:26), but also alluding to abstract things (Psa 39:7; 73:20; Curtis 1992, 389). However, the image always represents something or someone.

Kierkegaard (2010, 104) remembers that man was created with God as his measure. Who man is, or who he is supposed to become, finds the only satisfactory answer in God. The Creator is both the source and the goal of this image. God created humans as his analog images, communicating some of his divine attributes. As Vanhoozer (2010, 64) explored, "The human capacities to know, will and love are themselves theomorphic". Przywara (2014, 436) argues that, "'Creator' and 'creature' intersect in the same 'image' and thus in the ultimate transparency of the divine

‘archetype’”. Unlike all other creatures, the ontic human points to God’s meta-ontic.[33] Furthermore, human beings are noetic beings, capable of knowing the truth, beauty, and goodness because humans are analogies of God’s meta-noetic being, the source of truth, beauty, and goodness itself (119–124). The Bible presents man and woman as God’s different theomorphisms, evidencing that God reveals something of himself in humanity, footprints pointing to him (King 2018; Garr 2011, 60). That is, human immanence is itself evidence of divine transcendence.

Besides, even though God is genderless, the Scriptures also reveal God’s masculine and feminine aspects, as the masculine Father and the feminine Wisdom (Prov 3:19; 8:12, 23; Matt 6:9; Garr 2011, 102,135). Thus, as a theomorphic expression of God, whether male or female, the human body is imbued with the ability to reflect aspects of the Creator. That is, God created the human body with finite capacities to experience and represent something of God’s infinitude. This is evidenced by the fact that God incarnated in human form in Jesus Christ and not in any other form since only the human being could ontically accommodate the divine meta-ontic.

Regarding the terms, צֶלֶם (image, Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 1028) and דְּמוּת (likeness, Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 226; Gen 1:26), for Irenaeus the two meant different things, arguing that in the fall humanity lost his likeness, but not the image (Iren. Dem. 22, 55; Hoekema 2018, 46). Irenaeus’s theology conceived the image of God in terms of a progression of the natural man towards Christ (Iren. Ag. 4.38, 1–3; Hiestand 2018, 58, 59, 67; Pannenberg 2009b, 303). Tertullian and Thomas Aquinas followed Irenaeus in this interpretation (Tert. Prax. 12; Karamanolis 2013, 165; Garrett 2014, 458; Pannenberg 2009b, 316). However, lately, the words have been interpreted as synonymous (Hoekema 2018, 25, 48, 59; Raunio 2010, 35–36; Grudem 2009, 372; Hodge 2010, 555; Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 39; Calvin. Inst: 1.15.3). Some, however, claim that the two terms together mean representation and distinction, meaning that humanity was created as God’s image, but not identically (Wolff 2007, 247–248; Lasor, Hubbard and Bush 1999, 25).

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[33] I use the term ontic to refer to the very being of things. The being itself. The meta-ontic refers to what gives existence to being, and which itself is also a being.

The terms image and likeness are not united by any conjunction, and each one has a different preposition in the prefix, indicating they are two different terms. The prepositions are בְּ (in, from; cf. Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 104) and כְּ (like, like as; cf. Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 453), which means that man and woman were created *from/in* the image of God, *as* his likeness. In Genesis 5:3 the two prepositions are exchanged concerning the words image and likeness, evidencing that the prepositions should not be interpreted as different. However, what about the terms image and likeness?

Some Church Fathers, like Irenaeus and Tertullian (Iren. Ag. 5.6:1; 3.23:5; Tert. Prax. 12), interpreted a difference between the terms. However, this has been recently rejected because of the concept of Hebrew parallelism, where theologians consider the two terms as synonymous. Nevertheless, the Jewish use of parallelisms does not mean that different terms are always synonymous, as proposed for example, by John Calvin (2001, 25). The terms in a parallelism mean different depths of the same idea (Berlin 1992, 155). By defining Hebrew parallelisms as mere synonyms, sharpness was lost, and the real nature of biblical parallelism was henceforth condemned to a perpetual “falling between two stools” (Kugel 1981, 15).

While it is true that considering the two terms as totally different is a mistake, considering them as mere synonyms is also a mistake. Parallelism deepens the meaning of what image means when is added the term likeness is added. For likeness modifies the term image in Genesis 1:26, while image modifies the term likeness in Genesis 5:3. The double use of the terms, I argue, points to identification and difference. To be human is to be identified with God, but also infinitely distinct.

The repetition of image and likeness points to a mechanism in linguistics called recursivity, which is the revisit of the same idea but with a deeper meaning or from a different angle. Recursivity was discovered by mathematics and later applied in computer science (Watumull et al. 2014; Chomsky 1998; 2010). The idea is broad but can be understood as the mechanism that “can take its own output as the next input” (Corballis 2014, 5). Alternatively, as the process of self-returning and self-reference (Beckstead 2015, xvi). In recursivity, the difference in an expression’s constituents may induce new ideas, deepening the concept. It is a cycle of self-assertion, where every new cycle repeats differently.

This is how parallelisms should be interpreted, I argue, as recursive processes. Many biblical parallelisms use subjective communication to deepen concepts, recursively leading readers to perceive the same truth's different depths. The historical Christian tendency to interpret parallelisms as mere synonyms may result from several factors, such as the Hellenistic practice of "solving" apparent contradictions employing allegories (Kugel 1981, 135), or it was the Occam's Razor's influence, taking the more straightforward interpretation as the correct (Frame 2015, 766; Grenz, Guretzki and Nordling 1999, 85). Or the idea of synthesizing different concepts finding a middle ground, which in this case was to call them synonyms. However, as I argued, this does not do justice to the depth of the words.

Recursivity helps explain Hebrew parallelism and an essential aspect of subjective thinking, which is the characteristic of the human mind turning on itself, revisiting a thought or concept differently, more profoundly, or from another angle. Recursivity is thinking, and thinking about thinking, because the human consciousness itself is recursive (Beckstead 2015, xxvi; Watumull et al. 2014). In every new moment, the mind dives into its consciousness bringing new ideas, acts, memories, consequences from the decisions previously concretized. Human consciousness recursively interacts with itself, self-developing, self-shaping, self-maturing, self-repressing. Kierkegaard developed this idea of a self-interacting consciousness (Kierkegaard 2010; Evans 2019, 11). Through recursivity, the human mind can address itself as an object, which is why human beings can self-evaluate and self-judge.

Long before the modern discoveries on recursivity, Kierkegaard worked his concept of repetition (Kierkegaard 2009d; Watkin 2010:214). This idea is in virtually all Kierkegaard's books, which presents the human searching for aesthetic, ethical or religious repetitions. Kierkegaard's repetition is a self-return to something previously experienced, a cyclical search for contentment. I believe that Kierkegaard's repetition relates directly with the modern concept of recursivity, which some psychologists have used lately to address the human consciousness (e.g., Beckstead 2015; Corballis 2014; Watumull et al. 2014).

Besides, the creation of humanity in God's image and likeness indicates that we were created as God's children. The expression נַעֲשֶׂה (“let us make”) reveals a

personal involvement, which is different from the expressions in the previous verses, where God stated, “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3, NIV), or “let the land produce living creatures” (Gen 1:24, NIV). Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, John Calvin, and others declared that God saying “Let us make” denotes decision-making, a divine deliberation (Greg. Man. 3–6, 8; Chrys. Gen. 2:1; Cotter 2003:17; Calvin 2001, 24, 25; Louth 2001, 28). The expression is distinct in word and tense, denoting a dislocation of time in the act of deciding to create man and woman. After all, unlike animals and plants, man and woman would have a personal relationship with God. The Creator was about to create his son and daughter, partakers of his image and likeness, his offspring.

That humanity was created as children of God is evidenced in the Scriptures, even perceived by pagan cultures, as the apostle Paul observed (Acts 17:28). The OT strikingly presents that Israel was God’s offspring, created by God to himself (Deut 1:31; 8:5; 14:1; 32:5–6, 19–20; Isa 43:6–7; 64:8; Jer 2:27; Mal 1:6; 2:10; 3:17). This teaching continues in the NT when Luke presents the genealogy of Jesus, ending with: “the son of Adam, the son of God” (Luke 3:38). Image and likeness point to the divine filiation of humanity. Crouch (2010, 1) affirms that the use of image and likeness in Genesis “intended to evoke the responsibilities of child to parent and of parent to child in the minds of its readers.”

In the light of these facts, I agree with Irenaeus (Iren. Ag. 4.38, 1–3) as he conceived God’s image as both origin and destiny. Not due to a reading of Genesis alone, but from a perspective that considers the whole Bible because it states that God’s perfect image was revealed only in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15), the goal and purpose of God’s law (Rom 10:4). As the son of God, Jesus reveals God to humanity, and reveals the authentic human to the inauthentic humanity. Jesus is the existential task, and every human needs to embody Christ through faith and obedience (Jothen 2018, 48; Kierkegaard 2010, 104). Approaching God’s image in man as both origin and destiny, presumes that man is already God’s image, but not yet. The tension between “already but not yet” is well-known in eschatology (Frame 2006, 310–314), and here is part of the dynamic behind the Kinetic anthropology.

In short, the human being is the image and likeness of God, that is, similar but not identical, a recursivity from God that is not God. Humanity was created as God’s offspring. As God’s image, the human being is God’s theomorphism, a limited, finite, and temporal analogy of his infinite, eternal, and unlimited being. However, the full

potential of God's image is only realized amid a direct relationship with God, which reveals the existential destiny for the human in the authentic human Jesus. Only when the human authentically reflects Christ, the human being becomes able to exercise his function of control over creation. Therefore, in this kinetic reading of God's image, it is possible to identify the participation of every person of the Trinity. First, the Father imprints his image on the human being, as his theomorphism; second, the Son incarnates and reveals the ideal image, providing the existential goal for the human being; third, the Spirit is the very relationship existing between man and God through faith in Christ's sacrifice, which now enables man and woman to reach their full potential as God's image, to fulfill their representative function.

4.2.3 *The Creation of the Self*

This section will discuss the formation of the self as a synthesis between the physical and the psychical. Genesis 2:7 says that God created Adam from the dust of the earth and from his divine breath. In this verse, unlike the narrative of the first chapter, God יוֹצֵר (shapes, gives form to) Adam using עָפָר (soil, dust), נָפַח (blowing, breathing) into his nostrils (Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 403, 708, 862; Harris, Archer, Waltke 2017, §898, §1390, §1664a). God breathed the breath of life, and man became a living soul. The creation of man, therefore, followed two steps, that of giving shape and that of giving life. The word יוֹצֵר (shape), often used to refer to the material (Isa 44:10; Amos 4:13; Hab 44:9), denoting a potter's activity (Mathews 1996, 195), also refers to the immaterial (Isa 45:7), and the proper spiritual (Zech 12:1), where God is described as the shaper of man's spirit (Walton 2016, 31).

Unlike the animals, Adam was shaped from the dust merged with the breath of God Himself (West 2018, 47; Mathews 1996, 196). Therefore, Kierkegaard (2010, 25) was right when stating that the human being is a synthesis between the finite and the infinite, the temporal, and the eternal, meaning a synthesis between the physical and the psychical. Kierkegaard described metaphysically what Genesis addressed as dust and breath; after all, the Scripture discloses the human as a psychosomatic unity (Ellison and Payne 2009, 158).

The dualistic dimension of the human being is evident in Genesis 2:7 and the rest of the Scriptures, describing that when a man dies, the body returns to dust and

the spirit to God (Eccl 12:7); that without the spirit, the body is dead (Jas 2:26); that one should not fear anyone who kills the body but cannot kill the spirit (Matt 10:28). Likewise, in Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, bones and flesh come together but receive life only when God breathes upon them (Ezek 37:8–9).

Moreover, Scripture reveals that man and animals are living souls, but also have souls inside, because the soul is the inward dimension. In Genesis 2:7 the words נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה (*nephesh hayah,* living soul; Koehler et al*.* 1994–2000, 307, 711; Harris, Archer, Watke 2017, §1395a; §644a; Champlin 2018, 38), related to Adam is the same as in Genesis 1:24, when it refers to animals. Both man and animals are *nephesh hayah*. However, man has his soul created from God's breath. Moreover, in Genesis 1:30, Scripture states that the soul is inside:

> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground — everything that has the breath of life (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, *nephesh haiah*) *in (*ב; Koehler et al*.* 1994–2000:103-104) it — I give every green plant for food. And it was so (NIV).

In this verse, God refers to all animals "that have" *nephesh haya* inside. This means that even though animals and humans are living souls, they also have living souls within. The same expression is present in the text of Zechariah 12:1, where God forms the "human spirit within a person" (NIV). This is central to understanding the OT's dualistic anthropology aligned to its holistic view. Interiority and exteriority, flesh and soul, dust and breath, are two realities of the same person.

Some scholars (e.g., Murphy 2011; Green 2008; Kim 2008; Brown, Murphy and Malony 1998) argue for a physicalist approach to answer the body-mind problem. For example, Murphy (2011, 1–5) argues that humans have no soul, relating the historical idea of an immaterial soul to brain functions. She claims that the human being's dualistic view was Plato's and Aristotle's influence on Christianity (12–16). Her argument is based primarily on neuroscience findings, like the ones made by Damasio (2019), relating emotions, memory, and instinct to specific areas of the brain. Damasio offered evidence that certain types of brain damage affect emotional capabilities.

Nevertheless, the fact that brain damage affects mental abilities does not invalidate the concept of soul, as Visala (2014, 108) rightly argued, because "even the

most zealous dualist would not deny the close connection between the soul and the brain". There is a two-way interaction between body and soul that should not be neglected; just as the mutilation of a tongue makes a person deficient in language, the injury of a brain area does the same for different faculties of the soul.

Arguments of physicalists like Murphy (2011) are not convincing for the following reasons: First, their epistemology owes more to a materialistic science than theology. Science deals with empirical, tangible facts; however, thought, memory, morality, and feelings are intangible qualities. Neither the soul nor God can be empirically measured. The closest to the tangible of the soul is the brain and emotions. Just as God can only be studied from what he has chosen to reveal to us in Scripture, from his actions, the soul can only be considered from the phenomena it presents to us. As God is the wholly transcendent, the soul is the self-transcendency, not accessible to the empirical world but only to myself, I who am the synthesis with immanency. Pearcey (2018, 82) rightly argues, "the claim that mental properties emerge from brain states is strictly implausible". Mental states are always *about* something, directed *towards* something, and a physical object simply "is". The new findings from neuroscience do not explain the self, the mind, the conscience, and free will. As Beauregard and O'Leary (2007, 104) stated, "Hypotheses that reduce the mind to the functions of the brain or deny that the mind exists have remained just that — hypotheses."

Second, those who claim physicalism usually attack NT anthropology to lessen the burden of clearly dualistic claims. For example, Murphy (2011, 19) states that she does not know what to do with specific passages (Matt 10:28; Luke 16:19–31; 23:39–43; 2 Cor 5:1–10). She concludes that the NT authors did not attempt to teach anything about the human metaphysical constitution (Murphy 2011, 21). However, even though the NT was not written focusing on a scientific mindset, this does not mean that the human constitution is not addressed. When the Scripture's statements are considered merely from the cultural context of its time, as Murphy (19) proposed, the Word of God is distorted. Jesus's words, for example, when stating, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matt 10:28), become condescending to the Hellenistic anthropology of his time. This hermeneutics supposes ignorance from the apostles and a lie, or a mistake, of Christ. This makes everything else spoken by Christ condescending to his disciples' supposed ignorance; therefore, every biblical

truth should be reinterpreted. Themes such as salvation, hell, Satan, heaven, should be revisited to demystify what Jesus really meant, leading to the dangerous well-known hermeneutic of Rudolf Bultmann (Taliaferro and Marty 2018, 48; Hägllund 1981, 351). However, I argue, scientific theories should be accommodated to the Biblical revelation, not the opposite.

Third, physicalism offers significant philosophical difficulties, as the question of freedom is usually attributed to some function of the brain (Horvat 2017, 135; Craig and Moreland 2005, 331). Also, physicalism has difficulties dealing with the unity and uniformity of the self through its physical changes (Dew and Gould 2019, 151; Craig and Moreland 2005, 331). After all, how does the individual maintain his self-identity through bodily changes throughout life if the self is strictly physical? Physicalism cannot biologically explain love, faith, and the desire for justice (Pearcey 2018, 83). Some physicalist philosophers are sincere in claiming, counterintuitively, that pain and desire, for example, do not exist at all but are illusions of the mind (Dew and Gould 2019, 151, 154). Nevertheless, the most crucial question is about human consciousness and how it arose on a material basis. Neuroscience until today has no answer to this question, as well as how humans acquired linguistic capacity (Pearcey 2018, 82–83; Horvat 2017, 133–135).

Fourth, the physicalist argument that immortality of the soul is Greek teaching absorbed by the Church Fathers (Green 2008, 52–54; Murphy 2011, 13–14), is not correct. The Greeks taught the soul's pre-existence, directly contested by Tertullian (Tert. Soul. 3, 4). The immortality of the soul is taught in Scripture. The fact that the OT prohibits people from trying to consult the dead (Lev 19:31), claiming that King Saul tried to invoke the spirit of Samuel (1 Sam 28:3, 6), and that Manasseh invoked the dead through mediums (2 Kgs 21:6), may not be evidence that the soul is indeed immortal; however, they show that the Hebrews believed it was. Besides, the transfiguration of Jesus experienced by the apostles, talking to Moses and Elijah (Matt 17:3), is also evidence that the soul's immortality was taught in the NT. Cooper (2018) offers strong arguments against physicalism based on Scriptures regarding the intermediary state between death and bodily resurrection. Also, arguing against physicalism, Taliaferro (2018) discusses Christ's descent in hell, as taught by Scripture and the apostle's creed (cf. 1 Pet 2:19–20; Eph 4:9), not in the flesh but spiritually.

Therefore, I conclude that the Bible provides evidence that man is a synthesis of the physical and the psychical, one from dust, another from God.

Nevertheless, in the biblical narrative, man is neither a soul trapped in a body nor an evolved animal who reached consciousness. On the contrary, the Genesis narrative presents the human being created from dust and divine breath, neither one nor the other separately, but both in irrevocable unity. The human being is, therefore, a synthesis, as Kierkegaard (2010, 25) defined.

However, the human being is not a mere synthesis between body and soul but a synthesis of multiple relations. Three relations need to be considered: the relation that constitutes the self as psychosomatic; the self with itself; and the relation with God. First, man is a synthesis between body and soul, called the aesthetic self. Second, the man is a self-relating synthesis, meaning he has self-consciousness, called the ethical self. Moreover, the entire synthesis is grounded in God, the God-relation, called the religious self. They are the same self but with three different relations that define three dimensions of selfhood. I will address each one in the following subsections.

4.2.3.1 The Aesthetic Self

The aesthetic self relates to the proper synthesis between body and soul. Although interiority was usually associated with the soul and restricted to reason in the past, Scripture is not blind to the body's role.

Scriptures contain many terms that relate bodily organs to aspects of the human soul. The term לֵב (heart) usually means the center of thoughts and will, also related to feelings (e.g., Gen 6:5; Exod 4:21; cf. Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 514; Garrett 2014, 500). Another term is the kidney, כְּלָיָה, referring to the most secret part of man, sometimes associated to man's consciousness (e.g., Psa 7:9; 26:2; cf. Koehler 1994–2000, 479; Garrett 2014, 501). Emotions, anguish, and mercy are related to the מֵעֶה, bowels, intestine (e.g., Jer 31:20; Lam 1:20; c.f. Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 609; Garrett 2014, 501). These terms demonstrate that the authors of the OT saw an intrinsic relationship between the bodily and psychical dimensions. Wolff (2007, 30–31) draws

attention to the synthetic-stereometric language in the OT, where the organs describe essential human functions connected to the whole being.

The OT connects human organs to emotions (Harris, Archer, Watke 2017, §1227a). Each body part has a different relationship with the mind, associated with instincts, drives, and emotions. For example, fear, anguish, shame, and anger are associated with the stomach's wrapping or turning of the intestine (Psa 25:17; Jer 4:19; 8:18). Likewise, the bowels can turn inside for feeling mercy or terror (Psa 73:21; Lam 2:11). The human being must synthesize all these psychosomatic drives and feelings. Body and mind are always related.

Nevertheless, unlike animals, humans can deny themselves, resisting internal drives, doing the opposite of what the body wants. In Scripture, the term that appears as the center of the human will and passions is the heart (Pearcey 2018, 48; Pannenberg 2004, 36–37). The heart is the meeting point between the physical and the psychical, the very synthesis between body and soul (Cross and Livingstone 2005, 744). The capacity to think, choose, love, and imagine, is associated in the Scripture with the heart (e.g., Gen 6:5; Exod 28:13; Deut 8:17; 1 Kgs 3:9). It is the center of the whole self.

In harmony with the soul, the bodily dimensions are not evil; quite the contrary, they gloriously reflect the beauty of God's creation. The erotic becomes beautiful as in the Song of Songs. The body can kiss the loved one (Song 1:2), smell its perfume (Song 1:3), be dazzled by its beauty (Song 1:8). Kierkegaard saw the aesthetic as the most inferior dimension of man, referring to a bodily existence, where the spirit (the self) appears in the form of immediacy (Kierkegaard 2010, 61; 2004, 494). The aesthetic self is focused on the immediate, motivated by comfort, beauty, and pleasure (Rae 2010, 85; Watkin 2000, 53). It is the realm of passion and imagination. It has the center of existence, the proper self, and its appetite.

The search for satisfaction can be traced to God's image in humanity, as God found pleasure in each day of creation, declaring that "it was good" (Gen 1:10,12,18, 21, 25; NIV). As God's image, the human being also longs for goodness, beauty, and pleasure. The word "good" in Genesis 1 is טוֹב (good, pleasant), meaning that it pleased God, achieving his divine intention (Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 370; Harris, Archer, Waltke 2017, §793; Walton 2015, 51). The word טוֹב also means pleasant,

desirable, efficient, beautiful. As God found pleasure in his creation, man as God's theomorphism is also inclined towards beauty and pleasure, man's aesthetical inclination. However, the difference between God and man is infinite because while man desires the beautiful and the pleasant, God is the source of beauty, pleasure, truth, and goodness. That is, while God is self-sufficient, man needs God to live poetically. The Creator provided aesthetical faculties to humanity precisely to be able to fulfill the existential task of becoming God's image poetically; after all, "to exist is an art" (Kierkegaard 2016, 68; Jothen 2018, 1).

When reading Genesis 1 and 2, it is essential to realize that God did not create only the material world, but also beauty, and goodness by giving order to everything. Order is God's invisible presence in nature, represented by God's Spirit hovering over the waters (Gen 1:2). Beauty and goodness are perceived by God's repeated declaration that "it was good". It is no wonder that the OT presents nature and beauty itself as revealing God.[34]

The Lord ordered the construction of the tabernacle with artistic expressions, as well as the ark of the covenant with vivid details (Exod 25–26; Schaeffer 2010, 20–27). The beautiful priest's clothing (Exod 28), and the use of musicians and instruments to enrich the praise of God in the temple (1 Chron 23:5), are evidence that beauty reveals and glorifies God.

God saw Adam alone (Gen 2:18, 20), and stated that it was not good (טוֹב). The use of the same word טוֹב is an indication that the Creator was not yet satisfied because the man living alone was not pleasing the Lord (Mathews 1996, 213). This indicates that God created man for טוֹב, the divine happiness planned for humanity which is also good to the Lord. Consequently, the Lord created the one who would bring to Adam happiness, making Adam's life טוֹב (good, pleasant). Thus, Eve brought order to the inward disorder of Adamic solitude, beauty to the lack of beauty, goodness to the lack of goodness.

[34] e.g., Psa 19:1; 69:34; 96:11–12; Eccl 3:11–13; Isa 35:1–2; Hos 14:6.

Therefore, the human being is inclined by God to resemble him aesthetically. Imagination, passion, creativity, and will were given to man and woman to resemble God artistically. However, these aesthetic capacities became corrupted after sin entered the world, serving the selfish and sensual desires that now enslave humanity. Instead of being inclined to God's goodness, beauty, and pleasure, humanity started to be "curved in upon itself", as Luther (2006, 159) stated.

4.2.3.2 The Ethical Self

The human being is not just a psychosomatic synthesis that relates to the world aesthetically, as this synthesis is also self-related. This is self-consciousness, which refers to the ethical dimension of the human being because, unlike animals, the human can self-evaluate (Kierkegaard 2010, 25–30; Evans 2019, 11). Distinct from the aesthetic–self, passionately related to goodness, beauty, and pleasure, the ethical relates to the other through the law. Humanity was created in a world immersed in God's laws. Objective laws established by God for Adam and Eve, such as the order to dominate and subdue creation (Gen 1:28), cultivate the garden, and not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge (Gen 2:15–17). Positive laws, in terms of what they should do, and negative, of what they should not do. The ethical dimension arises exactly from the human evaluation of what is right and wrong (Bonhoeffer 2020, 15; Watkin 2010, 77).

It is because Adam is not alone that he now sees himself as much through the eyes of God as through the eyes of Eve. Moreover, the intersubjective law that ethically emerges from social relations urges Adam to conciliate all. Thus, God's law for Adam now relates to the subjective law between Adam and Eve, and it is up to Adam to synthesize the two through personal ethical decisions. Therefore, consciousness plays a fundamental role in man's relationship with himself, the other, and God.

The reality of consciousness in humanity cannot be attributed to evolution because the self can oppose itself, deny its impulses, inhibit its drives, and evolution cannot explain self-denial or mental realities (Pearcey 2018, 82–84; Pannenberg 2004, 36–37). Adam was not just moved by bodily instincts like the animals, for he was free and seeing himself as a person (West 2018, 47). Consciousness allows the human being to "step out of himself" to observe the self as an object to be transformed (Evans 2019, 11; Sweetman 2017, 107). This self-consciousness allows self-determination, where the human being can set goals for himself (Kierkegaard 2010, 26). Therefore, human life is immersed in possibilities and restricted only by the limits established by the Creator and intersubjective social laws.

The creation of ethics implicates moral choices between personal freedom and responsibility, restriction, and determination, as the ethical is the "path to a unified

self", where the human achieves it by "enduring ethical commitments" (Evans and Roberts 2015, 212; Watkin 2000, 53). Among all creatures, the human being is the only one capable of self-evaluating, self-denying, self-judging, which means he needs to be also self-responsible. He is always self-accountable for his decisions, constantly conscient of his past actions and consequences. As a result, man can be self-confronted by his self-inconsistency.

Kierkegaard (2004, 517) argued that ethically the self needs to become himself authentically through personal choice. He emphasized that man was created out of nothing; however, man cannot create himself out of nothing, but using something or someone as a source to be mirrored. What man becomes depends on his relationships, as the human being is self-determined relationally (Evans 2019, 16). Adam had in God the ideal self to be imitated. Man can only concretize the inherent God's image if he has a real relationship with God (Kierkegaard 2018a, 83–84; Pannenberg 2009b, 293, 316). Man resembles God by keeping his eyes fixed on the Creator because otherwise he is brought down level to other men or other things, deviating from the divine likeness (Kierkegaard 1992, 141–142). If God is not the foundation of human existence, then existence in grounded on something else, a substitute for God (Evans 2019, 14).

Ultimately, humanity was created to glorify God aesthetically and ethically (Isa 43:7), by loving and enjoying him (Psa 37:4), and to fear and obey him (Eccl 12:13). Before the fall, Adam's intention, desire, and passion were aligned towards God. Thus, the intersubjective law between Adam and Eve did not conflict with God's law given to the first couple. However, sin changed everything.

4.2.3.3 The Religious Self

The religious self is the same aesthetic and ethical self, but now in direct relation to God. Hence, the most appropriate biblical word is spirit. Each dimension of selfhood refers to a relationship of the self, and in the religious, it is the God-relation. The word רוּחַ, the spirit in the OT also means wind, sometimes a synonym of breath (Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 1197; Hoekema 2018, 227–229; Wolff 2007, 68–70). Unlike terms like heart and conscience, the spirit is directly associated with God, a Theo-anthropological concept (Hoekema 2018, 225; Garrett 2014, 506; Wolff 2007, 68).

In the OT, it was the Spirit of God who hovered over the face of the waters creating life (Gen 1:2), and the same Spirit came upon Othniel (Judg 3:10), Samson (Judg 14: 6), David (1 Sam 16:13), and others (cf. Wolff 2007, 71), empowering and aligning them to God's purpose. Just as the Spirit brought order and beauty to the world in creation, coming upon God's servants brought order to and through their lives. Likewise, the NT presents the spiritual person as born from above, contrasting the natural one, born from below, only from the flesh (John 3:5–6). The religious self is the spiritual man, in genuine relationship with God, ontologically grounded in the Creator, born again through faith in Christ.

Kierkegaard (2010, 26) stated that, as a self-relating synthesis, the human being was established by God and had with him a God-relation. Humans depend on the God-relation to maintain the proper balance and integrity of the self (Evans 2019, 12–13; Davenport 2015, 235; Glenn 2007, 5–6). It is impossible to go deeper into self-consciousness without also going profoundly into the relationship with God. To become genuinely spiritual is to relate with God and, through him, relate with everyone else. Both Kierkegaard and Augustine agree that, as God is the ground of existence, transcendence is found through inwardness (Tyson 2019, 44).

The religious self is the culmination of human existence, the authentic spirituality. Kierkegaard conceived the complete self-realization of the theological self as an authentic Christian existence, the authentic human (Kierkegaard 2010, 26; Magurshak 1985, 170). In the religious self, his heart and conscience are aligned under the command of the Spirit of God, called man's spirit. The spirit is not another part of the human being, but the proper self-conscious heart relating by faith to God. The separation between the aesthetical, ethical, and religious only occurred after man and woman sinned. In the next section, I will address the subjective disruption caused by sin.

4.2.4 *The Fall and the Subjective Disruption*

If the man is an arrow aimed at God, and whose existential task is to become God's image, there is no better word to describe sin than חטא, "miss the mark" (Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 305; Harris, Archer and Waltke 2017, §638). Although the word "sin" does not appear in Genesis 3, the Bible presents this chapter as decisive

when sin entered the world (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21–22). The Hebrew word חטא means an error, sometimes involuntary; however, the biblical use points to a voluntary and culpable mistake (Garrett 2014, 527).

In this section, I will argue that besides being an ethical problem, sin is likewise aesthetic and religious, which affected man subjectively. Adam and Eve's temptation was a historical event that also explains every human temptation (Poythress 2019, 206–207).

4.2.4.1 Sin as a negative faith

The narrative in Genesis 3 presents the serpent as the initiator of the dialogue which led Adam and Eve to sin (Gen 3:1). The serpent was responsible for taking Eve's eyes away from the abundance in the garden, turning to what was forbidden. The serpent's malicious question tested Eve's awareness of the divine commandment. Upon hearing the woman's reply, the serpent denied the command of God, stating that they would certainly not die (Gen 3:4). God had commanded Adam and Eve to dominate and subdue the animals (Gen 1:26), therefore, it was their task to subdue the serpent, but they did not do it.

When God blessed man and woman, he repeated that they needed to כבשׁ (subjugate, overcome) and רְדוּ (rule, domain) the creatures (Gen 1:28; Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 460, 1190; Swanson 1997, §3899, §8097). These words appear twice, evidencing their importance (Gen 1:26, 28). God's order indicates the exercise of force and to strive upon creation (Wolff 2007, 251; Wenham 1994, 61). Besides, man and woman's domain represents the domain of God himself (Ellison and Payne 2009, 158; Lasor, Hubbard and Bush 1999, 25). However, a question requires attention: why would humanity need to subjugate creation if everything was perfect?

Following the Augustinian theology, an interpreter may conceive creation as perfect before the fall; however, for Irenaeus, the creation was good (Gen 1:10,12,18, 21, 25), but not fashioned mature, complete, or perfect (Iren. Dem. 14–16; Hiestand 2018, 65; Pannenberg 2009b, 303; González 2006). Irenaeus's interpretation of Genesis seems more accurate than Augustine's in this regard, by seeing man and creation in the progress of growth and maturation. For Irenaeus, man and the woman

were endowed with all their potential but needed to fulfill God's will to reach maturity. Something in the creation still needed to be ordered, submitted to the Lord's will, and man and woman were placed there for this purpose (Merril 2009, 54).

Heiser (2015, 74) affirms that the snake in the garden was not a member of the animal kingdom, as it was an angel. However, I argue that there is no contradiction, that the angelic being was also an animal, just as some prophets had visions of angelic beings who were also animals (Ezek 1:5–15; Rev 4:8). The enigmatic figure behind that serpent was Satan (Rev 12:9; 20:2), but this does not mean it was not also a serpent. The dual nature of the serpent which speaks reminds us of the moment when an angel opened the mouth of a donkey and through the animal talked with Balaam (Num 22:22–35; Poythress 2019, 208). Was it the donkey, the angel, or both who spoke? Therefore, declaring that this serpent was not part of the animal kingdom contradicts scripture.

Adam and Eve should have subdued the serpent, as they had been directed to do this (Gen 1:26 ,28). However, instead of subduing it, they submitted themselves to it (Frame 2013, 852; Merril 2009, 55). As Justin Martyr declared, this act placed humanity under a curse (Just. Dial. 45:3; 95:1).

How evil originated in the serpent's mind is not explained in the Bible. Besides, there is no evidence that Satan sinned before this specific moment.[35] The fall of Satan is to make humanity sin, which is why the fate of both is tied together (Gen 3:15). Therefore, the serpent's role in the fall of Adam and Eve cannot be minimized. Although Kierkegaard did not give the matter its fair value, we cannot fall into the error of considering man himself the true origin of sin, as did Immanuel Kant, and others who followed his theory of radical evil (Frame 2015, 265; Hocknull 2016, 92). Scripture presents the serpent as the original deceiver and first source of evil. Besides, several

[35] Contrary to the common idea that Satan fell before humanity in a rebellion in the celestial realm and then led man to fall, I understand that the Bible does not offer evidence for this idea. The fall of Satan, which is referred to in Isaiah 14:3–21 and Ezekiel 28:2–19, is related to Eden. I assume that the angel sinned by making Adam and Eve sin, where the fall of Satan was also the fall of man. This is why humanity's judgment is also linked to the devil's judgment (Gen 3:15).

Church Fathers did not neglect the role of Satan, giving importance to it, and contemporary theology should not neglect its role.[36]

The serpent lied, offering a false reality to Eve by saying that they would not die but would become like God (Gen 3:5–6). As a denial of God's word, this false reality was born in the serpent's imagination instigating the woman's imagination. As Irenaeus pointed, man and woman were unable to imagine evil, but the serpent guided them to imagine it (Iren. Dem. 14,16). It incepted Eve's mind with a lie that "impregnated" her with sin, as argued by Justin Martyr (Just. Dial. 100, 5,6).

Eating the fruit was more than disobeying an order, or breaking the law, as it involved faith in the serpent's word. Sin in this aspect was a negative faith, towards the serpent's word, instead of God's word. The serpent instigated the woman aesthetically by leading her to imagine and desire an alternative self, existing as God.

The serpent implied that God was not telling the truth by asking whether God had "really" said that they could not eat from all the fruits (Gen 1:2). The serpent was the first to question reality and invent its own. In the serpent's words was the indirect affirmation that God had unjustly forbidden them to eat the fruit; therefore, maybe he was not so good (Gen 3:1–3; Mathews 1996, 236; Ellison and Payne 2009, 160; Frame 2013, 852). The words were seeds of frustration in Eve's mind because God supposedly restricted them to something outstanding. The serpent stimulated Eve's imagination by proposing that the fruit could give them superior knowledge that God allegedly had held from them (Gen 3:5; Mathews 1996, 237; Iren. Dem. 14). It was an appeal to become independent of God (Ellison and Payne 2009, 160).

Frustration and imagination employed subjective pressure on Eve. This pressure is what Kierkegaard (2011) called anxiety. However, without this pressure made by the serpent stimulating Eve's imagination, there would be no anxiety. As Justin Martyr declared, seeds of evil were planted in Eve's mind, which she believed and gave birth to sin (Just. Dial. 100:5, 6). Therefore, sin is a negative faith, a belief in an imaginary scenario disconnected from God.

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[36] e.g., Just. First 28:1; Just. Dial. 45:4; 70:5; 88:4; 100:5; Math. Diog. 12; Barn. 12; Iren. Ag. 1.27:4; 3.23:3; Theo. Apol. 2.28; Clem. Inst. 2.13; Tert. Ans. 2,10; Tert. Soul. 16,21; Tert. Marc. 3.18; 4.24; Tert. Prax. 1; Orig. Princ. 3.2:1; Orig. Celc. 6.28; Aug. City. 14.11:2; 14:13:1

4.2.4.2 Sin and Anxiety

Kierkegaard treated Adam and Eve's sin in terms of anxiety to demonstrate that the first sin was no different from the sin everyone commits (Kierkegaard 2011, 30). Sin is conceived in the realm of imagination, and its womb is anxiety. It is the intermediary between innocence and sin, and Kierkegaard distinguished it as objective and subjective, as described before (Kierkegaard 2011, 62–68; Rae 2010, 91; Watkin 2010, 48).

Satan appealed to Eve's intellect and emotion, her imagination and passion (Frame 2013, 756). In Eden, objective anxiety was started by the serpent, and reached its peak when the woman looked at the fruit and imagined the possibilities (Gen 3:6; Jamieson, Fausset and Brown 1997, 19). By looking at the fruit, it was no longer the serpent generating anxiety, but it was now herself reflecting on the possibilities, physically interacting with the forbidden fruit. The biblical narrative presents three elements affecting Eve's temptation, which I believe are essential to understanding the later anxiety in humanity (Mathews 1996, 238; Hamilton 1995, 13; Ross 1985, 32).

The first anxiety is evidenced by the woman's perception that the fruit was "good for food" (Gen 3:6, NIV). The text says that the woman saw with her own eyes- וַתֵּ֣רֶא הָאִשָּׁ֗ה ("and when the woman saw"; Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 1157; Swanson 1997, §8011). Consequently, the attraction to the fruit now comes from her own aesthetic perception. Eve could mentally compare the fruit of knowledge with the fruits she had already eaten, concluding that it was "good for food". Perhaps the appearance and smell were evidence that the fruit was neither rotten nor poisonous; on the contrary, it looked desirable. The appeal engaged her senses, generating anxiety, pressuring her body to taste a fruit that looked appetizing (Hamilton 1995, 13).

The second anxiety that produced her anxiety was the fact that the fruit was תַּאֲוָ֥ה, "pleasing", "beautiful" to the "eye" (Gen 3:6), meaning that its beauty was attractive (Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 817,1673; Ross 1985, 32; Swanson 1997, §9294, §6412). The attraction for the eyes was an appeal for contemplation and possession. While the first appealed to the desire to taste the fruit, the second attracted to its beauty.

The third anxiety is the most significant, as the fruit was חמד “desirable”, “delightful” for gaining “wisdom”, “understanding” (Gen 3:6; Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 325, 1328; Swanson 1997, §2773, §8505). Eve was attracted by the possibility of becoming wise like God, reaching the same level as the divine (Frame 2013, 864; Lasor, Hubbard and Bush 1999, 27–28; Ellison and Payne 2009, 160–161). She wanted to become better, wiser, greater. Eve’s temptation was to detach herself from her supposed limited condition to experience her own reality as God. It was based on the alienated frustration created by the serpent that instigated the idea that she was not experiencing her most glorious potential.

An imagination instigated by an alienated frustration can bring into existence an incalculable evil in the world. The same kind of evil that later led to wars and events as irrational as those of Auschwitz. However, behind this alienated imagination, there are always these three anxieties operating.

The act of believing in the serpent was only concretized when Eve ate and gave to Adam, who was with her (Gen 3:6). Eating the fruit changed Adam and Eve, who suffered the qualitative leap into sin (Kierkegaard 2011, 70; Walsh 2009, 93). They changed from innocence to guilt. Instantly, anxiety was no longer merely objective, a force that from outside generates anxiety; now, it was also subjective, pressuring the self (Kierkegaard 2011, 62–69; Rae 2010, 91; Dunning 1985, 15–16) inwardly. The subjective disruption carried out in Adam and Eve perpetuated the subjective search for pleasure, possession, and pride because this subjective anxiety is now transmitted to the offspring. Quoting the apostle John, this anxiety is universally present in the world as “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16, NIV). I argue that after the fall, these three types of anxiety became three fundamental human longings, condensed as sensuality in the body (Kierkegaard 2011, 67; Walsh 2009, 93).

4.2.4.3 Pride and Sloth

It is imperative to identify the different attitudes of Adam and Eve in the first sin. Admittedly, Eve was deceived by the serpent, as the Scriptures say (2 Cor 11:3; 1 Tim 2:14), though she indeed wanted to become like God. She decidedly ate the fruit defying God. Her attitude is compatible with what Kierkegaard (2010, 89) called the despair–challenge, where she imposed her will in pride.

However, Adam's attitude was not one of pride but passivity. There is evidence that Adam was with Eve during the temptation but did not speak. The narrative says that Eve gave the fruit to her husband who was עִמָּהּ "with her" (Gen 3:6; Swanson 1997, §6640, §2085; Mathews 1996, 238; Ellison and Payne 2009, 160). Adam's attitude has been underestimated in theology, where the fault has been disproportionally put on Eve. While Eve sinned in explicit pride, Adam's attitude was the result of negligence, passivity, or sloth using Barth's definition (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,143; 2004i, CD IV.2,458; Jenson 2006, 173). Adam's attitude is consistent with what Kierkegaard (2011, 68) called despair–weakness, where he abandoned himself, allowing Eve to think and decide for him.

While Eve did what she was not supposed to do, Adam did not do what he was supposed to do. Thus, Eve sinned in pride, while Adam stayed in sloth, one in self-deification and the other in self-annulment. Augustine (Aug. City. 14.11) also affirmed that Eve sinned actively, believing in the serpent, while Adam passively in obedience to his wife. Even though pride and sloth are not Kierkegaardian categories, I believe Kierkegaard's (2010, 68–70) definition of despair–defiance and despair–weakness fits these categories.

Nevertheless, Kierkegaard argued that despair–weakness (sloth) is more common among women. In contrast, despair–defiance (pride) is more usual among men. While "female despair" (sloth) can be found in men and "masculine despair" (pride) in women, Kierkegaard (2010, 69) claimed that this is not common (Walsh 2009, 101). In the relationship between a man and a woman with God, pride sins by emphasizing the self over the relation with the other. On the other hand, sloth is the abandonment of the self, valuing the relationship with the other. While pride falls into despair by assuming excessive and illusory freedom, sloth falls into despair by giving up freedom for the sake of the other.

While some criticism has been leveled at Kierkegaard's distinction in terms of male and female despair, his perception cannot be ignored as it illuminates the different ways in which sin expresses in men and women (Evans 2019, 32–33; Walsh 2007, 127–128). In general, it is observed that men are the ones who assert themselves most aggressively over others, putting themselves as the priority and paying little attention to the needs of other people. On the other hand, women usually

fail to position themselves to speak out, fearing they will be oppressed if they do not behave stereotypically. The discussion that pride is primarily masculine, while sloth is feminine, is considerable, as demonstrated by Jenson (2006, 98–129).

Agreeing with Kierkegaard, I argue that the sinfulness of pride is different from sloth, and little theological value has been attached to sloth. Furthermore, little or no importance has been given to the intersubjectivity of sin between pride and sloth in male-female relationships in the family or society.

The egalitarian and healthy relationship that Adam and Eve had, became marked by a subjective imbalance affecting both. Although pride and sloth are not strictly male or female attitudes, the qualitative leap suffered by sin can help understand the dominant sinful attitudes affecting men and women differently. This is important because the Augustinian concept that pride is the root of all sins masculinizes the entire anthropology of sin (Aug. City. 14.13), neglecting the self-abandonment characterized by sloth. However, I claim, if Augustine had asserted that the root of all sins was selfishness, which encompasses pride and sloth, in my view, he would have been more accurate.

4.2.4.4 Nakedness and the Subjective Disruption

When Adam and Eve ate the fruit, God's immediate judgment fell on them, and they saw themselves to be naked (Gen 3:7; Champlin 2018, 49). The qualitative leap they suffered is grasped in the disruption between objectivity and subjectivity in their consciousness. Before eating the fruit, Adam and Eve were naked but not ashamed (Gen 2:25). There is no evidence of shame, guilt, fear, or anger before they disobeyed. However, their eyes were opened when they ate and recognized their nakedness (Gen 3:7). The word nakedness in Genesis 2:25 (עָרוֹם) is slightly different from Genesis 3:7 (עֵירֹם; Harris, Archer Waltke 2017, §1588b, 1588c; Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 823, 882). Nakedness before the fall (עָרוֹם) means exposure and is an indication of innocence. They were exposed to each other and did not feel ashamed, embarrassed. Nevertheless, nakedness (עֵירֹם) in Genesis 3:7 means awareness of a lack, as they became conscious that something was missing. As Ellison and Payne (2009, 160) declared, the feeling of nakedness was related to an inward absence.

It seems that the problem was not in nudity but in their consciousness, which now experienced evil. Adam and Eve's nakedness reflected their consciousness of how they saw each other. The nakedness was more than physical nudity, because Adam was still declared to be naked even when covered with fig leaves (Gen 3:10; Merril 2009, 219–220; Davidson 1988, 123). Something unknown for Adam and Eve was affecting their consciousness. Man's gaze was now projecting evil on what was innocent, for a spoiled consciousness started to perceive reality distorted (Harris, Archer, Waltke 2017, 1168; Kidner 1967, 74). Through the qualitative leap that Adam and Eve suffered through sin, they started seeing the sensual world through the lens of their subjective anxiety (Dunning 1985, 16). Consequently, all sensuality (the world of the senses) becomes sinfulness (Kierkegaard 2011, 69), as the apostle Paul wrote, "To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure" (Titus 1:15; NIV).

Therefore, sin corrupted man's objective perception of reality, putting him in a state of untruth. Adam and Eve saw nudity through a lens of untruth. Later, Cain would also see Abel through a lens of untruth (Gen 4:6–7). God asked Adam, "Who told you that you were naked?" (Gen. 3:11, NIV). In other words, if God made them עָרוֹם (*'arom*, naked), who told them that they were עֵירֹם (*'erom*, naked; Koehler et al. 1994–2000:91, 823, 882–883)? What changed *'arom* into *'erom*? What changed their perception of reality and themselves? God's question was epistemological, for the untruth of sin was evident in Adam's words.

The immediate consequence of sin affected how human beings would see each other, the world, and themselves. This phenomenon, which projects the subjective onto the objective world, distorting the way of seeing oneself and the world, would now be responsible for the emergence of culture. I will address this topic in the penultimate chapter.

4.2.4.5 Subjective Ethical Consequences

Kierkegaard (2010) defined despair as the unbalanced state of the self, where one or more internal relations are neglected (Evans 2019, 13; Rae 2010, 93). As an immediate consequence of sin, the subjective anxiety that gripped human beings now becomes their continual state of despair. Sin as despair is the becoming of death, the

inward anguish that wants to get rid of itself and at the same time does not (Kierkegaard 2010, 30–35; Jothen 2018, 67; Marsh 2007, 69). Despair is to live the death, existing disconnected from the source of all existence. It is the condensation of all anxieties, where the individual betrays himself, underestimating one dimension of existence at the expense of another, living in self-incoherence (Kierkegaard 2010, 101; Hühn and Schwab 2015, 80). This self-incoherence receives many names because sin is embodied as fear, shame and anger as described in the Bible.

Pannenberg (2008, 138–139) highlighted Kierkegaard's importance in introducing the concept of anxiety and despair. These psychological phenomena produce inward aggressions, generating continual imbalance within the self. Fear, shame, guilt, and anger are, I argue, different expressions of sin in terms of self-aggression, subjective tensions caused by the embodiment of sin.

After sinning, some strange feelings appear in Adam and Eve. Emotions like shame, fear, and anger are evident in Genesis 3. They covered their nakedness (Gen 3:7), hid from God out of fear (Gen 3:10), and tried to place responsibility on each other (Gen 3:12–13). Both felt shame and fear, hiding, not willing to deal with the consequences of their sin. The harmonious relationship between body and soul now gave way to a relationship of conflict and tension. Besides, anger is perceived in Adam's answer to God, when he stated that "The woman you put here with me" (Gen 3:12, NIV), accusing the Creator, not admitting his responsibility (Mathews 1996, 241; Jamieson, Faussset and Brown 1997, 19; Hamilton 1995, 14). Adam's anger reveals how biased was his perception of the situation. Adam did not admit his own sin, projecting the blame on God and Eve. The same happened with thedistorted gaze of Cain, who, having his offer rejected, blamed his brother, killing Abel (Gen 4:1–8).

These feelings of shame, fear and anger are revealed as immediate consequences of the fall (Gen 3:7,10,12–13). The word, "guilty," however, does not appear in the text. Even though some affirm that in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve felt guilt (e.g., Nicholls 2001, 236; Muller 2013, 152), neither Adam or Eve recognized their fault in front of God (Hamilton 1995, 14).

My argument is that shame, fear, and anger are direct consequences of sin, subjectively experienced by Adam and Eve, and guilt is objective. The OT developed the concept of guilt through the Mosaic law, as I will argue below. While shame, fear, and anger come from within, guilt originates outside. Adam and Eve automatically

experienced fear and shame after sinning, hiding themselves from God, trying to hide their nakedness from each other, therefore, a subjective reaction! Likewise, Adam in anger accused God and the woman, demonstrating an inward turmoil. However, the concept of guilt is present in the narrative because God objectively condemns Adam and Eve for what they did. Both subjective consequences (fear, shame and anger) and objective (guilt) are the same sin.

Anthropologists and missiologists have correctly identified that countries with a greater influence from the Judeo-Christian religions, present a worldview based on guilt, as distinct from countries with a different religious base (Georges 2017; Mischke 2015; Muller 2013; Nicholls 2001). This is, I argue, not because Augustine, Luther, and others emphasized the legal aspect of salvation, supposedly molding the western worldview to a guilty perspective, but because revelation itself synthesizes shame, fear, and anger under the category of guilt. They are all related to the same sin, as different types of despair. Therefore, I argue that fear, shame, and anger are expressions of what Kierkegaard (2010, 46–59) called unconscious despair; therefore, I claim, they have unconscious guilt.

Freud (1990, 582) developed the idea that there is a subjective sense of guilt in every person. He defined guilt as the repression of biological instincts resulting from the tension between the ego and the superego, producing inward aggression (690, 713; Johnson 1962, 41; Piers and Singer 2015, 11; Timpe 1999, 1115). For Freud, guilt is the tension itself, unconsciously present in everyone. Nevertheless, while Freud perceived the subjective guilt inwardly oppressing people, he did not recognize that this immanent reality is transcendentally grounded. The concept of objective guilt is only recognized in front of Biblical revelation, for it reveals that shame, fear, and anger are subjective evidence of the objective offense towards God.

Shame is the feeling caused by an offense and the exposure of the failed self (Seal 2016; Nicholls 2001, 234; Pannenberg 2004, 293–294). It is a relational feeling, connected to how the person is perceived by the other with the fault (Mischke 2015, 63). Fear, however, is related to the consequence of failure. It is the feeling of facing punishment before someone or something capable of damaging him (Custis 2014; Muller 2013, 154). Fear involves the feeling of impotence in front of someone. Regarding anger, in Genesis 4, it is more evident with Cain's murder of Abel. God's question to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?" (Gen 4:6, NIV),

connects the same feeling of humiliation that shame has, but redirected outward, projecting the fault on someone else. In all cases, whether in shame, fear, or anger, the interpretation of reality was wrong.

Guilt, however, involves the transgression of God's law as a law-breaking consciousness (Nicholls 2001, 234; Pannenberg 2004, 293). Guilt is related to God's law, a debt caused by breaking it and offending the Creator. Guilt is a forensic term that requires the revelation of the law in the OT to make it evident (Champlin 2018a, 392; Cairns 2002, 200; Stenschke 2000, 529). The development of the concept of guilt is vital in God's progressive revelation. Guilt has two main terms used in OT, אָשַׁם (with the correlate אָשֵׁם), and רָשַׁע (Champlin 2018a, 392; Harris, Archer and Waltke 2017, §180, §2222; Swanson 1997, §872, §8401). The word אָשַׁם is the primary term, not only of guilt as an act, but also as the state and punishment. The biblical revelation of guilt takes the subjective reality of sin and makes it objective, demanding retribution for the fault committed against God.

Fear is my sin relating to its consequence; shame is sin relating to myself in front of my neighbor who sees me; wrath is my sin projected onto my neighbor. However, guilt is my sin recognized as an offense before God.

Guilt (אָשֵׁם) is admitted by Joseph's brothers when they evaluated the events of their life as a consequence of having sold their brother (Gen 42:21). They became conscient of their guilt in front of God, facing their punishment, where their distress reminded them of their fault (Mathews 2005, 780; Kidner 1967, 211). Their guilt was a result of the idea that God required their brother's blood. (Gen 42:21–22). Shame, anger, and fear are present in those verses simultaneously, condensed under the concept of guilt.

However, guilt is pedagogically taught in the Mosaic law through the principle of atonement (Lev 4–5; 6:1–7; 14:21; 19:21). The death of a pure animal in the sinner's place atones for the guilt. It is an intersubjective legal concept connecting the human being with God. While guilt is the recognition of a barrier between God and man, atonement is when this barrier is removed. In the biblical concept of guilt, the law is only the mediator to communicate man's offense against God, where the real problem

is relational. The mistake is to understand guilt as man's problem with the law of God and not with the God of the law.

The law objectively reveals guilt, which in turn explains fear, shame, and anger. Therefore, the guilt concept requires God's revelation, while fear, shame, and anger are already self-revealed. There is no concept of sin and guilt in a society without the awareness of God. As Mann (2015, 16) claims, a society with increasing unawareness of the "divine Other" becomes a sinless one.

The OT reveals that guilt demands a "sin offering" (Lev 4:3; NIV), and God himself offers the payment for it (Gen 22:9–18). Therefore, the revelation of guilt in the law comes with the revelation of hope, pointing to grace! Without the transcendent revelation of God, there is no solution for the immanent sin. Without the objective revelation of guilt, the subjective feelings of shame, fear, and anger cloister the self in its internal imbalances. Each of these emotions is produced by the inconsistent relation between man's interiority and exteriority, or as Pannenberg argued, a dominance of man's centrality over his exocentricity (Pannenberg 2004, 104–105; Benjamens 2009, 383). While shame, fear, and anger are predominantly egocentrics, or, as Luther (2006 159) said, the self "curved in upon itself", guilt, I argue, requires the individual to look transcendently towards God. The ultimate human problem of fear, shame, and anger is guilt, the barrier between humans and God.

Clothes made of fig leaves did not hide Adam's shame enough, nor did attributing the fault to Eve resolve his anger, nor did hiding in fear from God exempt him from the consequences. However, these creative and ineffective answers invented by humans to pay their inward debts to themselves, to others, and mainly to God would start to emerge even more creatively from this moment. Sin caused the human being to turn inwards in the process of self-alienation from his guilt, shame, fear, and anger. Consequently, alienated cultures started to be created, and God's transcendence ignored.

I agree that western theology is blind to worldviews not oriented by guilt, as affirmed by some missiologists and anthropologists (Georges 2017, 10–11; Georges and Baker 2016, 22). However, the problem is not the emphasis on guilt by theology, but that it became objectified, neglecting the subjectivity of shame, fear, and anger. The western theological concept of guilt became a merely forensic definition because it is focused on God's law instead of being relational and focused on the God of the

law. The first is objectified and legalist, the second is relational and both objective and subjective.

4.3 The New Testament's Anthropology of Sin

4.3.1 *Introduction*

This section deals with the anthropology of sin in the NT, demonstrating that Jesus also dealt with it in a subjective manner. It makes evident that the dimensions of sin pointed out in the previous section were part of the anthropology of Jesus and his apostles. This section demonstrates the following: (1) Jesus considered the human being's subjective dimension. For this, some selected texts from the Gospels are addressed. (2) How Jesus dealt subjectively with sin. Some selected texts from the gospels are also tackled. (3) How the apostles dealt subjectively with sin. Some texts from the book of Acts and the epistles are studied.

4.3.2 *Jesus's Subjective Approach*

When reading the gospels, one can identify a peculiar tension between Jesus's objectivity and subjectivity in many of his speeches, as when he talked about eating his flesh and drinking his blood (John 6:51–54), or about the river of living water that would flow from inside whoever believed in him (John 7:37–38). Jesus spoke on these occasions in metaphorical or analogical terms, making a subjective relation between evident and spiritual truths (Borchert 1996, 58; Carson 1991, 294). The same occurred when he declared he would destroy the temple and raise it again in three days (John 2:19), a direct declaration not regarding Jerusalem's temple but of his body. This indirect communication is a warning that divine speech sometimes means more than what is immediately grasped. The author of Hebrews declared, "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son." (Heb 1:1–2).

God spoke in "various ways", and Jesus also spoke in different ways. Vanhoozer (2010, 21–22) uses "divine system projection", referring to Jesus as the perfect projection of God incarnated. Jesus is the accommodation of God's communication to the human level, where he self-reveals to humanity mainly using indirect communication (191). Vanhoozer asserts that this resembles Kierkegaard's

indirect communication concept, concerned with showing, not telling. More than speaking about God, Jesus showed him. For Kierkegaard, indirect communication was subjective and the most important in Christianity because it requires personal engagement (Watkin 2010, 128–129). While objective communication involves a typical teacher and student relation sharing information and facts, they are “soulless”. However, indirect communication requires the whole person to communicate inward truths (Mann 2015, 55; Walsh 2009, 40). It involves allowing people to discover truth “maieutically” for themselves (Rae 2010, 30–31).

Jesus used many parables to communicate subjectively. I agree with Mann (2015, 47–48) that stories have the power to interact with the whole person, not only the mind. Every individual seeks elements in the stories that explain the joys and sufferings of life, seeking points of self-identification. For Aristotle (Arist. Poetic: VI), art, especially tragic narratives, has the power to purify, producing catharsis in human beings. Plato (Plato. Rep., X. 605a–606e) also stated that poetic art elicits the same emotions of the narrative, such as love, anger, painful passions, where the feelings are urged in the listener. This intersubjective dynamic of art puts the listener inside the story, which Jesus explored in different ways. Jesus approached complex subjects that, if communicated objectively, would not generate the same result.

Indirect or subjective communication is essential for involving the communicator’s life as a mediator between the message and the listener. About this, Mann (2015, 105) rightly pointed that “it is only with the presence of the other that we can begin the journey to *at-one-ment* as human beings”. That is why Jesus’s answer to Andrew and John when he began his ministry was “‘Come’, he replied, ‘and you will see’” (John 1:39; NIV). He did not answer objectively but invited them to see, putting himself as the mediator for the truth. Similarly, Andrew invited Nathanael to “come and see”, to evaluate if Jesus was the Messiah (John 1:46). Moreover, the Samaritan woman called Sychar’s men to “come and see” Jesus (John 4:29) to evaluate if he was the Messiah. The Johannine expression “come and see” reveals the subjective character of Christ’s communication approaching people. Jesus’s encounter with people was always an invitation either to believe in him or to be offended by him (Rae 2010, 58; Walsh 2009, 111). He did not only preach the message but was the proper medium of the message. In the differential relationship between the incarnate God and the fallen man, his divinity becomes notorious and man’s fallenness.

When John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask Jesus whether he was the one they expected or if they should wait for another, Christ did not answer objectively (Matt 11:1–6). Jesus could have said “yes” and explained his Messianic ascension describing the fulfillment of the prophecies in his life. Instead, he urged John’s disciples to “hear” and “see” what he was doing (Kierkegaard 1991a, 94; Morris 1992, 275). Jesus responded indirectly, evidencing his miracles, declaring blessed those who believed in him, who did not get offended. True Christianity demonstrates the truth and not only speaks it, wrote Kierkegaard (1991a, 95).

The climax of Jesus’s self-revelation becoming objective happened in Caesarea Philippi when he asked the apostles, “who do you say I am?” (Matt 16:15, NIV). This was the first time that someone objectively acknowledged that he was the Messiah (Blomberg 1992, 251). Jesus’s question tested the disciples’ intuition to see if they grasped who he was (Nolland 2005, 661). Peter’s answer disclosed that “coming and seeing” Jesus’s ministry was how the Father chose to reveal Jesus’s messianic and divine nature (Matt 16:16–17; Blomberg 1992, 251).

Truth is validated when it is embodied. The very meaning of the incarnation of the *logos* is the embodiment of truth (John 1:1–14), not as an abstract and logical expression of bodiless rationality. The *logos* was not present only in Christ’s mind but in his entire self. Jesus’s ministry only took effect because he came in the flesh and was justified in the spirit (1 Tim 3:16). Through his bodily existence, humanity now can see the perfect image of God (John 14:9; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3). Therefore, just as Christ was the incarnation of the divine *logos*, the Christian by faith must incarnate Christ’s truth. Turning Christianity into a rational statement reduces it to something different from the Gospel (Kierkegaard 2013, 227).

Only through a relationship with the incarnated truth can the human being perceive its untruth, self-recognizing as a sinner (Evans 2019, 114; Jothen 2018, 92). Thus, man’s inauthenticity and state of despair become evident in front of Jesus, as the light exposes darkness. Jesus’s approach to the Samaritan woman is an excellent example of how this happened (John 4:1–42). After starting a conversation with the woman, he stated, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” (John 4:10, NIV).

Jesus connected objective reality (water) to a subjective one (living water), stating that while he was thirsty for physical water, she was for the spiritual (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown 1997, 133). The woman did not understand the subjective approach of Christ in the beginning, for she asked how he could take that living water (John 4:11–12; Kruse 2003, 131). Jesus answered again subjectively, saying that whoever drinks from the well will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the living water will never be thirsty (John 4:13–14). Jesus did not objectively accuse the woman of being a sinner, as this approach would probably have scared her. Instead, he invited her to call her husband, touching the wound (John 4:16; Kruse 2003, 133). She declared she had no husband (John 4:17), and at that moment, Christ revealed a double reality to her: that he was a prophet, and she was a sinner (Carson 1991, 220–221). Her thirst was spiritual, and Jesus made the woman turn within to perceive it in her many relationships (Kruse 2003, 134; Borchert 1996, 204; Kierkegaard 1992, 88). Jesus's subjective approach did not use the words "sin" or "guilt" but made the Samaritan perceive herself as a sinner, thirsty for life.

4.3.3 *Jesus's Answer to the Inwardness of Sin*

By sinning, man and woman were expelled from Eden, where God was present, losing three essential elements: the holy place, the father, and the community they had with the Godhead. As developed before, the aesthetic desires for pleasure, to possess and become, which attracted Eve to eat the fruit, imprinted on her subjectivity these three aesthetic longings. I believe the NT reveals how humanity redirected these three aesthetic longings into social longings, after losing the father, the garden, and the community.

Jesus addressed the three-dimensional loss of the father, the community, and the place, several times. First, Christ offered a place in God's presence, providing access to the Kingdom of God through repentance and faith (Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9). Second, he presented God as the Father, desiring the return of his prodigal sons (Matt 6:9; 23:9; Luke 11:2; 15:11–32). Third, Jesus created a new divine community called Church (Matt 16:18–19). Christ scandalized many by calling God his Father (John 5:18), stating that he would go to a place where they could not follow him (John 7:33–36; 13:33), and that he was establishing a new community, a flock for which he as the pastor would lay down his life (John 10:14–19). Jesus was addressing

deep religious longings: for the Father, the holy place, and the community. These religious longings shaped societies, and Jesus offered what genuinely would satiate this thirst.

The reason Jesus told his disciples not to call anyone “father”, declaring that their Father is in heaven, is a clear indication of Jesus’s awareness of the human longing for a fatherly figure for leadership (Matt 23:8). It is unlikely that Jesus was speaking of the natural father here but to the Jewish title given to their rabbis, tutors, and masters of the people (Nolland 2005:928; Morris 1992:577). Any human being should not supply this leadership figure, for humans are always searching for a master, a leader to take over the responsibilities and give direction. When humans give lordship over their lives to another human being, they are exempting themselves from their moral responsibility in front of God.

Concerning the longing for the holy place, Merrill (2009, 279–294) wrote that the Kingdom of God would restore the holy place lost with the expulsion from Eden. The Kingdom of God is one of the most vital subjects in the whole Bible. The expectation for the holy place is perceived in the disciples’ constant longing for the reestablishment of the Kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6–7). Jesus shifted their focus from a political and geographical kingdom to the central theme of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom not from this world (John 18:36). The disciples had this ethnocentric geographical longing based on the OT’s expectation for God’s land restoration (Jer 16:15; 23:8; 50:19; Hos 11:11; Joel 3:17). However, Jesus moved their focus towards a multi-ethnic perspective, revealing the nature of the Kingdom of God (Polhill 1992, 94–95; Gangel 1998:11). From expecting a political kingdom of Israel in Palestine, Jesus moved their eyes to build the spiritual kingdom of God among all peoples throughout the world.

Besides, the community that humanity lost with God was restored with the creation of the Church. A community of brothers and sisters, where no one should rule over others (Matt 20:26–28; 23:8–11; Mark 10:42–44). A community endowed with God’s transcendental authority to act in the immanence of the world (Matt 16:18–19; 18:18–20). The Church is the eschatological community of the Spirit, where every Christian becomes equally part of the same body of Christ, the recipient of God’s promise (Greever 2016; Elwell and Beitzel 1988, 459). I agree with Muller (2013, 277–

278–304) that the Church needs to recover the biblical meaning of community to answer the people's yearnings.

It was amid these human longings that Jesus dealt with the problem of sin. They express how humanity has religiously built its communities, places of possession and chosen its leaders. These are religious longings shaping everything else.

In the following subsections, I will divide the theme also into aesthetic and ethical. I will follow the same Kierkegaardian framework addressed before. I will focus on the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1–7; Luke 6:20–49), as it contains the essence of the Gospel, presenting the absolute ethic of the Kingdom of God (Lopes 2019, 125; Keener 2004, 55), capturing the heart of Jesus's subjective approach to sin. As Augustine stated, "this discourse is thoroughly composed of all the precepts by which the Christian life is formed" (Aug. Serm. 1:1).

4.3.3.1 The Subjectivity of Sin in the Sermon on the Mount

The main term used in this sermon reveals its character, which is μᾰκάριος "blessed", also meaning "happy" (Swanson 1997a, §3421; Liddell et al. 1996, 1073; Louw and Nida 1996, §25.119). Stott (1993, 22) considered it a mistake translating the term as "happy", arguing that Jesus was not addressing the subjective. France (1985, 114), however, argues that "happy" is a better word than blessed because it means "fortunate". Carson (1984, 130–131) declared that the meaning of μᾰκάριος is eschatological, alluding to an ideal state, an expression of the fulfillment of Isaiah 61. The very declaration of "blessed", I argue, contains both objectivity and subjectivity because, throughout history, the Church has interpreted the Beatitudes as a state of well-being in front of God (Houston 1988, 272). Weber (2000, 58) states that the difficulty with the term is because the modern idea of "happiness" is diluted, associated with circumstances, when God's happiness is strictly dependent on his assurance.

The Beatitudes are primarily Jesus's statements about himself, for he fulfilled the whole law (Coenen and Brown 2000, 118). Jesus portrays himself as the prototype of the perfect human, "raised to a higher level" (Barrett 2016a, 43; Walsh 2009, 138–142). He was the truly blessed one, and by stating his blessedness, he also posited the goal for every human (Keener 2004, 55–56). Consequently, listening to the whole sermon, one quickly sees itself as not blessed, becoming aware of being a sinner, a necessary step for repentance and faith (Stott 1993, 26).

Lopes (2019, 129) asserts that the first Beatitudes reveal the right way to approach God. They show that happiness consists of God's right relationship, which begins with the self-perception of misery. Repentance is the path taken through the recognition of misery (Matt 5:3), crossing the valley of tears (Matt 5:4), and humbling in submission to God's justice (Matt 5:5). The whole Sermon on the Mount proclaims salvation through grace and faith, not works, while also affirming the law (Lopes 2019, 131; Stott 1993, 25; Lloyd-Jones 1999, 15–16).

The first Beatitude addresses the poor in spirit (Matt 5:3). The word poor is πτωχός, a word related to a miserable person who has nothing and needs to beg (Lopes 2019, 134; Stott 1993, 28; Swanson 1997a, §4777; Liddell et al. 1996, 1550). To be πτωχός is to be completely broken. The bankruptcy that Jesus is addressing is inward, not financial. The poor in spirit is the spiritless person, like that man who owed a large debt to a king, kneeling in humiliation, begging for mercy (Matt 18:23–27). Consequently, the blessed cries before God. These tears are not from any sadness but of repentance (Lopes 2019, 137; Stott 1993, 30). For crying expresses the internal anguish of guilt, fear, anger, and shame, no longer hiding but exposing them through tears. Only the poor in spirit who recognizes his spiritual misery can genuinely cry in front of God.

Blessed also are the meek, who inherit the Earth (Matt 5:5). The word meek is πραΰς, usually applied to domesticated animals (Lopes 2019, 130; Barclay 2002, 158–159). The word also means gentle, tender, related to someone who has the instincts and passions under control (Swanson 1997a, §4558; Louw and Nida 1996, §88.60; Stott 1993, 32). The individual once distressed now has self-control. The meek do not rise defiantly before God but submit to his will. Anger is no longer an option because the meek learned to submit to the will of God, to keep his strength submitted, his own sense of justice under the perfect divine will (Lopes 2019, 141–143). In the differentiation that humans usually make concerning others, the meek is no longer brought down by the crowd but humbly submits to God.

The meek no longer yearns for self-justice, but for God's righteousness (Matt 5:6). The words "hunger" and "thirst" are the longing for God, depicted many times in

the OT.[37] The idea that Jesus was speaking of physical hunger can be dismissed, for what satisfies it is God's righteousness (Nolland 2005, 202; Morris 1992, 99).

Sin as spiritual hunger is not solved by knowing what sin or salvation is, as hunger is not satisfied by reading about starvation or food. Jesus showed that the proper way to treat sin is not religiously, objectively forbidding what should not be done, but positively, showing how the existential hunger can be truly satiated. Only divine justice can satisfy the existential hunger, represented by the word δικαιοσύνη, "righteousness" (Matt 5:6; Swanson 1997a, §1466; Louw and Nida 1996, §88.13). In the OT, justice was not a mere adjustment to the standards of the law, but a "behavior that is in conformity with the two-way relationship between God and man" (Coenen and Brown 2000, 1120). The justice of δικαιοσύνη is essentially relational, referring to the re-establishment of a right relationship once lost (Rae 2010, 104).

A complexity of laws involves human life: the law between man and himself, man and the other, and God. In this sense, each law refers to a different type of justice, the legal, moral, and social (Lopes 2019, 149; Stott 1993, 34). The NT authors reveal that these three justices are reached only through the God-relation reestablished by Jesus. Legal justice is reached by faith in Christ, who attributes justice to those who believe in him. Moral justice is subjective, embodied in a new inner life, accomplished by mirroring Christ. Social justice is the external practice towards others of imputed justice, imitating Christ. Thus, while legal justice restores man and God's relationship, moral justice restores man's self-coherence, and social justice restores man's relationship with other people (Kierkegaard 2018a, 38; 1992, 61).

Kierkegaard highlighted that in the ethics of the Gospel, justice means love, for "love hides a multitude of sins" (1 Pet 4:8; Prov 10:12; Kierkegaard 2009h, 181; 1992, 64). This is what Jesus declared when he said that the foundation of the law, that is, God's justice and ethics, is reached by loving God with the whole self, and the neighbor as himself (Matt 22:36–40; Mark 12:30–31; Luke 10:25–27). As Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1999, 32) declared, the believer and the unbeliever are distinguished by what they love. Love as justice is why the blessed one offers the other face to the one who

[37] e.g., Psa 42:1–2; 63:1; 107:5–9; 143:6; Isa 49:10; 55:1–2; 65:13; Amos 8:1

offended him, walks another mile, when necessary, and offers the cloak when his tunic was taken (Matt 5:38–42). Only the poor in spirit, the meek, self-domesticated under God's will, can love appropriately. Only the one inwardly blessed can turn his attention externally to the other. Love as justice leads the blessed one to love even his enemies (Matt 5:43–44).

As Augustine wrote, "How will you not sin against God when you sin against love?" (Aug. 1John. 7:5). Kierkegaard argued strongly about this, declaring that love is ethical and religious, as genuine ethics always manifests religiously as love (Kierkegaard 2018a, 130–131; Ferreira 2015, 335). Therefore, sin is the lack of love!

Love permeates the whole Sermon on the Mount, for Jesus called his disciples to love through good works, becoming the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt 5:13–16); teaching that they should love their enemies (Matt 5:21–26; 43–48); declaring that it is necessary to love God above their own honor and praise (Matt 6:1–8,16–18). In addition, Jesus emphasized that God's forgiveness only occurs when the person forgives those who have offended him (Matt 6:14). He said that it is necessary to love God more than possessions (Matt 6:19–21; 24–34). Moreover, he commanded all to treat others the same way as they would like to be treated (Matt 7:12).

Justice as love is depicted as a relational category raised from the dialectic between man and God, man and other men, and between man and himself. Love is the dialectical relationship with God that levels man to the divine image. God is man's reference for existence; consequently, man's relationship with God affects his relationship with other human beings. Moreover, the relationship with others should establish the dialectics of self-love because the man should love himself as he loves the neighbor. That is why the blessed one is not brought down by others but becomes a leveler of society, an agent of love who dialectically affects the world through love. Thus, he becomes salt of the earth and light of the world (Matt 5:13–14), bringing an immanent transformation in the world from the transcendent relationship with God.

Finally, Christ also presented that the intentions are also important (Garrett 2014, 536). Lack of forgiveness and even the cursing of a brother is considered murder, because what happens inwardly is as important as what happens outwardly (Matt 5:21–22). Adultery is not only the sin committed physically, but also the subjective act of imagining the adultery (Matt 5:27–28). The inconsistency between outward and inward is part of Jesus's criticism of the Pharisees and the false prophets

(Matt 15:7–8; 23:14–39; Luke 11:39–54). Jesus warned that the false prophets looked like sheep outwardly, but inside were wolves (Matt 7:15–17). It is through an inward relationship with Christ that good fruit can be produced outwardly. The objective declaration that Jesus is Lord is not enough, for what matters is whether his will was appropriated and embodied by the person in obedience. With these words Jesus makes clear that faith is not a mere rational acceptance of truths.

As demonstrated, the Sermon on the Mount addresses his listeners' inwardness, considering several dimensions of human subjectivity. Sin appears as the unsatiated hunger and thirst for justice and the lack of love. It is the inconsistency between inwardness and outwardness, between saying and being.

4.3.3.2 Christ's Anxiety at Gethsemane

Christ never sinned, but he suffered anxiety to sin in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46). The Synoptics record Jesus's prayer asking, if possible, to prevent him from going to the cross, yet he submitted to God's will (Matt 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42). The emotional intensity of that moment reveals that Christ was probably facing his greatest battle against sin. That was the decisive moment to face death or flee, for the greatest adversary that Jesus needed to overcome was his anxiety. Nevertheless, despite his desire to do otherwise, even sweating blood, which revealed the overwhelming anxiety, Christ submitted to God's will (Lopes 2017a, 630–635; Marshall 1978, 831).

Jesus's anguish is evident in the narrative. Jesus knelt, bowing down in prayer on the ground (Mark 14:35; Luke 22:41), showing the internal prostration and humility he experienced, as it was not customary to pray on the knees at that time (Liefeld 1984, 1032; Marshall 1978, 830). However, it was Jesus's statement, declaring that his soul was sad unto death (Mark 14:34), evidence of how deep his anxiety was. In Luke's narrative, the word ἀγωνία appears, which means agony, anguish, and is the only time this word is used in the entire NT (Luke 22:44; Lopes 2017a, 630; Swanson 1997, §75; Liddell et al. 1996, 19).

The nature of this distress has different interpretations. Lopes (2017a, 632) states that Jesus was not distressed by the possibility of death but by the prospect of separation from the Father (Mark 15:34). Morris (1988a, 330) states that Christ's anxiety could not be because of the cross, as others faced death and did not suffer as Jesus did. For Morris, the anguish was because Jesus would become sin. Marshal (1978, 832) also argued that Christ's anguish was not in the face of death but out of concern for the battle he was going to face. However, these interpretations seem to ignore the text in Hebrews 5:7–8, which says that Jesus cried out with "prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death" (NIV). Although death here probably means more than just his death on the cross, it does include the cross! Ignoring this reality nullifies the human nature of Christ as if the imminence of betrayal, humiliating judgment, and violent death would not affect him.

Interpreting Jesus's anxiety in that garden as only relating to his divinity, ignoring his humanity, is a theological error. His sacrifice was efficient and sufficient

precisely because he faced it as a genuine human being. Jesus's agony in Gethsemane was not simple anxiety which can be understood from a single perspective, for it involved his whole humanity and divinity.

Richards (2007, 188) states that any analysis of Christ's sufferings must be aware that Jesus suffered both as a man and as the Son of God. He argues that it was in Gethsemane that the exposure of the psychological torment that Jesus had carried since the beginning of his ministry was revealed. It involved the fact that Jesus was rejected by his own people, persecuted by religious leaders, was not fully understood by his disciples, was aware of their insensitivity to the importance of that moment. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown (1997, 123) claim that Christ's anguish convulsed his "whole inner man, and this so affecting His animal nature". The internal anguish that Jesus suffered as a man was the real possibility of the emergence of sin. As a perfect man, Jesus stood between two intense realities, acting in favor of God's transcendent will or his immanent human desire.

Jesus's anxiety probably involved the frustrations cited by Richards (2007, 188), which were reason enough for Christ to complain, murmur, express his anger somehow, but he did not. Pannenberg (2008, 136–138) lists frustration and anxiety as preconditions for aggression, and Jesus had enough reasons to attack his disciples or even blame God. The temptation to be angry was overcome by pouring out his anxiety before the Father and not projecting it on others.

Nevertheless, Jesus was not only tempted to be angry but also to be ashamed and afraid. Mann (2015, 86) states that a conflict occurred in Christ, between his ideal-self and his real self. Some psychoanalysts define shame as the tension between the self and the ideal-self (Timpe 1999, 1115; Piers and Singer 2015, 11). Jesus's ideal-self envisioned the fulfillment of his mission by going to the cross. Christ had declared this intent to his disciples (Matt 26:18–29; Mark 14:18–25; Luke 22:15–22), and now was the time to be coherent with it (Mann 2015, 82). Psychoanalysts say that the ideal self is identified as the representative sum of positive aspirations that the self wants to become (Freud 1990, 407; Benner and Hill 1999, 386; Narramore 1999a, 934; Pannenberg 2004, 193). Therefore, not becoming what God had planned would bring shame.

However, Jesus did not only suffer the anxiety of perhaps falling into shame but also of fear and anger. As the author of Hebrews declared, Jesus was tempted in everything but never sinned (Heb 4:15).

The fundamental difference between anxiety and fear is that anxiety is related to non-concretized possibilities and fear of something concrete (Kierkegaard 2011, 45; Grøn 2015, 276; Pannenberg 2008, 139). On the one hand, Jesus anxiously struggled with the possibility of becoming ashamed, also dealing with his frustration pressuring him to be angry. However, on the other, he had the concrete object of the cross, the soldiers, the torture, and the concrete experience of death which he would face. That is why Jesus also experienced fear, as what was at stake was his physical integrity. Jesus had previously told the disciples not to fear those who had the power to kill the body (Matt 10:28; Luke 12:4–5). However, it was in that garden where Jesus overcame fear, subduing his whole self under God's will.

Jesus stated that the spirit was ready, but the flesh was weak (Matt 26:41; Mark 14:38). This is the only reference in the gospels regarding the tension between flesh and spirit, referring to man's inward conflicting drives (Nolland 2005, 1102). Jesus was tempted to do what he was not supposed to do and become whom he was not supposed to become. His flesh wanted to escape the cross (Matt 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42), and at the same time, he did not want to disobey and become a sinner. The sum of all anxieties is expressed in the objective reality that Jesus was tempted to escape and become guilt. The paradox is present because Jesus would have become guilty if he had not accepted God's task to become sin for humanity. Fear, anger, and shame are condensed in Jesus's anxiety.

Jesus overcame his anxiety to the point of sweating blood (Luke 22:44), demonstrating physically the intense connection that these anxieties have with the body. Kierkegaard (2011, 45) defined anxiety as a "sympathetic antipathy and an antipathic sympathy". It is the dizziness in front of freedom and possibilities. Jesus's anxiety reveals that the risk of falling was real because he was human.

4.3.4 *The Apostle's Teaching About the Subjectivity of Sin*

The anthropology of sin in the theology of the apostles is firmly based on the teachings of Christ in the Gospels; however, it developed, facing new questions which challenged the Church in its missionary environment. Matters such as the relationship

between the Christian and sin, the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, and the theme of law and grace arose amid the Church moving and increasingly relating to other peoples (Rom 5–8; Gal 5:16–26; Jas 2:8–13; 1 John 2:1–17; 3:1–24). However, they usually used two different approaches, one ethical and the other aesthetical.

The apostle Paul, for example, using ethical language, declared that the law is fulfilled by loving one's neighbor (Gal 5:14). However, using an aesthetic approach, the apostle spoke of the flesh's works in terms of desire as sexual immorality, idolatry, rage, and other sinful longings (Gal 5:17–21). Thus, first, he addressed sin concerning the law and then in terms of desire, as sinful human longings. Both approaches, whether ethical or aesthetical, are common throughout the NT letters. Therefore, I will divide this into two subsections to treat sin aesthetically and ethically, different angles of the same subject. I argue that the apostles used the dialectic between flesh and spirit as the framework for the anthropology of sin in aesthetic terms and the dialectic of law and grace in ethical terms.

4.3.4.1 The Aesthetics of Sin in the Apostolic Letters

Human desires have special attention concerning sin in the apostolic letters. The apostle Paul treated sin as works of the flesh, using aesthetic vocabulary, relating sin with ἐπιθυμία, desire (Gal 5:17,19; Swanson 1997a, §2123; Louw and Nida 1996, §25.20). He stated that only by seeking satisfaction in the spirit, the Christian ceases to seek gratification in the flesh, for flesh and spirit are always in opposition (Gal 5:16; Bedford 2016, 169; George 1994, 385; Bruce 1982, 243). It is therefore fundamental to understand the apostolic teaching regarding human desires.

In the LXX, the word ἐπιθυμία and ἐπιθυμέω express typical human desires, sometimes used for praiseworthy yearnings (Gen 31:30; Isa 58: 2), sometimes for ungodly longings (Exod 20:17; Num 11:4,34; Deut 9:22), and others for morally indifferent desires (Deut 12:20-21; Coenen and Brown 2000, 524). It is good evidence that desire itself is not good or evil, as ἐπιθυμία was used for different cases. In the Gospels, these words also appeared expressing good desires (Matt 13:17; Luke 17:22; 22:15), morally neutral longings (Luke 15:16; 16:21), and sinful ones (Matt 5:28; Mark 4:19). The two texts in the synoptic gospels where ἐπιθυμία means evil desire, it appears directly related to desiring a woman (Matt 5:28) and world possessions

(Mark 4:19). When ἐπιθυμία is used as evil desire, it involves the desire for pleasure, possessions and becoming, the already addressed three fundamental longings (Kruse 2000, 95; Moo 2000, 74; Gal 5:16–21; Jas 1:14; 2 Pet 2:10; 1 John 2:16). The problem is not the desire itself but how it is satisfied.

In Paul's writings, ἐπιθυμία appears as an expression of the desire for sin that rules man, coining the theological term concupiscence, lust. When Paul talks about good desires, he prefers the words ἐπιποθῶ (Rom 1:11), ἐπιπόθησις (2 Cor 7:7), and ἐπιποθία (Rom 15:23; Coenen and Brown 2000, 525). In the Pauline theology, ἐπιθυμία seeks gratification in pleasure, in possessing and becoming, disconnected of God's will (Rom 1:24; 1 Tim 6: 9; Titus 3: 3; Gal 5:16:21). It is important to note that this evil desire is not only sexual, as Augustine, unfortunately, wrote (Aug. City. 14. 14–17; Pannenberg 2009b, 350–351).

For Paul, the lust's origin is the flesh (Gal 5:16–17), which induces a different objective of the Spirit (Bedford 2016, 169). Paul associates the desires from the μέλος, "members of the body" that are τά ἐπί τῆς γῆς, literally "on the earth", needing to be killed (Col 3:5; Swanson 1997a, §3517; Louw and Nida 1996, §63.17). It is a reference to all bodily senses. The idea that Paul taught ascetism here is wrong (Bedford 2016, 169). Paul is not contrasting body and soul, neither body and spirit, because flesh in Hebrew thought represented human limitation, fragility, and mortality, while the Spirit was related to God's action in the human being (Keener 2004, 554–555; Coenen and Brown 2000, 277–278). The contrast between living by the flesh or in the Spirit is not a Hellenistic idea but fundamentally Judeo-Christian.

Jesus rebuked Peter for not having "in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt 16:23, NIV). This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Colossians: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Col 3:2, NIV). Paul's teaching that the flesh needs to be killed is analogous to Jesus's teaching to gouge out the eyes and cut off the hands if they were mediums of evil desires (Matt 5:29–30; Ashby 2009, 2025).

Paul deepens this discussion in his epistle to the Romans, speaking of God's wrath for those who do not discern divine justice (Rom 1:18), who "exchange the truth of God for a lie" (Rom 1:25). The wrath is for both, whether the Gentiles who rejected

God's revelation in nature and the Jews who refused special revelation (Rom 1:18–3:23; Lopes 2017, 76; Allen 2009, 1828–1829). Hence God gave "them over in the sinful desires" (Rom 1:24, NIV). Paul describes the Gentile world as a den of addictions dominated by the passions of the flesh, where desires enslave humans in self-degradation (Rom 1:24–32; Lopes 2017, 76). The apostle Paul claimed that these men "invent ways of doing evil" (Rom 1:30), therefore, including imagination, for God gave them over to an ἀδόκιμος νοῦς, meaning a unrighteous or lawless mind (Swanson 1997a, §99, §3808; Liddell et al. 1996, 24; Rom 1:28, NIV). Thus, sin becomes a distorted lens, corrupting the imagination continually, making "all plans, efforts and endeavors" vain, as Luther (1976, 45) wrote. It is a recursive cycle within man's consciousness, for man becomes what he thinks and thinks what he becomes (Prov 4:23; 23:7; Lopes 2017, 92). In this recursivity, the sinful desires feed the imagination, which again desires in a new intensity and way, reinventing sin itself (Rom 1:26–31). While the acts of sin become increasingly wicked, the mind becomes gradually depraved.

The Pauline letters did not blame ignorance, the unawareness of God, as the source of sin, but the deliberate rejection of divine truth in nature and their conscience, which is why humanity is abandoned to its desires (Rom 1:18–21; Champlin 2020, 691; Allen 2009, 1828; Mounce 1995, 78). It is not God who first abandoned human beings, but humans who suffocate and repress God's objective and subjective knowledge (Rom 1:24; Eph 4:17–19; Lopes 2017–83). Paul repeats this three times, emphasizing that God abandoned them to their desires (Rom 1:24), to their shameful passions (Rom 1:26), and a corrupted mind (Rom 1:28), for the moral degradation is a result of God's wrath, not its reason (Mounce 1995, 81). Desire, passion, and a corrupted mind are the punishment enslaving the sinful man. As Luther (1976, 45) wrote, "the human mind is so inclined by nature that as it turns from the one (God), it of necessity becomes addicted to the other".

In Romans 1, Paul addressed the aesthetic dimension of sin, arguing that desire and passion become mediums of God's wrath, experienced in the body (Rom 1:27), which promotes anguish consequently (Rom 2:8–9; Champlin 2020, 686; Mounce 1995, 81). Thus, God's wrath is revealed within man, in an aesthetic aspect, as an endless search for an unsatisfying pleasure.

While for the apostle Paul, the desires come from the flesh, in the Johannine writings, they come from the world (1 John 2:16), whose ultimate origin is the Devil (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8). John defined the attraction that the world exerts on the flesh talking about three different desires: the lust of the flesh, which seeks satisfaction through pleasures; the lust of the eyes, which seeks contentment in the beauty that can be possessed; and the pride of life, which pursues self-contentment away from God (Frame 2013, 864; Akin 2001, 110–111; Kruse 2000, 95–96). These desires instigate thoughts, feelings, imaginations, raising wrong ideas (Coenen and Brown 2000, 526). The apostle John contrasted the ἐπιθυμία with love, for either one loves God or desires what the world offers (1 John 1:15–17; Kruse 2000, 95). While ἐπιθυμία longs for self-satisfaction, love longs for God's satisfaction.

Therefore, when the human desire is not redeemed and submitted to love God, it always becomes idolatry. Either humans love God and worship him or love and desire other things. Moreover, John's emphasis is also not on ignorance but on love. The problem of evil desire is not lack of knowledge but the heart set to love wrongly.

John's three types of desires, previously mentioned, are different expressions of man's ἐπιθυμία, as the attraction to sin in different forms. By looking at the different lists of vices and sins in the NT,[38] each one can be easily associated to one of the three frameworks of desires for pleasure, possession, and pride, the so-called lust of the flesh, of the eyes and the pride of life.

The apostle Peter also followed the same perspective as Paul and John, arguing that the flesh conflicts with the soul, producing sinful passions (1 Pet 2:11; 4:3). The human flesh is its weakness and finitude in contrast to God's power (1 Pet 1:24; 3:18; 4:1–2; Schreiner 2003, 120–121). Those who live according to the flesh are dominated by its desires (2 Pet 2:10), having eyes full of adultery, a heart exercised in greed, and a mouth full of vanities (2 Pet 2:14,18). Peter chose the word "soul" instead of "spirit" as Paul did, which is another good indication that what the apostles

[38] Matt 15:19; Mark 7:21–23; Rom 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20–21; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 4:31; 5:35; Col 3:5–8; 1 Tim 1:9–10; 6:4–5; 2 Tim 3:2–4; Titus 1:7; 3:3; 1 Pet 2:1; 4:3,15; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15.

were teaching was the same as their emphasis was on the opposition between interiority and exteriority.

James also offers a crucial approach regarding desires. He declared that each person is tempted by his ἐπιθυμία, placing the responsibility of sin on the human being (Jas 1:14; Unger 2006, 634; Moo 2000, 75–76; Richardson 1997, 81). No one is forced to sin, as God cannot be held responsible for temptations (Jas 1:13). Human desires can direct the person to seek satisfaction in what the world offers, outside God's will (Bedford 2016, 171; Lopes 2017b, 26). As "every good and perfect gift is from above" (Jas 1:17; NIV), man's longings need to be directed towards God to produce good fruits from above. As Pearcey (2018, 97) stated, unlike Eastern asceticism, which suppresses human desires, the Bible teaches the correct way to satisfy them.

James teaches that desires can instigate imagination, making the person συλλαμβάνομαι, "pregnant" with sin (Jas 1:15; Swanson 1997a, §5197; Louw and Nida 1996, §23.49). Instigated by the sensual world, desires can impregnate the mind with sinful ideas, producing anxiety that pressures inwardly for concretization, or birth, as Kierkegaard argued (Kierkegaard 2011, 62–66; Jothen 2018, 4; Rae 2010, 91; Richardson 1997, 81). Kierkegaard (2015, 21) calls this "birth" a "poetic" production.

This poetic production is because of the verb ποιέω, used in James 1:22–23, meaning "to do", "to produce". (Swanson 1997a, §4475; Liddell et al. 1996, 1427). James wrote that Christians need to be ποιητής, "practitioners", "poets" and not only listeners of God's word (Coenen and Brown 2000, 2542; Davids 1982, 96). Every human is composing something in himself, where the Christian poetizes the word of God (Jas 1:22). Similarly, the apostle Paul wrote that Christians are ποίημα, poem, handiwork, of God in Christ (Eph 2:10; Liddell et al. 1996, 1429). The Christian is God's masterpiece, his poem to the world (Barth 2008, 226–227). As the poet is an artist who produces out of an idea, James was urging, just as Paul did, the need to poetize from God's word instead of personal desires (Jas 1:22–23; Rom 2:13).

Similarly, the apostle Paul claimed that Christ needed to be μορφωθῇ, "formed" in the lives of the Galatians (Gal 4:19), and urged the Romans to be μεταμορφοῦσθε, "transformed" by the renewal of their minds (Rom 12:2; Swanson 1997a, §3672, §3565; Louw and Nida 1996, §58.4, §13.53). The Christian life is depicted as giving

birth to Christ from the Spirit, through the mind into the body (Rom 13:14; Gal 4:19; Bedford 2016, 169).

The use of aesthetic words like these is more than a mere analogy. Scripture shows that every human is a poet, where the sinner composes from his imagination alone, having the sensual world as his object of love. The sinner lives an endless recursive process of desire, becoming pregnant with ideas, giving birth as a new sin, and desire again. As humanity sees itself without limits, everything becomes possible, and the only absolute truth is the endless experimentation for self-invention (Hobson and Edgar 2019, 40). It is necessary to differentiate the concept of self-poetize or self-invention raised from atheistic existentialism from the idea of self-poetize expected from Christians. Kierkegaard emphasized that one is one who creates himself poetically, and the other is the Christian, who allows himself to be formed poetically by God (Kierkegaard 2015, 217; Walsh 2009, 75–76). To live poetically is to live as an artist, beholding Jesus as the model to be painted, and the self as the canvas receiving the portrait (Eph 4:22–24; Jas 1:25; Jothen 2018, 1–2).

4.3.4.2 The Ethics of Sin in the Apostolic Letters

While the aesthetical self is related to the dialectic between flesh and spirit, the ethical relates to the law and grace. Whether it is the subjective law within the self (Rom 7:21–23), or the divine law revealed (Rom 2:17–29; Gal 3:10–13), or the social law between the Christian and the other (Gal 5:14), the subject of law is essential to the study of sin.

The law's importance can be perceived in words referring to sin and sinners throughout the NT letters. As is well known, ἁμαρτία, "sin" is derived from the meaning of "missing the mark", "failing", raising the question of what is the mark missed (Champlin 2018a, 1318; Coenen and Brown 2000, 1602; Swanson 1997a, §281; Louw and Nida 1996, §88.289). In the NT, sin also appears as a synonym of transgression, which is the word παράβασις, meaning "to go past", "overstep", "transgress", also raising the question of what is transgressed (Coenen and Brown 2000, 1608; Swanson 1997a, §4126; Louw and Nida 1996, §36.28). Both ἁμαρτία and παράβασις refer to the act of moving towards a wrong target. The law is what objectifies the target. Any

direction other than God's law is a wrong goal. Consequently, the person himself becomes ἁμαρτία, παράβασις, for he is in the subjective movement away from God.

The apostle John also defined sin as ἀνομία**,** "without law" (1 John 3:4; Swanson 1997a, §490; Louw and Nida 1996, §88.139), a term widely used in other apostolic writings.[39] Similarly, he declared that all unrighteousness, ἀδικία is also sin (1 John 5:17). The word ἀδικία means "no-righteous", "no-just" (Coenen and Brown 2000, 1599; Swanson 1997a, §94; Louw and Nida 1996, §88.21), and is also used several times in the apostolic letters.[40] Both ἀδικία and ἀνομία are denials of the law, referring to God's law in general but mainly the Mosaic (Garrett 2014, 527).

Another word widely used throughout the NT is παράπτωμα,[41] meaning "transgression," referring to an offense against the law (Coenen and Brown 2000, 1611–1612; Swanson 1997a, §4183; Louw and Nida 1996, §88.297). Whether παράπτωμα, ἁμαρτία, ἀδικία, or ἀνομία, the words always have the law as reference.

The concept of sin as a subjective movement away from God is present throughout the apostles' teachings. The idea that there are two existential paths, one of peace and one of destruction (Rom 3:16–17), one that fulfills the law by faith and the other that tries by works (Eph 2:8–9), evidence two distinct movements. For either the person is in the existential path of righteousness or unrighteousness, law, or lawlessness. While the terms ἁμαρτία and παράβασις refer to the movement itself that is sin, the terms ἀδικία and ἀνομία refer to the individual in the movement of sin. Even though sin and the sinner are distinct, subjectively, they are indistinguishable, as sin is the proper individual missing the mark.

Peter's word to Simon, the magician, demonstrates how the apostle blamed him "captive to sin" (Acts 8:23, NIV). The word translated as "captive" is σύνδεσμος which means "bond", "unite" (Swanson 1997a, §5278; Liddell et al. 1996, 1701). The

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[39] e.g., Rom 4:7; 6:19; 1 Cor 9:21; 2 Cor 6:14; 2 Thess 2:3,7; 1 Tim 1:9; Titus 2:14; Heb 1:9; 10:17; 2 Pet 2:8; 1 John 3:4

[40] e.g., Rom 1:18, 29; 3:5; 6:13; 1 Cor 13:6; 2 Thess 2:10, 12; Heb 8:12; 1 John 1:9; 5:17

[41] e.g., Matt 6:14–15; Mark 11:25–26; Rom 4:25; 5:15–20; 11:11–12; 2 Cor 5:19; Gal 6:1; Eph 1:7; 2:1, 5; Col 2:13.

apostle was saying that Simon was in unity, in bond with non-righteousness. Simon was indeed committed to greed and not to the Spirit (Acts 8:18–19; Lopes 2017c, 178–179; Polhill 1992, 220). Simon's story shows the discrepancy between inwardness and outwardness, for he publicly accepted Philips's preaching and was baptized (Acts 8:13), but inwardly he was still bound to sin. The preaching of the Gospel, and the experience of God's power through the apostle's hands, were not enough for Simon's conversion because he was still bonded to the movement of sin. Peter's rebuke of Simon makes clear that he still needed to repent.

The movement of sin is not ignorance but the human volitional denial of God's will (Lopes 2017, 83). It is the rejection of the inward longing for God, where the person deliberately hardens the heart (Eph 4:18; Champlin 2020, 691). Consequently, a "futile thinking" (Rom 1:21), a "depraved mind" (Rom 1:28), and a corrupted conscience (Titus 1:15) distort the gaze of the self, seeing all through deception. Even when seeing God's law, the corrupted conscience produces sinful desires (Rom 7:8–11), and a weak conscience interprets innocent acts as evil (1 Cor 8:7; Wall 1992, 1129). As Adam and Eve saw shame imprinted on their nakedness, fallen humans see God's law also distorted, which is the concept of "depravity" (Garrett 2014, 556; Frame 2013, 865–871; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1645).

It was Paul who connected the Hebrew idea of heart with the Greek concept of conscience, *συνείδησις*, pictured as a universal capacity in every human being, capable of perceiving right and wrong (Rom 2:15; Wall 1992, 1129; Bruce 1985, 97). The word *συνείδησις* is derived from the union of the words *σύν* and *οἶδα*, meaning "with knowledge", fitting the idea of the self-relating knowledge (Garrett 2014, 576; Swanson 1997a, §5250, §3857). Thus, conscience is the inward connection between heart, thoughts, and memory, where Paul states that the work of the law is written in the heart, where conscience bears witness; that is, it relates to itself. In this case, conscience is the proper self, but self-related, as Kierkegaard (2010, 25) also defined. Inwardly, the conscience can work as another self within the self, and this is why Paul often talks about the conscience as a witness (Rom 9:1; 1 Cor 4:4; 2 Cor 1:12). Freud called the superego this another-self within the self, the self's internalization of morality and judgment (Müller 2013, 40; Pannenberg 2004, 194; Thiselton 2002,110; Narramore 1999, 1186).

Paul wrote that the “requirements of the law” are written in the hearts; therefore, they are inexcusable (Rom 2:1–16; NIV). First, Paul states that Gentiles are without excuse for rejecting God’s general revelation; second, he argues that Jews are also without excuse for rejecting the law in special revelation (Lopes 2017, 101–102). Each one is judged according to the light received, whether it is the moral law subjectively present in conscience or the objective law revealed by God (Champlin 2020, 711–712; Lopes 2017, 113; Boa and Kruidenier 2000, 79). The human conscience is the inward witness called by Paul to evidence the universality of sin (Rom 2:15).

However, Paul did not claim that the Gentiles have the divine law in their hearts, as this was promised only to the Church (Jer 31:33; 2 Cor 3:3; Mounce 1995, 95; Morris 1988, 126). He claimed that the conscience, as the natural human ability to perceive what is right and wrong, also allows some attributes of God to be discovered naturally; however, the pagan willfully represses this knowledge (Evans 2019, 41). Paul shows that there are aspects of God revealed in nature that can be discerned empirically (Rom 1:18–20), placed by God so man could seek and find him (Acts 17:27). The conscience is the witness of ignoring such knowledge, aware of its self-incoherence.

Kierkegaard (1985, 192–192) stated that people are “unwilling to let what they know (that the God exists) get control of their minds”. For, as man has the truth of God’s existence inwardly, the denial is a direct self-contradiction, or in Freudian terms, a “repressed knowledge” (Evans 2019, 52), a “cognitive dissonance”, as also stated by Pearcey (2018, 31). Ethically speaking, sin is this willful repression of knowledge, leading to the state of existential inconsistency.

This repressed knowledge is forgotten, and the inconsistency is pushed to the unconscious, becoming a hidden presence. As deception dominates conscience, and the self is alienated from God and himself, this alienation produces an unconscious law that the apostle Paul identified in himself (Rom 7:21–23). The apostle wanted to do what was right, but he did what was wrong. Many commentators wrote numerous arguments to demonstrate that either Paul was addressing his life before redemption or after, with arguments on both sides (e.g., Champlin 2020, 836; Lopes 2017, 268–270; Allen 2009, 1843–1844; Osborn 2004, 180–182; Stott 2001, 205–206; Mounce 1995, 166–167). However, the change to the present tense in the text is strong

evidence that Paul was speaking of an actual struggle, not an old one (Rom 7:14–25), coherent with the struggle between flesh and spirit.

The apostle Paul identified a tension between God's law and this strange law present in his body. A tension between transcendence and immanence within. It was within but hidden as the apostle Paul declared he did not understand what he was doing (Rom 7:15), only that he could not do what he wanted (Rom 7:18). Perhaps Paul was quoting Ovid, who wrote: "I see the right, and I approve it too. Condemn the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue" (Ovid. Meta. VII, 19.20). He could also be quoting Epictetus, who wrote, "He who errs does not wish to err, but to be right, it is plain that he does not do what he wishes" (Epic. Disc. II.26). Ovid and Epictetus evidence that human beings can perceive their self-inconsistency only by looking inward. However, regardless of the possible influence on Paul, the fact is that he recognized in himself more than Ovid and Epictetus did, a hidden law within.

Freud's concept of unconsciousness intends to explain the person's hidden and predominant drives (LaPine 2020, 294; Narramore 1999, 1236; Freud 1990, 428). As a sum of inward impulses, Freud's unconsciousness is deeply rooted in the body, which is precisely what Paul addressed, the law in his "members" (Rom 7:23). It is a container of instinctual drives in Freud's thought (McCulloch 1999, 603). Although Freud made an atheistic reading of human subjectivity, some of his conclusions converged with biblical revelation. He, for example, considered the idea that the human being is by nature good as an "unsupported illusion", for humanity is inherently turned to aggressivity (Freud 1990, 788; Pannenberg 2008, 129–130). Moreover, the inexplicability of man's tendency to evil, present in infants, and Freud's various studies on human neuroses also discloses humanity in pathological despair.

The tension described by the apostle Paul was between his conscience of the law and the unconscious law present in his body. The law in his body refers to the aesthetic dimension of selfhood, which is sensual and pulses towards satisfaction. The awareness of the law clashes his aesthetical self with his ethical self, creating this tension between what he wants and what he needs to do. His awareness of the divine law and his inability to fulfill it generated a conscience of despair, as he cried, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24; NIV). As Kierkegaard (2010, 32) asserted, despair is wanting to get rid of yourself, but at the same time not wanting.

The Pauline approach to the question of sin has many parallels with Kierkegaard's types of despair. One is the despair of the pagan who is unconscious of his guilt, as he is unaware of God's special revelation and his state of condemnation (Kierkegaard 2010, 63; Evans 2019, 30). The pagans repress God's truth. Condemnation itself is a state of alienation, tribulation, and anguish, unconscious for them (Rom 2:8–10). In this despair, God abandons them to a purely aesthetic existence, subjecting them to their sensual desires and passions (Rom 1:24, 26, 28; Kierkegaard 2010, 61). The second category of despair is the conscious one, with different degrees of this consciousness related to the awareness of sin (Kierkegaard 2010, 67; Evans 2019, 31). These degrees involve self-awareness, as the law within reveals the self-inconsistency as the pagans Epictetus and Ovid perceived (Ovid. Meta. VII: 19.20; Epic. Disc. II.26). Paul declared that both would perish, the pagans without law, unconscious of their guilt, and those who are conscious, who try to justify themselves in different ways (Rom 2:12–29).

Kierkegaard divided religiosity into Religiousness A and B (Watkin 2010, 212; Roberts 2007, 135; Kierkegaard 2016, 269). Religiousness B is authentic Christianity. Religiousness A is a general religiosity that seeks the spiritual in its own way, however, without faith in Christ. Religiousness A involves those in a state of alienation and despair, relating to God or their concept of God only through the intelligible universe. Kierkegaard (2016, 271) stated that this religiosity is not only found in pagans but also in nominal Christians.

I argue that Kierkegaard (2011, 100–103) was very Pauline in his approach about the pagan's anxiety. With Paul, Kierkegaard affirms that the pagan has some knowledge of God from nature and its conscience; however, he represses it (Acts 14:15–17; 17:23–30; Rom 1:18–32; 2:14–16; Garrett 2014, 52–54).[42] Kierkegaard states that in sinfulness, the pagan is not aware of his anguish and condition of guilt in front of God, existing in alienation. For Kierkegaard, men who live in religiousness A were spiritually awakened by God's immanence in creation, even though their

[42] Karl Barth's interpretation (Barth 2004e, CD III.1, 119) that the general revelation in Romans 1 refers to those who had already received special revelation is simply unconvincing. He interpreted the whole text under the statement of Romans 1:17, considering that those of whom Paul speaks in the later verses had already heard the gospel. Barth seems to neglect other texts that demonstrate the role of creation in divine revelation (Psa 19:1–6; Acts 14:17; 17:26–28).

conceptions of the divine are wrong (Evans 2019, 46; Jothen 2018, 191). A self within this religiosity seeks to achieve the divine through reason, intuition, and his own strength but lives in an existential contradiction of failure, a state of subjective anxiety causing despair, as the apostle Paul also taught (Rom 7; Gal 3). Consequently, the subjective anxiety urges within in many ways (Kierkegaard 2011, 103–104). I have already argued that they are manifested as fear, shame, and anger.

This subjective anxiety is superior in the Jew and the nominal Christian because they are conscious of God's law and their state of guilt (Kierkegaard 2011, 112–114). In this conscious despair, which is the edge between Religiousness A and B, only faith in Christ can solve. As presented, Kierkegaard's approach was very Pauline, depicting the gradation of man's consciousness of sin, offering good insights that theology can apply to its psychology, practical theology, missiology, and possibly other disciplines.

The great mistake the Church can make is addressing the pagan using the category of guilt when he is not aware of God's law, or even the concept of guilt. The pagan has inward anxieties as witnesses of self-incoherence, expressed in a multiform way, which the Church must engage. Furthermore, the conflict between the law of the unconscious and the law of God generates guilt that can lead to salvation when faith is presented. However, sometimes the Church promotes the increase of guilt through moralistic postures that increase the pressure by neglecting the corporeal immanence of sin, reducing salvation only to the transcendent doctrine of justification. A multidimensional view of sin requires a multidimensional soteriology.

4.4 Final Considerations

Developing an anthropology of sin from the biblical account provides useful tools for a Church which needs to grow in self-knowledge. Dealing with sin only through its objectivity, that is, affirming what is or is not sin, makes Christianity a legalistic religion, not so different from what Paul denounced in his letters.

In a hedonistic world increasingly involved by the aesthetics of entertainment, it is necessary to rediscover the aesthetic concepts of biblical anthropology; redeem the imagination by bringing awareness of its role in the conduct of human existence, recovering the role of holy passions in this time of corrupted aesthetics. Understanding how sins are expressed in man in a self-destructive recursivity and learning how to lead people to find balance in the whole self. Likewise, in a world of post-truths and

lack of absolutes, nothing is more solid for people than their subjective reality of guilt, shame, fear, and anger experienced. These subjective truths are solid points of contact between their subjectivity and God's objective revelation in Scripture. As Jesus approached the Samaritan woman, theology also needs to approach people today because humanity is hungry for pleasure, possession, and honor while still suffering from guilt and its subjective expressions of shame, fear, and anger. Whether aesthetically or ethically, humanity tries to solve its despair.

Kierkegaard (2004, 493) wrote that every person develops a particular view of life and establishes its own purpose, that directly shapes the person's religiosity and worldview, where those who live aesthetically live for themselves, their pleasure and self-satisfaction through an immanent religion (494)(Rae 2010, 85). Even when this satisfaction is due to the enjoyment of developing talents, as poetic, mathematical, religious, or others, they have self-satisfaction as the goal; therefore, they are their own idols (Kierkegaard 2004, 496). Those who choose to live ethically live in service of the rational, like a law, an idea, an ethic, or society itself, which is not immanent, subjective, but transcendent to the self, becoming a religion. While pagan religiosity is subjective, immanent, ethical religiosity is objective, transcendent. Therefore, whether aesthetically or ethically, sin leads people to different types of idolatry.

Every man has an inward calling to accomplish a vital duty given by God, inherent present in God's image. However, without a proper relationship with him, the lack of revelation also implies a lack of self-knowledge, leading to the invention of religious duties and alienated worldviews. Anyone who accepts an ethical system as a transcendent purpose of life, giving a sense of spiritual duty, whether it is social, cultural, or religious, needs to hear Paul's words that work save no one, but only faith in Christ (Rom 3:28; Eph 2:8–9; Titus 3:4–7; Rae 2010, 88). Ascetic monks, philosophers, and soldiers who self-sacrifice in war; all live for human ideologies, giving them a moral purpose, a religious life view, and worldview.

Therefore, whether the person lives in the aesthetic sphere, enslaved by his desires (flesh, eyes, and pride; cf. 1 John 2:16); or lives in the ethical, seeking to fulfill an existential purpose that solves his problem of guilt, shame, fear, and anger, the person is in despair. His state of sin is of inconsistency with himself, with others, and with God. As Mann (2015, 29) wrote, there is "a breakdown between who they would like to be and the reality of who they are". Still, this self-inconsistency is repressed,

hidden by the self who chooses to live in denial, creating a system of alienation (Eph 2:12; 4:17–18; Col 1:21). This alienation is the state of untruth, where the human being does what disapproves, living an ironic existence.

To conclude, based on everything discussed in this chapter, I identified four categories of subjective sin in human beings: (1) Aesthetically sin is expressed as a desire to experience, have, and be, represented by the lust of the flesh, eyes, and the pride of life. Aesthetic sin directly affects the senses and imagination. (2) Ethically, sin is an offense to God's law, which is guilt. Sin is guilt which subjectively presents itself as shame, fear, and anger. (3) Religiously, sin is expressed in three ways, the first as untruth, where the human being is alienated from himself, from the other, and God, living in denial. The second is pride, where humans, like Eve, defiantly do what God does not want. The third is sloth, which, like Adam, exempts himself from doing what God wants. (4) Finally, sin is socially expressed in three shared longings: for a Father, the lost place, and the holy community.

In the next chapter I intend to systematize and apply theologically what was found until now regarding the anthropology of sin.

Chapter 5

A Theological Formulation for a Contemporaneous Anthropology of Sin

5.1 Introduction

A Kierkegaardian reading of what it means to be human and its relationship with sin enriches a new perspective for theology. Kierkegaard's approach helps rescue the biblical essence of what it means to exist as a human being and understand sin in subjective terms. Who is the human being, or what sin is, are questions answered differently by previous theologians, as demonstrated earlier. However, Kierkegaard awakened the importance of subjectivity in human existence, and what it means to sin.

As a subjective reality, sin exists in human beings. Sin is not an objective thing that can be identified separately from human beings. It is subjective and exists symbiotically in human subjectivity, making human life incoherent with itself, the other and God. Thus, human existence is wrapped in sin and its consequences, interacting with human psychology, biology, and intersubjective dynamics in society, culture, the arts, that is, in everything. That is why I speak of an anthropology of sin, as it is not possible to study the human without dealing with sin, or study sin without studying the human.

This chapter develops a proposal for a new theological anthropology of sin, considering the main findings highlighted from the previous chapters, raising new insights. The chapter begins with a systematic approach to the main subjects of this anthropology and then tackles its implications.

It starts by asking theologically what it means to be human. The section will explore different dimensions of the human being to answer this question, addressing it as God's theomorphism, as a kinetic, and as a recursive self. Each dimension

unfolds different aspects of selfhood, whether theologically, psychologically, philosophically, or sociologically. The subsequent section addresses the question of what it means to be a sinner. It starts studying the subjective heredity of sin, offering a Kierkegaardian proposal for the problem. It also formulates a kinetic ontology of sin, suggesting a new interpretation for the problem of evil and sin. In addition, it addresses the aesthetic of sin in terms of relationship with desire and imagination, and the ethic of sin, in terms of vices and the consequences of a disrupted conscience. It demonstrates that the aesthetic of sin engages the attraction to evil and the inception of sin. In contrast, the ethics of sin involves its subjective consequences. Feelings of fear, shame, anger, and guilt are addressed as subjective expressions of sin, as consequences of sin inwardly apprehended.

The last part of this chapter addresses some implications of this anthropology of sin for different areas. It is not an exhaustive section but points to other research topics raised by this work. It raises new questions so that theology can rethink other theological problems in light of this research.

Although this chapter deals with several seemingly abstract concepts, each principle has concrete consequences in human life. This essentially theological chapter builds an anthropology from a synthesis between biblical revelation, historical theologians' interpretations, and Kierkegaard's thought. It is essential to emphasize that even though this is a Kierkegaardian approach, it is not strictly Kierkegaard's anthropology, for here I am also in dialogue with other concepts, proposing a fresh perspective.

5.2 What it Means to Be Human

What it means to be human is the most critical question for anthropology, which has vital theological unfolding. Objectively, to be human is to be God's image. However, what does it mean subjectively? What does it mean to me, a human? In other words, what does it mean to exist as a human who is supposed to reflect God? How can one "become" God's image?

To answer these questions, the following subsection will summarize the theological teaching regarding God's image, addressing the human as God's theomorphism. After, it will address the human being ontologically, using a Kierkegaardian ontology in terms of a kinetic self. Subsequently, I will propose an

approach that considers the human as a recursive self. This section is at the same time a summary of findings from the previous sections, dialoguing with modern and contemporaneous theologians, which also raises new questions and implications for further studies.

5.2.1 *The Human Being as God's Theomorphism*

For Tertullian and Origen, God's image in humanity was the reason, a faculty of the soul (Tert. Soul. 16; Osborn 2001, 164; Orig. Princ.1.1.5). For Augustine, it was the soul (Aug. Trin. 11.11–12; McGrath 2013, 59), which he envisaged as a trinity of intelligence, memory, and will (Aug. Trin. 11.11–12). In the same way, Thomas Aquinas conceived God's image as the soul in terms of rationality and will (Thom. Sum. 1.93.6; Hoekema 2018, 49; Petri 2016, 220–221). This rationalization of God's image fragmented the Christian concept of the human being into two or three parts, reducing the divine resemblance to reason.

For Luther, God's image meant to be satisfied in God, only possible in Christ after death, because the man had lost God's image by sinning (Raunio 2010, 35–36; Luther 1904, 115). Karl Barth rejected the previous theology that considered the *imago* to be some property or capacity of the human being, claiming that God's image was an existence in dialectical confrontation (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,184), probably influenced by Heidegger's philosophy (Webster 2004, 59; Oshima 1973). He rejected the *analogia entis*, the analogy between God and man, proposing his *analogia relationis* (Barth 2004e, CD III.1,195; Hoekema 2018, 65). However, for Wolfhart Pannenberg, the image was not revealed in the creation, but only in Jesus, God's eschatological image for humanity (Echeverría 2013, 748; Pannenberg 2009b, 316–317). God's image for him was the goal.

Therefore, historically, three main interpretations of God's image can be recognized: essentialist (similitude in man's essence), relational (similitude as a dialectical relation), and functional (similitude as a function or a task) (Jančovič 2019). Each perspective has a value that should not be rejected or assumed as uniquely correct, for all depict different angles of the same subject revealed in the Bible.

I argue, however, that theology needs to develop an integrated perspective considering the three elements together, as similarly proposed by others (e.g., Hoekema 2018, 81–118; Garrett 2014, 463), though following Kierkegaard's

anthropological framework. Kierkegaard's thought presented the human as a multidimensional being, a bio-psycho-social-spiritual creature, integrated but with different relations that also constitute him. The different angles of the *imago* presented are correlated and determine the human identity in four fundamental theological truths that should be acknowledged: (1) In order to know who the human being is, it is necessary to know who God is, for to be human is to exist as God's image, therefore a theomorphism; (2) To comprehend the ideal for the human being, its goal, and purpose, it is essential to know Jesus Christ, for he is the perfect expression of God's image; (3) Although the human is God's theomorphism, he only reaches the divine ideal through concrete and continuous relationship with God by faith alone, for the relations also constitute man's ontology, being the God-relation the most important.

First, to conceive the human being as God's theomorphism, it is necessary to reject the idea borrowed from Hellenism, which conceived only the soul to be God's image. The Christian Hellenized view mutilated God and man's emotional importance, reducing the *imago* to the rational. Christianity should not conceive God from the idealized abstractions presented by the classic philosophical thought but from the Biblical revelation. Besides, if the human being was created to reflect God perfectly, it is correct to say that only one person was authentically a man: Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3). He alone is the true revelation of what it means to be human, the real man as addressed by Barth (2004f, CD III.2,132; Jenson 2006, 136). As Christ is man's perfect model, he is also the existential task for every human being.

Jesus's incarnation reveals that the human bodily dimension is an important medium for God's self-revelation. Jesus is not only the revealer of the real human but also of God. If Jesus loved, cried, suffered, experienced mercy, it was because of his psychosomatic existence, which was an accommodation of God's spiritual self into Jesus's human self. The divine incarnation in Jesus was only possible precisely because the human is a divine accommodation, endowed with attributes capable of reflecting the Creator. Therefore, the human being is God's theomorphic creation (Gen 1:27), with Jesus as God's exact representation (Heb 1:3). Vanhoozer (2010, 64) argued that the human form is analogous to the divine form and not vice versa. This is also the argument of Przywara (2014).

The Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel (2001, 344–357) helps to address the question of man's similitude to God reasoning about Anthropopathy, the idea of

whether God has feelings like humans or not. Interpreting the OT prophets, he argued that “God’s unconditional concern for justice is not anthropomorphism. Rather, man’s concern for justice is a theomorphism” (349). For him, there are two opposite risks regarding God’s passions: one that levels God to the human level, humanizing the Creator as an ally of man whether doing right or wrong; and the risk of anesthetizing God by reducing him to a disconnected abstraction from human emotions (353–354). He argued that God’s use of human emotions does not compromise the biblical teaching,

> The statements about pathos are not a compromise-ways of accommodating higher meanings to the lower level of human under-standing. They are rather the accommodation of words to higher meanings. Words of psychological denotations are endowed with a theological connotation (Heschel 2001, 348).

Following this reasoning, human subjectivity in terms of divine projection in humanity as love, passion, concern for justice, and even wrath, points to something superior to humans, with higher significance. If God’s emotions in Scripture, like mercy, wrath, and love, are mere anthropomorphisms,[43] such texts become deceptive depictions of God. However, this is not what Scripture reveals, pointing to emotions as mediums for humanity to understand God’s holiness. By speaking of wrath, for example, the biblical authors subjectively urge man’s anger, connecting man to God’s transcendent message. The human bodily and spiritual constitution is fully endowed with everything necessary to grasp God’s message, because human emotions are subjective bridges to God’s transcendency.

However, if one does not have Jesus as the point of contact between anthropomorphism and theomorphism, one will envisage God according to sinful perceptions. As the ultimate revelation, both anthropomorphic and theomorphic, Jesus reveals together God and what it truly means to be human. Through Christ, it is revealed that man’s passions, as part of God’s image imprinted on humanity, have higher theological meaning. Without Jesus as the model to understand man’s inwardness, humanity loses objectivity, the ground of reality, falling into subjectivism. Without Jesus as the reference, love is reduced to desire, and the truth is relativized.

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[43] e.g., Exod 20:6; 2 Sam 24:14; Psa 36:5; Jer 9:23–24; Lam 3:22; Hos 2:19

The biblical revelation that the human being is an emotional creature, whose authentic emotions come from God, goes against the Greek thought, mainly Stoic, that idealized *apatheia,* or apathy as the ideal to be reached (Cross and Livingstone 2005, 82; Brachtendorf 1997, 290). Zeno introduced the idea that passions are movements "contrary to reason", therefore, to the nature of the soul (Heschel 2001, 325–326). Clement of Alexandria believed in the "impassibility" of God, making it the ideal for Christians. Augustine also emphasized the *apatheia*, something to be reached in perfection only after death (Aug. Free. 1.8.18; 1.9.19; Aug. City. 9.3–5; 14.9). This concept devalued the theological importance of God and human emotions. It was only after the Reformation that the pagan idea of God's impassibility began to be rejected (McGrath 2005, 326–327). Biblical revelation does not promote the idea of God's apathy; on the contrary, it emphasizes empathy, revealing God as one who sympathetically identifies with and responds to human sufferings. In fact, Scripture condemns apathy, calling it hardness of heart, a state of insensibility.[44]

As Heschel (2001, 348) argued that Biblical "words of psychological denotations are endowed with a theological connotation", his argument is blunt and should not be ignored. If psychological terms have theological value, theology should not abandon psychology to itself, nor should it resort to psychologies that are not biblically and theologically grounded. If emotions reflect something from God, then anthropology and psychology must always start from biblical revelation. Because, either theology makes psychology, or psychology will make theology.

Being God's theomorphism means that humans have the potential to become the authentic humans planned by God. However, as mirrors of God, humans need the God-relation to reflect him correctly. It is precisely the God-relation that enables potentiality to become actual. Thus, the God-relation is a mirror-relation that is more than a mere social relationship but a constituent of human ontology. As Irenaeus declared, "For the glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God" (Iren. Ag. 4.20.7).

Therefore, without Christ, humans cannot become authentically human, for Jesus is the one who restitutes the God-relation and is the divine model for all

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[44] e.g., Psa 95:8; Prov 28:14; 29:1; Rom 2:5; Heb 3:7–8,13,15

(Kierkegaard 2010; Jothen 2018, 67). Unaware of Jesus's salvation and model, man is doomed to an existence of sin as despair. Only through God's revelation is despair recognized as sin, a necessary condition for the Christian life (Evans 2019, 113; Rae 2010, 90). Without God's revelation, however, sin as despair has many names.

Therefore, I argue, emotions urge inside the inauthentic human, dominated by despair, the so-called unconscious guilt, manifesting in anger, shame, fear, and compulsive desires. Desperate for self-concretization, these feelings somatize in an epidemic of anxiety through different pathologies. The corporeal relation with these emotions and the urge of different diseases are mysterious connections between biology, psychology, and theology, where the concept of sin connects all.

Without knowing what to do with subjective guilt, people run to psychotherapies and drugs, seeking to anesthetize the conflicting emotions, silencing the existential despair crying for a solution. They anesthetize what connects them to God, which inwardly testifies urging for salvation. A sedated society becomes deaf to God and neighbor. The increase of a sedated and apathetic society promotes indifference, bringing injustice and social alienation. Besides, the exponential rise of suicides worldwide confirms the failure of modern solutions for humanity's despair and the collapse of the modern and post-modern idea of what it means to be human. Theology needs to rescue the correct identity of man, created by God as the source, for God as the goal, and with God as the modeler.

The fact that the human being is made according to God's image determines him as an inescapably moral creature. The reason, emotions, and conscience are eternal witnesses of his coherences and incoherencies. The sinful person is a prisoner of himself, confronted by the mirror of conscience in a distressing existence that wants to get rid of himself, however, without power. Only the transcendent move of faith in Jesus can deliver the man from his cloister.

5.2.2 *The Human as a Kinetic Self*

5.2.2.1 The Human as a Synthesis

What does it mean to be human? Are humans merely immaterial souls imprisoned within their bodies? Throughout history, as discussed earlier, theologians have tackled this question differently. Justin Martyr assumed a Neoplatonist approach, conceiving the human in terms of body, soul, and spirit (Just. Dial. 6, 2). Irenaeus of

Lyon was controversially considered trichotomist (e.g., Karamanolis 2013, 190; Hoekema 2018, 48) for speaking of man as body, soul, and spirit (Iren. Ag. 2.33, 5). However, Irenaeus's use of spirit was closer to the Pauline anthropology, considering the spirit as the Spirit of God in man (5.6, 1). As argued before, Irenaeus's anthropology was more aligned to the biblical revelation than to the Greeks'.

Tertullian criticized physicalism, the concept that there is no soul (Tert. Soul. 3; 5; 27; Pannenberg 2009b, 267; Osborn 2001, 164). However, for Tertullian, the soul, even though different in nature from the body, is always expressed bodily (Tert. Soul. 10; Karamanolis 2013, 194–195). Origen, differently, assumed strong Platonic philosophy, considering the soul imprisoned by the body (Orig. Princ.1.1.5), where man's identity is reduced to the soul. Augustine also assumed a Platonic view, conceiving man as a soul able to rule his body (Aug. Cath. 27.52; Aug. Soul.13.22; McGrath 2013, 59; Fredriksen 2012, 117). Augustine considered the soul the essential part of the human being, devaluing the body as the "least noble part" (Aug. Free. 1.16.34; Pannenberg 2009b, 291; Teske 2001, 116). Thomas Aquinas, in turn, considered the human being constituted of body and soul, however hylomorphically as Aristotle did (Thom. Sum. 1.76; Petri 2016, 199–200). Aquinas's approach conceived man holistically, but with different layers, dimensions of interiority in terms of powers of the soul (Thom. Sum. 1.77; Pasnau 2012, 359).

Martin Luther also conceived man constituted of body and soul, hylomorphically united (Luther. Hom., 21, 35; Raunio 2010, 29). For him, the human was a "mere matter of God" with the Christian receiving God's form (Luther. Hom., 35–38). The modern theologian Karl Barth also followed the same concept, seeing the human in terms of body and soul, psychosomatically united (Barth 2004f, CD III.2, 372; Guretzki 2016, 50). For Barth, body and soul are two parts of the same human being, who is one. Pannenberg also considered body and soul inseparable, criticizing the Platonic dichotomy and the Aristotelian hylomorphism, arguing that Scripture does not support the idea of two different substances (Pannenberg 2009b, 266–269; Goldingay 2006, 552). His approach tended to a monistic view, more like Hegel's thought, producing a form of panentheism (Ochoa 2017; Grenz 1990, 210–211).

Many later theologians, like Bavinck (2001, 230), Berkhof (2001, 178–181), Erickson (2008, 231–232), Hodge (2010, 515–518), and Grudem (2009, 388), argue for a dichotomist perspective, where the human being is a union of two distinct

dimensions, body, and soul. Grudem claims that either dichotomy or trichotomy may be possible interpretations for evangelical theologians, but not monism, as the Bible teaches the soul's survival after the body's death.

As described, the Church has usually conceived nature with two realms, material and spiritual. Most Church Fathers, reformers, and post-reformers constructed their theology based on this dualist metaphysics. It can also be grasped in Augustine's dualism between the City of God and the City of men and Luther's dualism between the realm of man and of the spirit (Aug. City.; Luther. Bond., 51; Hagglund 1981, 197). However, only recently, the monist concept, which comprehends reality in terms of only one substance, whether physical or mental, has grown in the theological discussion. Hegel was probably the one who most influenced this thought, affirming a process of immanent evolution of a monistic reality that constitutes the "absolute spirit", a type of pantheism (Hegel 2020, 298–299; Pearcey 2018, 87; Evans 2019, 4).

I agree with Plantinga (2011, 100), Grudem (2009, 388), and Pearcey (2018, 37, 65–68) that Christian thinkers should reject monism, whether in the form of materialism, physicalism, or idealism, because the Bible depicts humanity with two distinct natures, physical and spiritual.[45] Any Christian theology that assumes monism ontologically will have to agree with several Hindu or Buddhist premises, ultimately becoming a new form of pantheism. Supposing that the human being is only physical, and his mind can be entirely explained by neuroscience by studying the brain, emotions, pain, love, justice become mere illusions of the human mind, products of a mere human experience, without objective value. Consequently, there is no distinction between the self and the other, only the fantasy of difference, where consciousness is an alienation, an illusion of individuality where all is the same in a material world interconnected. Free will and thought become simple mechanical processes in a material sameness determining the existence, with no place for freedom, individuality, love, justice, truth, or higher meaning life. Everything suddenly becomes immanence with no room for transcendence.

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[45] e.g., Isa 10:18; Ezek 37:1–14; Eccl 12:7; Zech 12:1; Matt 10:28; Rom 8:10; 1 Cor 7:34; 2 Cor 5:1–10.

A monist perspective obliterates the distinctions, making reality fluid. Male and female, right and wrong, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, immanent and transcendent suddenly become the same. Reality is conceived as an illusion, where everything is in the process of becoming its opposite. The biblical distinctions between light and darkness, good and evil, truth and lie, become mere illusions and opinions.

I believe that the motivation for the theological monism is the result of the radical dualism formerly emphasized, where the body was conceived as unnecessary, an impediment to the soul. This radical separation that diminished the body indeed must be abandoned. However, to affirm the human integrality, as Scriptures affirm, it is necessary to conceive the human as a merging of two realms, as Kierkegaard (2010, 25–26; 2011, 90) stated, a synthesis between physical and psychical.

The previous chapter emphasized that the Bible presents the human being as a *nephesh haiah*, a living soul (Gen 2:7); however, Scripture also speaks of animals possessing *nephesh haiah* inside (Gen 1:24). In this sense, as already argued, both man and animals are living souls and have a living soul inside. When God made Adam, he breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and Adam became a living breath. Therefore, there are two different breaths in Genesis 2:7, one was the breath from God, נְשָׁמָה, and the other was the living breath, נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, resulted from the fusion with the dust (Swanson 1997, §2644, §5883, §5972; Koehler et al. 1994–2000, 307, 711, 730). The man received the breath and became a breath, received a soul, and became a living soul.

Innumerable OT texts present the human being as constituted of two natures.[46] In the NT this dualism is even more evident.[47] I argue that the similarity to the Greek teaching does not represent a Greek influence on Christianity but refers to the general revelation grasped by the philosophers. Under the Greek influence came the error of teaching the inferiority of the body and the idea that man is a soul imprisoned by the body.

The relationship between body and soul is as complex as the relationship of Christ's two natures. Just as Christ was fully human and fully divine, man is entirely

[46] e.g., Isa 10:18; Ezek 37:1–14; Eccl 12:7; Zech 12:1
[47] e.g., Matt 10:28; Rom 8:10; 1 Cor 7:34; 2 Cor 5:1–10

body and entirely soul. Following Luther's Christological analogy, that what is valid for one nature must be true for the whole person (Luther 2006, 204, 205; Hodge 1997, 407), it is correct to say that there is nothing in man that is not related to his body, just as there is nothing not involved with the soul. Tertullian also stated (Tert. Soul. 5), that what is done in the soul is accomplished by the body, and what happens to the body is felt by the soul.

5.2.2.2 The Human as a Self-Conscious Synthesis

Besides the synthetic relation between body and soul, two other relations constitute the human being, as affirmed by Kierkegaard (2010, 25). One is the self-relation of the synthesis with itself, which is consciousness, as before addressed earlier (Evans 2019, 11; Sweetman 2017, 107). The human being is more than just a psychosomatic being, but a self-relating psychosomatic creature. Deeper dimensions of human interiority are produced from the dialectics of selfhood. The body has different categories, like finitude, temporality, necessity, while the soul has others, like infinity, freedom, and eternity, where they self-relate. Kierkegaard (2010, 25) used some dialectical tensions between these categories, helping to grasp the multidimensionality of the human being.

To conceive the human being solely as two dimensions impoverishes the multiplicity that constitutes the human inwardly. The black and white of physical and psychical are transformed in degrees of grey through its self-conscious synthesis, in an almost indistinguishable continuity of different relations producing layers of the same self. In this sense, although the human is one, he is also many. The human being does not *have* multiple relations, but he *is* the complex relations. Heart, memory, imagination, reason, passions, desires, feelings, self-image, ideal-self, past-self, actual-self are just some layers produced by this multidimensionality.

This multiplicity helps to understand why Jesus did not only repeat the OT expression of loving God with all heart, soul, and strength (Deut 6:5) but included the omitted "heart" by the LXX, also adding a new term, "mind" (Mark 12:30; NIV; France 2002, 480; Grassmick 1985, 164). Doing this, Jesus expressed the complexity of man's comprehensive nature. His emphasis is that man needs to be integrated, loving God with the whole self, repeated four times by Jesus (Edwards 2002, 371). While the emphasis is on loving God with the whole self, Jesus highlights distinct areas of

interiority, demonstrating that these are vital centers of gravity within. If one of them is not aligned with the love of God, the whole self is misaligned. Rather than just declaring that man must love God with the whole self, Jesus distinguished some inward dimensions to leave no doubt that besides God is interested in the totality of man; man can also exist in a fragmented life. The idea of wholeness aligned with God's will is also present in Jesus's exhortation that one should not love God and wealth together, as one will lead to hate the other (Matt 6:24). So also, James's admonition to the divided-minded (Jas 1:7–8; 4: 8), claiming that they must turn away from the Devil to approach God. Again, in John's warning to not love the world but love God (1 John 2:15). There is no room for a divided mind or a divided heart in the spiritual man, for his whole self must be surrendered to love God. When heart, soul, mind, and strength disagree, it characterizes sin, a fragmented self.

Furthermore, the human being, as a self-conscious synthesis, also becomes aware of the other. The relationship with himself is affected by his relationship with the other, and vice versa. Human morality arises because the human sees himself in the other and through the eyes of the other, he sees himself. As he is God's theomorphism, the man perceives in the other the same value he has, and God's law begins to be revealed through this social self-awareness. Mosaic laws such as "do not kill, do not steal, and do not commit adultery," become subjectively evident when human beings realize that they must not do to others what they would not want to have done to themselves.

5.2.2.3 The Human and the God-relation

Self-consciousness is not enough to integrate the human self, for the human being is ontologically grounded in God and depends on the God-relation (Kierkegaard 2010, 25–26). As Augustine stated, without God, the human soul is restless (Aug. Conf. 1.1.1). The God-relation is the third fundamental relation that constitutes the self as spiritually aligned by and to God. The God-relation is not social or psychological, but the ontological relation of man with the Creator, who by faith embodies God's will into human existence.

While the spiritual man is grounded in God, the spiritless is grounded in nothingness. Both need God to exist, but while the spiritless person resists the God-relation, the spiritual one submits. Kierkegaard (2010, 26) and Barth (2004f, CD III.2,

325–426) affirmed this in their way. Without Christ, who restores the God-relation, the human exists in self-contradiction, self-deterioration for resisting the Spirit who gives life and purpose. Therefore, the God-relation is the proper Spirit of God, where it aligns the whole self. In this case, man's spirit is not some third element but the whole person connected to the Holy Spirit.

Based on these three relations, as before shown, Kierkegaard defined selfhood in three spheres, different centers of gravity where the fallen man orbits around one of them (Kierkegaard 2004; 2013a; Obinyan 2014, 4; Rae 2010, 83–84). I argue that Kierkegaard's aesthetic, ethical and religious stages are consistent with how the apostle Paul wrote in his first epistle to the Corinthians regarding the man σάρκινος (1 Cor 3:1), ψυχικός (1 Cor 2:14) and πνευματικός (1 Cor 2:15), meaning fleshly, psychic and spiritual (Swanson 1997a, §4461, §4921, §6035; Louw and Nida 1996, §12.20, §41.42, §79.5). These three words depict selfhood in three distinct categories. The apostle Paul did not separate the human into three parts but portrayed different types of man, who live either by the flesh, psychic, or the Spirit. The spiritual man, the religious in Kierkegaard's vocabulary, is the only one whose life is integrated, ordered under the Holy Spirit, for possessing the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16).

5.2.2.4 The Kinetic Self

The terms heart, conscience, and spirit are correlated and often synonymous in the biblical narrative. They are associated as each refers to the integrality of the self; however, I argue, they address different centers of gravity. The Bible presents the heart as the center of aesthetic life, conscience as the center of rational and ethical, and spirit as the center of religious life. I will argue about this below.

No anthropological term is broader than "heart" in the Bible, where both Hebrew and Greek have broad application. Although it also refers to the physical organ,[48] in the vast majority of instances, the term refers to the inner, immaterial nature of the human being (Harris, Archer and Waltke 2017, §1071a; Verbrugge 2018, §2840). The heart is the best term to refer to the synthesis of body and soul because it involves both dimensions, as the relationship between inwardness and outwardness (Prov

[48] Exod 28:29; 1 Sam 25:37; 2 Kgs 9:24; Psa 38:8; Isa 1:5; Luke 21:34; Acts 14:17; Jas 5:5

27:19), as the center of emotions,[49] the seat of reason and thoughts,[50] the place of illusions and visions (Jer 14:14), and the seat of the will and decisions.[51] In the NT the heart also condenses the wholeness of inwardness,[52] sometimes meaning mind.[53]

As heart, the self aesthetically relates with the world through the center of passions and will (Pearcey 2018, 48; Garrett 2014, 500; Pannenberg 2004, 36–37). That is why "the heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer 17:9), for it sensually directs the self towards desires. While the biblical term includes the corporeal to the concept of the heart,[54] theology usually neglects it, considering emotions only as cognitive. However, an entire side of the heart is incomprehensible, automatic, or hardened, related to corporeality, which also affects everything (Ezek 11:19; Rom 7:21–23; LaPine 2020, 324).

Now, the term conscience is a development of the term, heart. It is the word συνείδησις, meaning "with knowledge", related to the self-knowing (Garrett 2014, 576; Swanson 1997a, §5250,§3857). Conscience is the self-relating heart, therefore the best term for the relationship of the self to itself. That is why the term appears alongside heart (Rom 2:15), for it is the heart sharing with itself the knowledge it possesses, involving memory and self-perception, as the universal human capacity for self-recommendation or self-condemnation (Verbrugge 2018, §5287; Wall 1992, 1129; Bruce 1985, 97). It is also the seat of reason and morality, where man judges himself.[55] The conscience is the whole self ethically relating to itself and the world. It is the self-related heart, which sees itself as responsible to itself and others, able to judge right and wrong (Garrett 2014, 576; Wall 1992, 1129; Bruce 1985, 97).

Regarding the term spirit, as already argued, it is a Theo-anthropological term for relating man with God (Wolff 2007, 67–68). In the NT, it relates to those born of the Spirit by faith in Christ (John 3:5–6). The spirit is nothing more than the whole self in a direct relationship with God (Hoekema 2018, 225; Garrett 2014, 506; Wolff 2007,

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[49] Judg 16:15; 1 Sam 2:1; 24:5; 2 Sam 24:10; 1 Chr 16:10; Neh 2:2
[50] Gen 6:5; Exod 7:23; 1 Kgs 3:12
[51] Exod 36:2; 2 Chr 12:14
[52] 2 Cor 5:12; 1 Titus 2:17; 1 Pet 3:4
[53] 2 Cor 3:14–15; Phil 4:7
[54] e.g., Psa 38:10; Prov 14:30; 15:13; 17:22
[55] Rom 13:5; 1Cor 8:7; 2Cor 1:12; 1 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:15; Heb 9: 14; 1 Pet 3:16

68). The spirit is, therefore, the proper heart self-related, connected to God. Where the Holy Spirit is the proper God-relation.

While the heart acts desiring, the conscience acts judging and deciding, the spirit acts believing. Thus, God created the human as an arrow thrown in his direction, as Madureira (2017, 75) wrote, and only when he becomes πνευματικός (1 Cor 2:15), he has his heart and conscience aligned with God.

Therefore, I argue the need for a kinetic anthropology, where man was created to move and progressively develop towards God's image. As Irenaeus argued, man was created to mature and progressively develop towards perfection, with Jesus as the goal (Iren. Ag. 4.38, 3; Iren. Dem. 22, 55; Hiestand 2018, 58). This was also argued by Thomas Aquinas and Pannenberg, as earlier demonstrated (Thom. Sum. 1.93; Pannenberg 2009b, 316–317; Echeverría 2013, 748–749). Nevertheless, I believe it was Kierkegaard who worked it more consistently, as argued.

The presented kinetic anthropology is trinitarian but not trichotomist. I believe this approach is superior to others for the following reasons: First, it condenses the various elements of biblical anthropology without fragmenting the human being; Second, it helps to identify centers of gravity in the structure of the self, such as the heart (aesthetic), conscience (ethical) and spirit (religious), which can serve theology for more intentional approaches.

I will summarize the kinetic anthropology into four fundamental points: (1) The human being is the synthesis between two distinct realities, one bodily and one psychic; (2) The human being is self-conscious, a synthesis self-related raising different inward layers, including morality; (3) The human being is not self-grounded, developing either a God-relation or a Nothingness-relation to seek balance; (4) The human being was created as a movement to become God's image, and only through faith in Christ, he becomes authentically so through the Holy Spirit.

As a kinetic self, the human being is movement, subjectively attracted by some center of gravity, whether immanent or transcendent. In the next section, I will approach the human being from this perspective, as a recursive self.

5.2.3 *The Recursive Self*

Recursive processes involve the whole creation. God created man in a nature involved by different cycles. The natural cycle of the earth around its axis establishes

the recursivity of the days. The movement of the earth around the sun repeats yearly the seasons. The human body also depends on the recursive circulatory system. Life is involved by recursive processes everywhere. Man's unconscious also involves recursivity as automatic behaviors that move life in intricated processes, as will be argued in this section.

As Barth (2004f, CD III.2,138, 203, 219) stated, the human being is God's representation and repetition in creation, with Jesus as the perfect repetition. However, to be God's repetition is not to be God's recursion, for repetition is not equivalent to recursion. I will argue in the following subsections that, while repetition has God as the transcendent center of gravity, recursivity has the proper self or society as centers of gravity. I intend to demonstrate that the human being without Christ is obliged to orbit around himself in an existence of meaningless recurrence. Without Christ, the human is given over to the determinism of his immanence, hermetically producing himself out of himself. Only through the transcendency of faith and a continual relationship with Christ can he escape this cycle, becoming able to repeat Christ. Repeat Christ means bringing into immanence God's transcendence. Jesus is the only one who brings self-awareness and power to overcome the determinism of man's recursive immanency. With Christ, the human being can be freed from a nihilistic existence curved upon nothingness to a meaningful existence that reaches a transcendent existence. In the following subsections, I will address the dynamic behind repetition and recursivity to better understand man's subjectivity and the unfolding of theological anthropology. I will address in five subsections: (1) Understanding Repetition and Recursivity; (2) Recursivity and Immanence; (3) Repetition and Transcendence; (4) Self-Consciousness and Self-Recursivity; (5) Recursivity and Time.

5.2.3.1 Understanding Repetition and Recursivity

To briefly introduce the importance of recursivity, it is necessary to understand it as an intricate process in the human constitution, implicating body, and mind. As the synthesis between physical and psychical, the self is absorbed by recursive processes forming innumerable conscious and unconscious procedures. This section addresses the philosophical concept of repetition and recursivity, and the following two address the relationship with consciousness and unconsciousness.

Both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche identified, apparently without any relation, that human existence is involved by endless repetition (Carlisle 2011, 294; Deleuze 2006, 25–28). However, Kierkegaard's transcendent approach went beyond Nietzsche's immanent reductionism. By denying God as the foundation of human existence, Nietzsche's thought also denied humanity's existential purpose, developing a nihilist perspective (Frame 2015, 331–332; Thiselton 2002, 93). Nihilism believes that there is no basis for knowledge, truth, or morality, and therefore no purpose for life (Cairns 2002, 310; Geisler 1999, 540). While Nietzsche denied objectivity, emphasizing a subjectivist perspective, Kierkegaard's emphasis on subjectivity never denied objective truth. While Nietzsche was a monist, reducing reality to the immanence of the physical, Kierkegaard was a dualist, with kinetic anthropology and, therefore, a transcendent view.

Nietzsche believed in the unavoidable conditions of nature, determining humans to an eternal recurrence (Taliaferro 2018, 94–95). If the world is finite and ruled by chance, consequently, everything one day recurs, which Nietzsche probably followed from Stoicism (Frame 2015, 752). Augustine argued against this determinist idea proposed by the Stoics (Aug. City. 12.13). As time was infinite for Nietzsche, he believed that the universe would have remained in equilibrium infinitely if there had ever been equilibrium in the past. That is why he believed that the universe is in constant and infinite transition, where it is impossible to achieve balance. Nietzsche also believed that among all the possibilities of the human being, there was one that was his superior version, called the *übermensch*, which should be achieved through the imposition of force (Frame 2015, 330). Nietzsche proposed that man needed to be overcome to make room for this *übermensch*, who creates his values, benefits what is new, lives his bodily experiences to the fullest, and exerts his extreme individuality (Nietzsche 2011, 18–29). For him, as life is trapped in infinite recursion, it should be driven by the power of the human will.

Kierkegaard called repetition what Nietzsche called recurrence, but with a different approach (Carlisle 2011, 294). I use the word recursivity as synonymous with recurrence, considering its use in mathematics, linguistics, and psychology (Beckstead 2015; Corballis 2014, 1–16; Watumull et al. 2014; Chomsky 2010; 1998).

Kierkegaard's concept of repetition is similar, but not the same as Nietzsche's recurrence because while Kierkegaard's repetition relies on the total transcendent,

Nietzsche's concept is entirely immanent. While for Nietzsche, man is a rope over an abyss, between a beast and the *übermensch* (superman), for Kierkegaard, the abyss is within the human, called sin (Nietzsche 2011, 22; Kierkegaard 2011, 67; Podmore 2011, 6). For Nietzsche, the abyss transcends man but is immanent to nature, where the individual needs to exert the will of power to become the *übermensch.* For Kierkegaard, the abyss is immanent, and there is no will capable of overcoming it, only a total transcendent move of faith.

Although the definition may seem too abstract, it should be noted that Nietzsche's immanentist thought has greatly influenced today's society. For immanentists like Nietzsche, all that exists is nature, the body, and the strength of the human being to surpass himself. Hence the growing idea that human beings are mere victims of their biochemistry, hostage to their hormones and inherited DNA. Ironically, given this biological fatalism, Nietzsche's *übermensch* became the post-modern idea of the authentic individual, who is distinct in all, breaking with biological and sociological determinism, reinventing itself. Kierkegaard's approach was totally different.

Kierkegaard identified the phenomenon of repetition in man's inwardness, instead of addressing it in nature, approaching it as a movement of the spirit (Kierkegaard 2009d, 31–33; Carlisle 2011, 294; Deleuze 2006, 26). He tackled the problem directly in his book "Repetition" (Kierkegaard 2009d), but before, he briefly wrote about it in one of his journals,

> Repetition turns up everywhere. (1) When I am about to act, my action has existed in consciousness in idea and thought, otherwise I act thoughtlessly, i.e., I don't act. (2) Inasmuch as I am about to act, I presuppose that I am in an original integer state. Now comes the problem of sin. That is the second repetition, for I must return again now to myself. (3) The real paradox by which I become the single individual, for if I remain in sin understood as the universal, there is only repetition no 2. (Kierkegaard 2008, 177)

Repetition in this note acquires different meanings. First, as the concretization of an idea thought. Consequently, repetition is the realization through the body of an imaginary idea or thought. However, another type of repetition is happening, which is sin, where the person thinks he is an "original integer", but he is only repeating the

universality of sin. In this aspect, this repetition fits Nietzsche's recurrence. The expression "return again now to myself" points to recursivity because the individual returns to himself. An essential element in this quote is the role of sin maintaining the cycle, *ad infinitum*, keeping the individual trapped in the universality of sin. Only when he breaks with this universality he becomes the "single individual", that is, the authentic self. Therefore, two different repetitions are highlighted by Kierkegaard in this text, one that is conscious and the other unconscious. One is by choice and the other mechanically repeated.

This broad definition by Kierkegaard mixes different concepts under the same term repetition. The term is a translation of the Danish word *Gentagelse*, which has no direct translation to English (Carlisle 2011, 295). The modern Danish dictionary connects the English words "repetition", "recur", "replay", to the meaning of *Gentagelse* (Garde 1995, 255, 259, 260). Zlomislić and Goicoechea (2018) argue that etymologically the word *Gentagelse* used by Kierkegaard means "re-getting it again in a new way each day". The term has been usually translated as "repetition" in Kierkegaard's books. I, however, will distinguish the meaning of "repetition" in two terms, one meaning "recursivity", which is the unconscious repetition, and what Kierkegaard calls repetition through conscious action, I instead call "concretization".

Kierkegaard (2009d, 31) introduced the theme of repetition in the more extensive philosophical discussion of movement and change, an essential subject for Hegelian thought (Carlisle 2011, 296). He associated repetition with the platonic doctrine of recollection; however, he said, with a different direction (Kierkegaard 2009d, 32). While recollection was backward, repetition is a recollection forward, he argued. This means that the Platonic doctrine leads the person to repeat in consciousness, remembering what happened, while repetition brings to reality through concretization of consciousness. One moves the self to the past and the other to the future. One idealizes the person, and the other concretizes what was idealized. Thus, although recollection seeks truth as knowledge, repetition seeks truth concretized in life (Carlisle 2011, 297).

Through the concept of repetition, Kierkegaard opposed the Greek *logos*, which related the human identity to knowledge. Kierkegaard associated *logos* with the "becoming" of Christ (Milbank 2005, 72). For him, the human identity is not merely knowing God or remembering him but becoming Christ's repetition concretely, as

Christ was God's authentic repetition. He emphasized that the mistake of theology was precisely confusing ethics with dogmatics, confusing *logos* with logic (Kierkegaard 2011, 14); because the philosophical *logos* was knowledge, while the Christian was the incarnation of revelation.

Whereas Nietzsche (2011) only saw an immanent existence, without divine transcendence, where the human being should invent himself, exercising his will to power to become the *übermensch*; Kierkegaard (2010) showed that from immanence, it is only possible to exist in despair and sin, no matter which version of oneself is built, as it is always an unbalanced version. For Kierkegaard, the solution for the self is in the total transcendence of God, which needs to be appropriated, existentially incarnated in the life of the human being that authentically reflects the Creator.

Kierkegaard (2015, 184) argued that "Socrates transported individuals from reality to ideality", from a temporal and actual existence to an idealized one. Socrates grounded existence in the past (Dupré 1985, 125). The past is immutable and offers no distinct possibilities other than what has already occurred, therefore, living by recollection is an existence determined by immanency. However, repetition as concretization is the opposite, transporting the individual from the ideal, the sphere of possibility, to the concreteness of temporal existence (Carlisle 2011, 297; 2005, 67). The concretization is, therefore, the becoming, where the individual crosses through anxiety, striving to become the idealized image.

For Kierkegaard, the human "will" can change from an unconscious and compulsive "desire" to a striving and conscious "will", and then finally to "faith", where the human authentically exerts the will of believing and resembling Christ. Thus, while recollection seeks to connect man to the unconscious, making it conscious, repetition as concretization brings the conscious to existence, where faith is its highest transcendent expression. For the authentic human being, the idealized image is Christ, who is incarnated through existential decisions of faith at every moment. Therefore, the human ideal is to become an existential repetition of Christ. The suffering occasioned by the striving for this repetition is the suffering of birth, of the blossoming of objective life through subjective effort. This is the suffering that through faith brings the transcendent existence of Christ into the immanent existence of the self. In the following two subsections, I will deal with the topic to untie this, tackling the relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness.

5.2.3.2 Recursivity and Immanence

Influenced by a Freudian view, the human being today has been conceived fundamentally through physicalist anthropology. Freud's interpretation rendered man a hostage of his impulses, derived from a pre-existent biological reality (Pickstock 2013, 109–112; Benner 1999a, 1037). For him, man was determined by biological forces pressuring the self recurrently. For Freud, repetition was a higher principle than the drive for pleasure, determined by the death instinct, where "all living things seek to return to a state of pre-organic existence" (Pickstock 2013, 111; Freud 1990, 656). Freud's repetition followed Nietzsche, reducing man to a mechanistic view, a biologically conditioned self (Price 2002, 176). Freud's repetition addressed unconscious forces within the human as recursive drives operating from the immanence of the body.

Freud was wrong to reduce existence to the immanence of the body because humans are more than that. Nevertheless, the human is also his bodily immanence. Man lives in the paradox of being both immanent and transcendent, a synthesis between freedom and necessity (Kierkegaard 2010, 25). The unconsciousness is a reality evidenced by scientists and philosophers, who have demonstrated how desires, emotions, and beliefs can be inward states of a person unaware of them (LaPine 2020, 294; Kim 2011, 20; Wilson 2002).

New research in psychology points to innovative interpretations about the unconscious, rejecting the psychoanalytic definitions raised by Freud and his followers. The new concept of unconsciousness has been defined as all mental processes not conscious to the person, which raises thoughts, emotions, and produces behaviors influencing judgment (LaPine 2020, 294; Wilson 2002, 6–8). The mind generates automatic processes, internal recursions that repeat specific procedures without the help of consciousness or any sexual drive as postulated by Freud. Many of these unconscious operations are entirely biological, and have no access by consciousness. The unconscious is the "automatic-self", managing most of the operations of the mind (Wilson 2002, 11–12). I call immanent recursivity these unconscious's automatisms, also called implicit memories (LaPine 2020, 303).

I agree with LaPine (2020, 295) that the unconscious should neither be neglected nor overvalued. He wrote that theologians usually neglect the unconscious emotions rooted in the body (297). He states that physiology influences the mind and

rational thought. Damásio (2019) demonstrated this, arguing that man's rationality intensely depends on emotions. The disconnection between body and mind may have been the most significant error of Descartes' thought, as Kant's concept of morality, understood as strictly rational. As a synthesis, human beings are physically shaped by emotions and feelings.

LaPine (2020, 297) stated that "physiology enables emotional plasticity", the neuroplasticity that shapes the human nervous system, creating habits, automatic thoughts, behaviors, feelings. Emotional reactions and traumas can produce automatic feelings or thoughts inwardly. Some automatic behaviors acquired, such as driving a car or playing an instrument, can be absorbed by repetition, and pushed to the unconscious (Smith 2020, 59–61). Several studies have pointed to this neuroplasticity of the nervous system, which is in the constant process of remodeling, adapting to the various stimuli caused by physical inputs, carried out by the environment (LaPine 2020, 301; Price and Duman 2020; Pascual-Leone et al. 2005). It is ongoing research, where discoveries reveal how traumas, depression, and many other acquired conditions are rooted in the immanence of the body. However, these same researchers point to the reversibility of such conditions, demonstrating that conscious actions can reshape them.

Therefore, the human should not be reduced to its unconsciousness, considering only his immanence. Also, he should not be reduced to consciousness because not everything is under his awareness and will. That is why Kierkegaard's approach is the most adequate for the new psychology paradigms. In his anthropology, man is neither totally free, conscious, and master of himself; nor fully determined, unconscious, and a self-slave, but a synthesis of both. There is a degree of human immanence that is unconscious, over which humans have absolutely no power. The apostle Paul identified the same immanent and hidden law in his flesh (Rom 7:21–23). However, there is also a degree of conscience and freedom, where every person is responsible for himself.

Consequently, Freud's and Nietzsche's nihilist accounts were not entirely wrong, if considering a human existence restricted to its immanence without God's transcendent revelation. Man's self-transcendence is insufficient against the power of the immanent sin. Therefore, Nietzsche's "will of power" only leads the person to another type of immanent recursivity. Without God, the unconscious recursivity of sin

is uncontrollable in different ways. Any attempt to overcome sin and its recursive nature utilizing human ways will fail. Only a transcendent action can overcome human immanence. Therefore, the perfect expression that characterizes the nihilism of man's imprisonment in his immanent unconsciousness is the exclamation of the apostle Paul, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" (Rom 7:24; NIV).

5.2.3.3 Repetition and Transcendency

While in the immanence of the body, the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors can become recursive processes, automatic behaviors; in consciousness, they are not automatic, requiring choice, a self-transcendent leap. For this, Kierkegaard's concept of repetition is accurate, as Carlisle (2005, 70) argued, as a "form of consciousness".

Kierkegaard (2009d, 51; 2019, 101) related the repetition movement as concretization with the Aristotelian concept of *kinesis* (Arist. Metaph. IX) when an object moves from potentiality to actuality. However, Kierkegaard applied the concept to consciousness (Carlisle 2005, 68). The repetition is what the Hegelians wrongly called mediation, argued Kierkegaard (2009d, 50). The individual's movement from possibility to actuality is not a mechanical or logical movement like physical elements changing from potentiality to actuality. Kierkegaard (2011, 15) claimed that the subjective movement from potentiality to actuality is always a conscient and transcendental act, always a matter of choice, acted in time by the individual.

As proposed by the Hegelians, mediation was an immanent idea that ignored human transcendence, and Kierkegaard defended that the movement from the consciousness to concreteness involved the transcendence of choice (Stewart 2003, 293; Carlisle 2011, 299). Every actuality emerges through freedom as a self-transcendence in the world. While immanence keeps man in the sameness of his unconscious recursivity, his psychic reality can transcend the temporal materiality of his body when he chooses to materialize a transcendent thought.

Kierkegaard (2004) demonstrated this in his book "*Either/Or*", his version of the Aristotelian law of the excluded middle applied to human existence. The human being always has decisions to make that involve "either/or" evaluations, choices like "either marry or not marry", "either buy this or not", which the person must decide and live with the choice made (Carlisle 2011, 299–300). The decision is not compulsory but

transcends the individual's temporality and immanence, bringing into existence what was imagined in the mind (Hannay 2007, 30).

Kierkegaard accused people of living a mechanical and inauthentic life, a spiritless existence living on autopilot for existing unconsciously (Kierkegaard 2010, 50; Evans 2019, 23; Glenn 2007, 7). However, he emphasized that the human being is not a victim of his immanent nature, for he can transcend it, where faith is the highest transcendent expression of the human will.

If his immanent controlled nature, man would not be able to deny himself. He would not resist the body's desires, like controlling the urge to eat, for example. Those who go on hunger strike or voluntarily fast show that the transcendence of choice can be imposed upon the immanency. The same could be said for voluntary celibacy and those who subdue bodily pain, such as the Indian fakirs. Man's choice is not determined by his immanency, as if the human were reduced to a biochemical machine (Pearcey 2018, 37; Plantinga 2011, 109).

The human decision is based on possibilities, not on potentiality. The human mind can idealize possibilities and never concretize them. Nevertheless, the choice to act and concretize one of these possibilities is a transcendent act that brings something into existence. Every action of concretization actualizes the self through a qualitative leap. After choosing, the impact of either doing something or not now becomes a reality chosen. The transcendent concretization affects the whole self immanently. This is part of Kierkegaard's (2011, 32; Watkin 2010, 17) concept of the qualitative leap.

Therefore, there is a relation between immanence and self-transcendence. Love, fear, passion, guilt, shame, and many other emotions are transcendent human realities connected to subjective ones. These and other emotions and thoughts cannot be reduced to hormones, or electrical pulses in neuro-networks of the brain, as they are related to truths beyond man's immanency (Pearcey 2018, 82–83). Theology must recognize the objectivity in these subjectivities, for there is transcendent truth behind these immanent realities. As Heschel (2001, 348) stated, these subjective terms point to higher theological truths. This discussion is the heart of all anthropological problems in this time, for human life has been reduced to its immanency, rejecting human transcendence along with God's existence. The human being has been considered a

mere victim of unconscious and invisible forces within, not a responsible creature before people and God, as Scripture reveals.

Just as sin entered the world transcendentally through the volitional act of one man (Rom 5:12), it continues to enter the world transcendentally every time a person decides to sin (Kierkegaard 2011, 33; Dunning 1985, 1213). For the act of sinning brings into existence the evil that only existed in the mind. Only the transcendent God can break the recursive cycle of sin to which the individual is enslaved. Without the total transcendent revelation of God and the human transcendent act of faith, the individual is destined to an endless recursive life of sin. A nihilistic existence.

5.2.3.4 Self-Consciousness as Self-Recursivity

Kierkegaard addressed the multiplicity generated by self-consciousness when the self relates to itself. Self-consciousness introduces not only self-perception but also different relations of the self with himself, as already argued (Evans 2019, 11; Kierkegaard 2010, 25–30). There is the self I see as my ideal self, the self I want to become, the virtual self, but there is also the awareness of my actual self and the memory of my former selves, including my personal history. This capacity to objectify itself is because the human being can also manipulate itself inwardly and recursively.

A man can see himself as an object and see himself seeing himself as an object and do it theoretically *ad infinitum* (Perinat 2015, 9). He can lose himself in his own imaginations, manipulating his self indefinitely. However, this *ad infinitum* is not indeed possible because the human mind is limited, where the number of multiplying possibilities soon reaches “beyond the capacity of the mind to hold them” (Corballis 2014, 9). Thus, the human can recursively detach from reality and project himself into a new imagined one, in new possibilities. This recursive capacity enables human beings to do many things. In other words, self-consciousness makes possible self-recursivity.

In the imagination, the human being projects himself recursively in scenarios different from his actual reality. An imaginary situation can contain a future intention (ideality) and a past (memory), leading the whole self to experience or repeat an illusion. Kierkegaard addressed different despairs related to this imaginary existence. The “despair of infinitude” and the “despair of possibility”, for example, are when the person is detached from reality, living an illusion (Kierkegaard 2010, 46–49, 52–60;

Evans 2019, 13). Kierkegaard was not talking about lunatics but about people considered normal in society because society itself is alienated, immersed in the same type of despair.

In these two despairs, what was imagined is not concretized by the self, for it is a type of “escapism”, where this becomes an imaginary recursion treated as real for the individual (Kierkegaard 2010, 47; Westphal 2007, 59–61). This person lives an aesthetic existence in the realm of his imagination. As the self is a synthesis, the mental experiences always involve the body, which feels and experiences to some degree the illusion, because imagination, passions, and feelings are inseparable (Jothen 2018, 3; Edwards 2018, 56–67). This virtual existence within the recursivity of consciousness is concrete for the person because he experiences the feelings in his body. However, Kierkegaard (2010, 53–54) argued, a person who exists only in imagination suffers for not actualizing and concretizing the imagined reality. By living in the imagination, the person is lost in the infinite possibilities of his creativity, exhausting his temporal and limited physical existence that increasingly demands the realization of what the mind creates. If the imagined scenario quickly vanishes psychically, what to say about the emotions and feelings experienced by the body through the imagination?

This helps explain the growing mental diseases when humanity is increasingly living in the recursivity of virtual realities. This new *Homo Virtus*, shaped by virtual realities, involved in so many recursive technologies, exists more psychically than concretely. Even when living in the concrete, existence is an illusory expression. Consequently, the *Homo Virtus* lives under the tension of satisfying multiple demands through a limited body and mind. It is not surprising that today, society suffers a pandemic of anxiety and depression. The exhaustion of mind and body reflects the universal thirst for an infinite reality that can only be satisfied by divine transcendence. The modern man tries to live in the realm of infinitude and eternity, but is thrown in despair to the ground of his finitude and limitation. The only way humans become eternal is through the God-relation. An important approach for theology should be bringing awareness, the conscience of finitude and temporality, getting the illusory

individual to the realm of reality. Jesus, for example, led Peter from his overconfident and illusory self-image to the self-perception as flawed and sinful.[56]

All recursive and imaginary realities are always in front of God; as Jesus stated, a sin committed in the heart is also sin (Matt 5:28). Kierkegaard raised this concern, that everything a human being does is always in front of God, whether objectively or subjectively in imagination (Kierkegaard 2010, 107). Many discussions try to define whether virtual worlds are moral, as in games where the player pretends to be a rapist, murderer, or thief (e.g., Bartel 2020; Ostritsch and Ulbricht 2020; Ostritsch 2017; Young 2017). Theology, however, should answer this question without difficulty, as no reality can be considered amoral for the human being.

5.2.3.5 Self-Recursivity and Time

An essential aspect of subjective recursivity is the dynamic of time. Kierkegaard coined the term “moment”, sometimes translated as “instant”, meaning an instantaneous time of the self (Watkin 2010, 168). In Kierkegaard’s “moment”, one can see the Augustinian concept of time distending the soul (Aug. Conf. 11.23–27). It was Augustine who first used the idea of “moment”, referring to the concomitant presence of past, present, and future in a person’s mind, where the present demands to be posited in space, in a “moment” (11.28–37). In the form of memory, it is the past, and in the form of expectations, it is the future. In the human mind, past, future, and present appear as realities that either ceased to exist or do not yet exist; however, they are present for the individual’s “moment”. For Augustine, as for Thomas Aquinas, God created and maintains the space-temporal existence, moving the human and all creatures through time and space in a continuous temporal flow (Aug. Lit. Gen. 8.26, 48; Thom. Sum. 1.85.4).

For Kierkegaard (2011, 92; 2010, 70, 82), one of the consequences for the human being of the synthesis between physical and psychical is that he is also the synthesis between temporality and eternity (Elrod 1975, 65). Kierkegaard stated that each moment is, in fact, eternal, as the sum of all moments of the past is in direct tension with the future expected (Kierkegaard 2011, 93; Elrod 1975, 67). In this case,

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[56] Matt 26:31–35, 69–75; Mark 14:27–31, 66–72; Luke 22:31–38,54–62; John 18:15–18, 25–27

time is a subjective representation of a succession of countless past and future moments. It is always disappearing, becoming from the future into the past. What exists is the now, the moment, the temporal connection between past and future happening in the self. The moment, therefore, is not an atom of time, “but an atom of eternity”, for it contains all the moments together at the same time, implying a sense of continuity and permanence of the same self (Kierkegaard 2011, 94; Dupré 1985, 124).

Indeed, every moment is eternal, as Scripture declares that every person is responsible for each spoken word, thought, and action because everything always happens before God (Eccl 12:14; Matt 12:36–37; Rom 2:16; 14:12). The moment is where the multiple is present in the one, both in terms of past, with the multiple selves in memory, and future, where possibilities urge for an action (Kierkegaard 2018, 281). When posited, sin transforms all temporality of the individual into sinfulness, and the past starts to be blurred (Kierkegaard 2011, 100). There is no more objectivity for the individual beholding his past, ignoring or reimagining it freely, even though his real past is alive subjectively as anxiety. The temporal self that sinned is now always present, bringing the whole experienced anxiety, including the physical and emotional effects, but blurred in consciousness by sinfulness. The sinner has his own understanding darkened, ignoring himself and God, losing his sensibility, suppressing the truth (Rom 1:18; Eph 4:18–19).

At every moment, man is the synthesis of all his moments, the sum of experiences, anxieties, and sins; consequently, he is always sinful in front of God. However, human beings are not always aware of their total temporality. The aesthete, for example, ignores his past and future, losing himself in satisfaction of pleasure in the present, regardless of any responsibility (Kierkegaard 2004, 86; Jothen 2018, 13). The ethicist, though, has some conscience, as he recognizes some past and his responsibility, trying to build a future by looking back. He looks back, trying to either repeat an experienced ideal or to avoid a failure. The ethicist is a fragmented person, not conscious of all. He is bound by his sinful immanence, in self-deception, suppressing truth, unable to look to the transcendence of eternity. Only the Christian, can become fully aware of his temporality and eternity, able to transcend by faith (Dupré 1985, 117).

The moment is a blink of an eye, an instant where the fullness of time is present. Kierkegaard related the fullness of time to the atom of eternity (Mark 1:15; 1 Cor 15:52; Gal 4:4; Hühn and Schwab 2015, 85; Elrod 1975, 68). Jesus is the one who not only came in the fullness of time but was himself the fullness of time. When Christ encounters the temporal human being, he leads the person to the awareness of his own fullness of time (Kierkegaard 2019, 33; Jothen 2018, 64–65). That is why the encounter with Jesus puts human beings in contact with their untruths, often forgotten, suppressed, or ignored. The apostle Paul addressed this forgetfulness in terms of suppressed truths, and Freud called repression of memory (Rom 1:18; Pearcey 2018, 27; Larkin 1999, 1037; Freud 1990, 423). These hidden and suppressed truths are present, and at the same time unknown to the individual, part of his fullness of time (Kierkegaard 2019, 31). This unconscious untruth posits itself, arises, leaping transcendentally through acts of sin at the moment, revealing its existence without exposing itself completely. To become whole, solving its fragmentation, the self must know its suppressed truths, his untruth. With the fulness of time, through Christ, eternity becomes a possibility for the self (Elrod 1975, 68). Only Christ brings awareness of the sins, mistakes, inconsistencies, traumas, and countless past failures, connecting them through the forgiveness and healing of the cross to infinite possibilities in the future.

In each person's history, sin suppresses itself and divine truths, temporarily fragmenting the individual who wills to forget his inconsistencies. The suppression, repression, and forgetting of sin as experiences of the self, do not occur only as traumas but as a mechanism created by the sin itself. Because of selfish self-love, the human being cannot live with himself and his sufferings, anxieties, guilt, shame, anger, and other anguishes consciously all the time. Therefore, he distances himself from the sinful self, suppressing it, hiding as if he were now another self, a recursivity of himself. This newly created self, forgets the old one, however, keeping him alive inwardly.

I argue that the Kierkegaardian concept of the moment offers great questions for theology. Soteriology, for example, tends to see the human being as a static being, where a single temporal experience with Christ is sufficient. Nonetheless, maybe this is because contemporary soteriology tends to equal salvation to justification, reducing it to its legal dimension. However, soteriology should involve the whole self and his "fullness of time". Only the encounter with the one who is the fullness of time can

redeem, atone, and heal every atom of eternity in the individual's personal history affected by sin. Salvation in time must move Christ into the fullness of the personal time, applying redemption to every moment of the person's history.

The individual needs to self-perceive as an untruth, getting to know his forgotten, unknown, and repressed truths, shaping his personal history and future self (Kierkegaard 2019, 31–41). For just as one day all things will be recapitulated, re-signified, unified under the lordship of Christ (Eph 1:10), this must now take place in the personal history of each newborn Christian. The human needs to be re-signified in Christ, re-signifying each moment of his personal history, unifying the fragmented self in the fullness of time. Whether past, present, or future, each moment of the self must be redeemed and submitted to Christ's work.

Unlike the atheistic existentialism that encourages postmodern man to reinvent himself, forgetting the old self as if it were a worn-out garment, abandoning the acts of the past, Christianity does not forget but remembers and redeems every atom of man's eternity in the atom of eternity that was the Cross of Christ. While for the postmodern man, the anguish of sin is pushed into the unconsciousness to be suppressed, whether through medicines, entertainment, or psychotherapies; Christianity invites human beings to meet their anguish before Jesus Christ, who redeems and heals every atom of his eternity.

5.3 What it Means to Be a Sinner

This section will produce a synthesis of what was discovered in the previous chapters about sin, conducting a dialogue with systematic theologians. New insights will be highlighted as part of a proposal for theology to address the anthropology of sin in a fresh and relevant way. This section seeks to answer some essential questions about the anthropology of sin; both in objective and subjective terms: (1) Is sin transferred from parent to child? How? (2) What is sin? Is it just an ethical category, or does it possess ontological reality and epistemological unfolding? (3) How does sin relate to the aesthetic dimension of the human being? (4) How does sin relate to the ethical dimension? The theme will be concentrated, therefore, on these four subsections accordingly.

5.3.1 *The Subjective Heredity of Sin*

5.3.1.1 A Brief History of the Theology of Original Sin

The Scriptures affirm that all men have sinned, falling short of God's glory, receiving death as a reward (Rom 3:10, 23; 6:23). Thus, teaching the universality of sin is an indispensable biblical truth that should not be neglected (Garrett 2014, 553–556). There are primarily three different ways of interpreting the universality of sin and its relation to Adam, which in the history of the Church Fathers appear in Pelagius, Augustine, and the Eastern Fathers (Farris 2020, 140; Garrett 2014, 559).

Pelagius denied the kinship between Adam's sin and humanity, defending that sin was learned only through example (Champlin 2018a, 1320; Cross and Livingstone 2005, 1257). The Pelagian solution valued man's free autonomy, annulling humanity's communal relationship with Adam and the whole race (Thiselton 2002, 108). His interpretation was condemned by the council of Ephesus (Farris 2020, 141).

Augustine's interpretation did the opposite, seeing humanity as part of a collective that was all present in Adam (Aug. City. 13.14, 1; Houck 2020, 19). According to the Church Father, when Adam sinned, all humanity sinned in him; therefore, everyone inherits Adam's guilt and sinfulness. The Reformed interpretation followed Augustine, as John Calvin proposed that Adam sinned as the head of humanity, representing everyone (Farris 2020, 141). Jonathan Edwards gave a similar reading but based not on a legal connection like Calvin; instead, on a metaphysical one, treating humanity as a branch from the same tree as Adam (Edwards 2009, 219–223; Rea 2011, 332–345). Both Calvin and Edwards reframed the same Augustinian theory, but differently. For them, every human being participated in Adam's guilt and sinful nature. As much as Augustine, Calvin, and Edwards used different analogies, in the end, the three concluded the same.

The third interpretation did not affirm the transmission of Adam's guilt to the offspring, but only sinfulness, also affirming the universality of sin. We see this in Justin Martyr and Irenaeus (Just. First. 61, 10; Iren. Ag. 4.2, 7; Farris 2020, 145–146). According to them, man inherits Adam's corrupted nature, but not his guilt, because guilt is related to personal sins which cannot be passed on to offspring. The idea that man inherits Adam's evil nature but not his guilt is also the Arminian and Wesleyan interpretation (Farris 2020, 146). While the Pelagian view emphasized the individual

over the collective, and the Augustinian the collective over the individual, the third interpretation synthesized the collective and the individual, arguing for the universality of sin, but not the inheritance of guilt.

The Arminian and the Reformed view of original sin follow different perspectives; as for most of the reformers, human nature was totally corrupted by sin, while for Arminianism, human nature was wounded (Rea 2011, 324; Cairns 2002, 179; cf. the “Canons of Dort”, and the “Five Arminian Articles” in Schaff 1882). Luther (2017, 38, 80) considered man’s nature as totally corrupt, which is why it needs to be hated. Luther’s interpretation of human nature transformed man into something different from God’s good creature (Jenson 2006, 56). Even though Augustine is probably the primary influence on Luther, Augustine never affirmed the total corruption of human nature, only that it was wounded, and needing healing (Aug. City. 11.2; 14.11).

Like Barth and Pannenberg, many modern theologians have rejected the whole doctrine of original sin and its transmission, trying to explain sin’s universality using Kantian arguments (Pannenberg 2009b, 378–380; Barth 2009, 265; Peters 2014, 378; Buckley 1995, 367). Others, influenced by liberal theology, also rejected the fall of Adam, claiming that sin is part of the animal aggression inherited by humans through evolution (Champlin 2018a, 1320). These opinions should be rejected, as they oppose the biblical revelation, neglecting the fundamental role of Adam and Eve and a historical fall, as described, and argued earlier.

5.3.1.2 Transmission of Sins from Parents

As I will argue below, it is necessary to abandon the inconsistent idea of transmission of sin conceived by Pelagian and Augustine, while reaffirming and reformulating the theological importance of the doctrine of hereditary sin for today. Therefore, I will argue for the third interpretation as described earlier, using a modified version of Kierkegaard’s approach. Two Pauline texts deserve special attention. The first is 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, “For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive” (NIV).

In this text, there is no reference to sin’s transmission, only the teaching that the consequence of Adam’s sin affected his offspring, bringing the universality of death. I argue that these verses need to be read typologically (Taylor 2014, 385;

Ciampa and Rosner 2010, 763), for if they are read literally, they may lead to universalism, because Paul wrote that “in Adam all die” and declared that “in Christ all will be made alive”. Who is “all” in his statement? Typologically, Paul said that everyone in Adam dies (present tense), while those in Christ will one day (future tense) be resurrected (1 Cor 15:22; Marsh 2009, 1920). Thus, the text does not teach about the transmission of sins but the union between all humans who are “in Adam”, who suffer the same consequence of death. Paul’s statement only declares that sin and death came through Adam, as salvation came through Jesus. Another vital text is Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all people, because all sinned” (NIV).

The idea that sin passed from Adam to all his descendants originated in Augustine’s reading of this verse through the wrong translation of the Latin Vulgate, which read that “in Adam all have sinned” (Aug. City. 13.14; Houck 2020, 2; Pannenberg 2009b, 365). The idea that humanity was all in Adam and, therefore, all sinned in him, or the idea that Adam sinned as the head of humanity, thus bringing guilt to all, is a mystical concept foreign to Scripture (Kierkegaard 2011, 28–31; Barrett 1985, 51–52). The reformer Zwingli also rejected this Augustinian concept, affirming that in posterity, the original sin “is not truly sin”, but a condition (Shedd 1999, 177).

I argue that the idea that all souls were in Adam seems an Augustinian reframing of the Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of souls (Plato. Phaedrus., 248–250; Pannenberg 2009b, 367) as if humanity pre-existed within Adam. According to this thought, Adam’s acts, and those of our forefathers, were also our actions because we supposedly existed and acted in them. While Augustine rejected the idea of a fall in a pre-existing state, his doctrine of original sin became another Platonic version of a pre-existing fall (Aug. City., 11.23; Shedd 1999, 9). Moreover, I argue that the idea of original guilt is a reframe of the Platonic teaching of reminiscence (Plato. Meno., 85b–86c). In the Platonic teaching, the soul recollects the truths of a pre-incarnational existence, very similar to what Augustine defended, that the human soul should recognize the sins committed in the past life in Adam, for being supposedly accountable to them (Aug. Conf. 8.10; Rigby 1999, 612).

Interpreting hereditary sin in such terms makes the biblical narrative into a mystical one, as Kierkegaard (2011, 34) precisely argued. The concept that guilt was passed through generations lacks biblical foundation. Besides, if a human inherited

Adam's guilt, he would also inherit the guilt of his parents and grandparents when the Scriptures reject such an idea (Jer 31:29; Ezek 18:1–20). Furthermore, the apostle Paul declared that every man will be judged according to what was done "while in the body" (2 Cor 5:10), not in a pre-existing soul in Adam.

In Romans 5:12, Paul is not claiming that everyone sinned in Adam, but affirming that sin entered the world and death through sin because of Adam. Death "scattered", "moved on" (διέρχομαι) to all men, but Paul did not say how (Swanson 1997a, §1451; Louw and Nida 1996, §15.17). Paul's emphasis is on the consequence of sin, not on how it was transmitted. Therefore, one should not expect any clear doctrine of original sin from Romans 5:12, as Paul's focused on highlighting Jesus's salvation available to everyone (Allen 2009, 1838). Furthermore, in Romans 5:18, Paul was also speaking typologically. He declared that condemnation came to all men because of one offense, and grace also scattered to all men because of one man's obedience. If one bases the doctrine of original guilt on this text alone, one will also need to affirm salvation in a universalistic way, for Paul declared that grace came upon all men. We cannot take one part literally and not the other. If Paul was affirming the universality of guilt, then he also affirmed universal salvation. On the contrary, as argued before, the apostle was speaking typologically.

The fundamental role of human participation in the action of sin cannot be minimized. After all, "Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin" (Deut 24:16; NIV); and "The one who sins is the one who will die" (Ezek 18:20; NIV). Moreover, the Bible declares that God will reward each one according to what they did in this life, not according to what their parents did.[57]

The apostle Peter also emphasized that God judges each one according to one another's works (1 Pet 1:17) and that the futile and sinful way of life is transmitted (πατροπαράδοτος) "through tradition", taught by parents to their children (1 Pet 1:18; Swanson 1997a, §4261; Louw and Nida 1996, §33.240). Peter's words do not point to a physical transmission of sin, instead, to a transmission via tradition. Peter here is not teaching the inheritance of guilt but claiming that sin, as an ethical-religious category,

[57] Psa 62:12; Prov 24:12; Isa 3:11; Jer 31:30; 32:19; Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10

is an empty lifestyle taught by parents, inherited by example (Champlin 2020c, 135–136; Polkinghorne 2009, 2158).

Therefore, the idea of inherited guilt has no biblical base, even though Scripture affirms the relation between Adam's sin and every man's sinful nature. Kierkegaard stated that the explanation which renders the original sin as a race covenant explains nothing and reduces sin to a necessity where man has no responsibility (Kierkegaard 2011, 29–31; Barrett 1985, 53). Just as Adam sinned, there is for each one a "qualitative leap" where man moves freely into the legal category of guilt (Kierkegaard 2011, 32–34; Grøn 2015, 278; Rae 2010, 91).

Kierkegaard reaffirmed the propagation of Adam's sinfulness but asserted personal freedom and responsibility (Walsh 2015, 301). While sinfulness grows quantitatively in history through propagation, sin is always posited freely through a "qualitative leap".

If the sin of Adam determined compulsorily the other sins in humanity, they are not the result of free action, then humanity is not responsible for their sins. As Kierkegaard (2011, 38) argued, if a man was not innocent before becoming guilty, consequently, he would have never become guilty. As Zwingli stated, without transgressing a law, there is no guilt (Shedd 1999, 176). Besides, if we are metaphysically Adam's branches, our subsequent sins are indeed not sins, as we were not responsible for a compulsory movement started by other. Consequently, I argue, all subsequent sins would be nothing more than the same and only sin committed by Adam and Eve, for our sins are mere branches of the same Adamic corruption. Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards argued that we are guilty as much for our corruption as for Adam's guilt, claiming that we coexisted in him in a type of metaphysic union (Rea 2011, 325). However, conceiving hereditary sin in this way is the same as seeing the transmission of sin as a domino effect, where each piece topples another. In this view, only the first movement that pushed the first piece is responsible for the total result. No piece is, in fact, capable of preventing the movement, for each movement made by each piece is merely a consequence of the same initial one. Therefore, there are no sins, but only the first one, because the first movement is the only movement operating in all. However, I claim, unlike domino pieces, human beings are made in the image of God, possessing some given freedom and are responsible for it. We are not merely immanent creatures but also

transcendent ones. The metaphysical and the branch theories create more problems than solutions.

Therefore, I conclude: (1) Every human being inherits the sinful nature of Adam and Eve (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:21–22); (2) The inherited sinful nature is not guilt, because man is not responsible for the sin of Adam or his ancestors, only for his own sin (Deut 24:16; Jer 31:29; Ezek 18:1–20); (3) Guilt is posited when a man acts in sin (Ezek 18:20; 2 Cor 5:10); (4) Every human being, with the only exception of Jesus Christ, is a sinner (Rom 3:10,23; 1 Pet 2:22).

5.3.1.3 Transmission of Subjective Anxiety

Kierkegaard argued that subjective anxiety is generated when sin happens, disturbing the whole self (Kierkegaard 2011, 62–89). The inherited fallen world presents objective anxiety, a reality of temptation to every person. In addition to a world immersed in sin, humans inherit an unbalanced bodily nature from their parents, impregnated by subjective anxieties. With the positing of sin, sensuality becomes sinful, propagated to descendants, creating a predisposition to sin without compromising personal responsibility (69) (Walsh 2015, 301). Sensuality, and especially sexuality becomes sinful, because man and woman can't see each other anymore without the distorted gaze caused by their disrupted conscience. Now, through sexuality, sinfulness (not sin) is transmitted to offspring (Steinmetz 2021, 89).

As a result, every newborn individual becomes increasingly sensual and anxious, inheriting sinfulness as a potentiality to sin (Kierkegaard 2011, 80; Steinmetz 2021, 89). I argue that this subjective anxiety quoted by Kierkegaard is the unknown law quoted by Paul (Rom 7:21), bodily inherited from the parents and grandparents. This sinful nature inherited in terms of anxiety, or anguish, is an unconscious force produced by "my other", pressuring the self in the direction of evil, as a potentiality urging to be born (Kierkegaard 2011, 45; Walsh 2015, 301).

The latest discoveries in the field of epigenetics seem to support Kierkegaard's argument. On the one hand, genetics cannot explain original sin because no volitional act can generate changes in the DNA sequence (Houck 2020, 183). However, a new study about epigenetics analyzes the inheritance of traits through "non-genetic processes". Epigenetics investigates the changes in gene expressions during an organism's lifetime, caused by factors different to the DNA sequence (Houck 2020,

183–184; Brazier 2019, 745; McLatchie 2017, 210). Epigenetics has shown how external factors, like the environment, behaviors, addiction, and experiences like stress and depression, generate epigenetic changes in the body, which may be passed on to offspring (Bihaqi 2019; Steck and Steck 2016, 51; Nestler 2011; Weinhold 2006). Transgenerational epigenetics are the traits transmitted to other generations, as changes in gene expressions (Brazier 2019, 745). Epigenetics demonstrates that, even though someone can carry a biological potentiality for addiction, psychosis, or depression, for example, the person is not predetermined, as the condition needs to be triggered somehow. Nevertheless, the condition is there, latent as a potentiality.

Houck (2020, 184) argues that it is unclear if transgenerational epigenetics is transmitted further than the first generation in humans, arguing that it is unlikely that epigenetics can explain the heredity of sin. However, many recent studies have confirmed that epigenetic traits are indeed transmitted across generations (e.g., Carrell 2019; Casavilca-Zambrano et al. 2019; Pang et al. 2019; Rodgers et al. 2013). They demonstrate how an environmental insult, that is, an event that significantly impacts the biology of the body, producing stress, is transmitted to the offspring through sexual cells that carry a picture of the last cellular moment of the body. Likewise, psychological traumas, anxieties, and depression can also be transmitted to the offspring, even traced in different generations (Cunningham, Walker and Nestler 2021; Roberts et al. 2018, 2).

Brazier (2019, 745) suggests that the fall triggered epigenetic changes in the first couple, creating conditions for the perpetuation of evil through its repetition. He claims that epigenetically, characteristics can be turned on or off, according to the behavior, sometimes even triggered by the nurture received by the mother (753). Indeed, the new discoveries seem to confirm this theory, even though the researchers approach the subject from a non-theological perspective (e.g., Cunningham, Walker and Nestler 2021; Carrell 2019; Casavilca-Zambrano et al. 2019; Pang et al. 2019; Roberts et al. 2018:2; Rodgers et al. 2013).

The stress impacting the body, the environmental insult that triggers epigenetic changes as discovered by modern biologists, seems to match what Kierkegaard called the “qualitative change”. When sin is posited, a qualitative change occurs in the whole

self, making sense that it is also an environmental insult affecting the whole body, therefore affecting it epigenetically.

Epigenetics is a growing area of study in biology that I believe can offer some tools for theology and Christian philosophy to address the problem of sin. It is still open for debate whether it provides the final biological answer to the theological problem of sinfulness transmission. However, so far, epigenetics seems to agree with the same premises as Kierkegaard's anthropology. Nevertheless, while science, on the one hand, is concerned with facts and empirical truths, it is up to theology to interpret them under the light of biblical revelation.

To conclude, the doctrine of hereditary sin opens the door for studying other problems that need to be addressed by theology—practical problems related to the subjective relationship between sin and its social consequences. A theological understanding of a subjective heritage that mediates sinfulness through generations should not be restricted to the relationship with Adam but also the parents, our ethnic history, and national identity. The repetition of sinful tendencies in different peoples and societies could lead to empirical studies to help theology better understand peoples and develop better approaches to practical theology and missiology.

From a biblical-theological foundation of hereditary sin, theology can approach some of the rising issues in the world. For example, theology can approach racism and the growing Neo-Marxist claim of the supposed debt of white people to black people. For, even though Neo-Marxism denies the doctrine of original sin, it seems to popularly defend an Augustinian view, considering today's whites to be heirs of the guilt of slavery perpetrated by their ancestors. This social interpretation owes its assertion to the idea that white people existed in their white parents and therefore inherited their guilt. With the help of a Kierkegaardian anthropology, I argue that we can reject the idea of inherited debt without neglecting the consequences passed down through the generations. Theology can help the Church to find better ways to minister to Blacks, or South American Indians, and others, who inherit the subjective anxiety of their enslaved and oppressed parents, seeking to understand how to redeem centuries of subjectively condensed suffering, anguish, repression, and humiliation.

5.3.2 *A Kinetic Ontology of Sin*

In this section, I will address the problem of what sin is ontologically. I will approach the issue by summarizing some of the main definitions throughout history and presenting my proposal for a kinetic ontology of sin.

It was Plotinus who first asserted that evil was the lack of substance and Augustine who defined evil as the absence of good, as the lack of God (Plot. Enn. 2.4.16; 1.8.5; Aug. Conf. 7.9—17; Aug. City. 11.11; Champlin 2018a, 1012; Acosta and Mangum 2016; Frame 2015, 110; Hochschild 2012, 9). With Plotinus, Augustine denied any objective existence to evil, treating it in terms of "nonbeing" and "nothingness" (Aug. Free. 2.20.54; Thiselton 2002, 86; Davie et al. 2016, 316). According to him, evil was deprivation, in the same way darkness is the lack of light. Thomas Aquinas followed Augustine, defining evil as the absence of goodness (Thom. Sum.1.5.48; Thiselton 2002, 86; Walsh 2009, 106). This concept became the prevailing definition in theology until Immanuel Kant presented his theory of Radical Evil.

Kant's concept reduced evil to a condition inherent to human freedom, a natural capacity to deny its moral reason (Hocknull 2016, 91; Frame 2015, 771; Pannenberg 2009b, 355; 2004, 86). Kant, therefore, moved the concept of evil from a metaphysical to an epistemological category. The main problem with Kant's "radical evil" is that evil became a natural condition of every human being.

Karl Barth's definition of nothingness conceptualized evil in Augustinian terms as the negation of God (Barth 2004g, CD III.3, §50; Guretzki 2016, 81). With Augustine, Barth defined sin as denial, not attributing any objective existence (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1,139—140). However, he mixed Augustine's concept with the Kantian, treating evil as a natural tendency nurtured by freedom (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1, 501; Webster 2004, 73–74). Barth also mixed concepts, and probably borrowed from Heidegger and Sartre (Davie et al. 2016, 316; Barth 2004g, CD III.3, 334–335; Heidegger 2018; 2018a; Sartre 2012). However, Barth's definition of evil, and sin, went beyond Augustine, Kant, Heidegger, and Sartre when he defined it in terms of falsehood in reference to the real man, Jesus Christ (Barth 2004j, CD IV.3.1, 434–436; Jenson 2006, 164). Barth presented sin as an existential state of falsehood before the divine model provided in the real man (Barth 2004h, CD IV.1, 144–146; Jenson 2006, 163). Thus, Barth combined many concepts, synthesizing evil as the existential

grasp of nothingness, characterized by the human denial of God. Barth's theology was notable regarding sin, condensing different views about evil.

Augustine reduced evil to a metaphysical concept by addressing it in terms of nothingness, a formless entity without substance. Frame (2015, 111) recommends abandoning Augustine's concept for this reason. The Plotinus-Augustinian concepts paved the way to Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist thinking (Kirkpatrick 2015; 2017, 98). According to Sartre, "existence precedes essence" (Sartre 2012, 695), providing substance to nothingness generated by the existing individual. For Sartre, grasped nothingness acquires the same substance of the individual. The difference between Augustine's nonbeing and Sartre's nothingness is man's existence. While the first is conceived negatively, as inexistent, the second is defined positively, existing within.

Comparing evil with darkness is a biblical metaphor,[58] but it leads to erroneous propositions when taken as a final definition. Biblically, sin and evil have objective existence, treated as an objective power (Luke 22:53), where man's body itself becomes darkness (Matt 6:23). It is true that poetically, Scripture depicts darkness as deprivation of God's knowledge, a type of spiritual ignorance.[59] However, darkness also appears as human distress and anxiety, a subjective evil.[60] If evil as darkness were a non-existent reality, as a mere absence of light, it would not also be treated as an objective place, called hell, of weeping and gnashing of teeth.[61] Consequently, a more comprehensive ontology to deal with the problem of evil is needed.

Considering that sin became a reality within creation when the serpent instigated the first couple, consequently sin is a human creation, and humanity shares its nature. As the human being is a synthesis between physical and psychical, I argue that sin is also a synthesis between nothingness and the human being. It is the grasp of nothingness, or as Vanhoozer (2010, 343) stated, it is "grasped spiritual entropy".

Sin is nothingness as an idea concretized and embodied in humanity. The original nothingness was idealized by the serpent and embodied with the forbidden fruit by the first couple. Consequently, sin became subjective and objective, humanly

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[58] e.g., John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; Acts 26:18; Rom 13:12
[59] e.g., Job 12:24, 25; Matt 4:16; John 1:5; 8:12; 12:35, 46; 1 John 1:5; 2:8, 9,11
[60] Gen 15:12; Job 5:14; Eccl 5:17; Isa 5:30
[61] Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet 2:17; Jude 6; 13

transcendent (present in mind, memory, imagination) and immanent (body, emotions). Evil as nothingness, therefore, receives objective existence within humanity's ontology. It is the present lack of God, the paradoxical presence of an absence.

Evil as nothingness is present in the sinner's mind as the denial and lack of God. In the concreteness of the body, sin can take many forms because, by embodying the denial of God, humanity also embodied the denial of life. The grasped nothingness in the body moves biology towards disorder and dissipation, since the very body substance of human beings became opposed to itself. In this respect, sin is the becoming of nothingness, death. The synthetic self is unbalanced and groundless, tending to dissipation and death.

I want to argue for a kinetic ontology. For this, I will summarize proposing the following: (1) Sin is the synthesis between the human being and nothingness, resulting from the relationship between the ideality of evil and the embodiment through action. In this sense, sin is both psychical and corporeal. (2) Sin is self-related through man's consciousness, where subjective sin increasingly corrupts itself. This self-relation of sin in consciousness grasps more nothingness, suppressing and repressing itself. (3) Sin is the lack of God-relation. In this aspect, it is eternal thirst. (4) Sin is the becoming of death, as the movement of the self towards nothingness.

5.3.3 *The Aesthetic of Sin*

Before addressing the aesthetic of sin, it is vital to recall that aesthetics is not in itself sinful. As discussed previously, God created the human being as an aesthetic being, imprinting his image on man and woman. Through the senses, humans can perceive the world around them, bedazzled by the beauty of nature, worship God by contemplating his glory in creation. The beauty in man and woman is the reflection of God's glory. Also, humans can produce creative aesthetic expressions of worship, knowing that God is also an aesthetic being that responds to art. I argued earlier that human aesthetics, including emotions and creativity, are Theomorphic expressions in human beings. However, because of sin, man's aesthetic became sinful; as Kierkegaard (2011, 69) stated, sensuality became sinfulness.

Existential aesthetics is related to two human realities, one bodily and the other psychic, the senses, and the imagination (Watkin 2010, 14). Kierkegaard characterizes the aesthetic as the lowest sphere of existence, as a mere

psychosomatic person (Kierkegaard 2010, 25; Davenport 2015, 245; Glenn 2007, 6). Here, the human is a simple synthesis without self-awareness, living for self-satisfaction, constructing his identity according to his desires (Rae 2010, 85; Vardy 2008, 36). Like the senses, the instincts and desires have no morality in themselves; therefore, when the individual dwells in this sphere, he exists in amorality. The aesthetic self is characterized by spontaneity and thoughtlessness, which does not mean that he is irrational, but ignores essential aspects of reason and morality.

To understand the aesthetics of sin, the subject will be approached considering two dimensions: (1) Sin and Imagination; (2) Sin and Desire.

5.3.3.1 Sin and Imagination

The imagination plays a fundamental role in the aesthetics of sin, as it is where human beings create images of what they want to do, experience, or become. It was in the serpent's imagination where the idea of becoming like God arose, and when it galvanized Eve's imagination, it moved her to desire the imagined, as Irenaeus stated (Gen 3:5; Iren. Dem. 16). The Bible reports that God probes the imagination of men.[62] God destroyed the world in the flood when he saw that all imagination of the human heart was inclined to evil (Gen 6:5). The word כֹּל, "all", is important there, because it does not appear in Genesis 8:21, when God says that man's imagination is evil from childhood (Matthews 1996, 392). That is, even though man's imagination after the flood is evil, not all is. There is a measure of evil in imagination, reached in the time of the flood and only known by God.

It is through imagination that human beings act, choose, create. By acting, man produces himself as an individual within an imagined scenario. For example, Eve imagined herself as equal to God before eating the forbidden fruit. When sinning, man poetizes himself conceiving from imagination. Kierkegaard differentiated the human being into two types in terms of imagination: one who poetizes himself from infinite possibilities, and the other who allows himself to be poetized by God (Garff 2015, 254; Rae 2010, 85–95; Farago 2011, 120–128). The first feeds his imagination with endless ideas, building a fictional identity. The second feeds imagination with the ideality of

[62] Gen 6:5; 8:21; 1 Chron 28:9; Prov 6:16–18; Isa 26:3

Christ, allowing God to concretize it. One has its selfhood grounded in God, and the other in the imagination fueled by the selfhood of others around (Evans 2019, 13–16).

The individual who poetizes himself freely from imagination is disenchanted with reality, denying it to affirm his own ideas (Kierkegaard 2015, 212). He repudiates the world to invent his own. His personal history is suppressed and forgotten, building himself as a myth and legend (214). In this imaginary existence, with total freedom, Kierkegaard (203) names it as the ironist. The ironist is the one who contradicts and asserts himself equally (Cross 1998, 127). Ironic existence is a sinful life in incoherence between subjectivity and objectivity, imagination, and actuality.

Here lies a significant difference between the subjectivity promoted by atheist existentialists and that of Kierkegaard. Atheist subjectivity extols total freedom that despises reality, but Kierkegaard's subjectivity emphasizes coherence with objectivity and reality. Kierkegaard was influenced by the apostolic Fathers, such as Ignatius of Antioch, who highlighted a coherent life between being and action, exteriority, and interiority (Ign. Eph. 15; Kierkegaard 2011a, 85). Kierkegaard's ironist fits the post-modern individual who is the relativist changing masks "merely in order to conceal the fact that he has no face" (Garff 2015, 255). The ironist lives as an actor, an illusory version of his true self, as a relativist, disconnected from reality and its absolutes.

By alienating himself from the world, the aesthetic person tends to lose himself in his imagination, where he is the god of his inner world in a narcissistic existence (McCarthy 1995, 55–61). While the word narcissism never appears in Kierkegaard's writings, the idea is everywhere. Kierkegaard stated, in the words of the Aesthetic "A", "I have only one friend, Echo. And why is Echo my friend? Because I love my sorrow, and Echo does not take it away from me." (Kierkegaard 2004, 51).

For the aesthetic person, the object of love is himself, and imagination plays a vital role in fulfilling his love, becoming his private world for self-love or self-pity. Another character, Johannes the seducer, narcissistically wrote to his "Cordelia" that "In myself I have found the most interesting of my acquaintances" (Kierkegaard 2004, 336; McCarthy 1995, 61). He claimed to be able to talk to himself about her, possessing her in his imagination forever. Thus, the aesthetic person loves himself alone, and even when he loves someone, it is a selfish love interested narcissistically only in his own pleasures.

Kierkegaard described different types of aesthetic sins concerning imagination. First, as an expression of the despair of infinitude, the individual lost himself in endless ideas, becoming a fiction identity with imaginary feelings, knowledge, and even an imaginary will (Kierkegaard 2010, 47–48; Glenn 2007, 7; Westphal 2007, 56). Second, in the despair of possibility, the individual is lost in its possibilities projected in imagination (Kierkegaard 2010, 53). He misses the power to concretize its possibilities, for he is not listening to his inward need. Third, in terms of despair of finitude, where man lacks imagination. He levels himself to them when contemplating the crowds, abandoning creativity (Kierkegaard 2010, 50; Glenn 2007, 7). Fourth is the despair of necessity, where the self lacks possibility and lacks imagination (Kierkegaard 2010, 55). This man lacks faith, for he sees no possibilities. In comparison, the first two sin in the excess of imagination, the second two sin by lacking it. The former believes in illusory and unlimited freedom, and the latter gives up freedom, choosing to be like the crowd. Aesthetic sin is, therefore, a consequence of misusing imagination.

As Jesus is the right measure for the human, the correct use of imagination must be both towards an infinite imagination shaped by the image of Christ, and towards finitude in its concrete realization, as a repetition of Jesus's life (Kierkegaard 2010, 104; Evans 2019, 13–16; Jothen 2018, 44). For this, it is necessary to do the "double-movement"[63] of faith, the same made by Abraham when sacrificing Isaac (Kierkegaard 1994, 27; Glenn 2007, 19–20; Westphal 2007, 62). In this case, the aesthetic sin involves imagining something other than Christ or just imagining without concretizing Christ. Both cases misuse imagination. The revelation of Christ should feed the imagination, requiring the action of faith to concretize it. However, when knowledge only shapes imagination and is never concretized, the individual still lives in irony, affirming something but living another. Only the double movement of faith, of total resignation and trust, can save the aesthetic person.

The points raised in this subsection are of particular importance for the present time, mainly because humanity suffers countless influences on its imagination. The cinema, the internet, virtual games are just some influences galvanizing people's

[63] The double move involves losing everything and gaining everything. It involves sacrificing everything for the love of God, and at the same time expecting everything from God.

imaginations. As a result, on the one hand, humanity seems to lose itself more and more in illusions that disconnect from reality. An increasingly alienated society is taking place worldwide. On the other, an ironic Christianity also seems to be growing worldwide. Theology must engage the practical unfolding for the misuse of imagination and its relationship with psychological pathologies, social problems, and geopolitical confrontations.

5.3.3.2 Sin and Desire

Aesthetics also involves the senses, which are entangled in the body. They are not just corporeal because the human is a synthesis. However, they are directly related to the sensitive world. In aesthetics, anxiety arises, from the connection between imagination and the senses, in a paradoxical relationship between desire and fear. Anxiety fears what desires and at the same time desires what fears (Kierkegaard 2011, 45; Walsh 2009, 91). A typical human experience of attraction and repulsion towards something.

McCarthy (1995, 51) argues that Kierkegaard shared with Freud that the root of the human problem is desire. However, Kierkegaard goes beyond Freud by offering the solution to desire through faith in Christ. Besides, Freud's interpretation of desire was unidimensional, with an immanent and determinist interpretation, while Kierkegaard's reading was broad, interpreting it both as immanent and transcendent.

What are the desires, these inward passions moving the human being? By studying the account of the fall in Genesis, I argued in the last chapter that Eve was tempted in three different ways: by the desire to satisfy her flesh, her eyes, and to become like God (Gen 3:6; Mathews 1996, 238; Hamilton 1995, 13; Ross 1985, 32). John also listed the exact three dimensions when he declared that "For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world" (1 John 2:16). These three dimensions are also present in Christ's temptation (Matt 4:1–11) when he was attracted to transform stones into bread (lust of the flesh); to bow down and worship Satan to receive the human kingdoms (lust of the eyes); to throw himself down from the highest point of the temple and be recognized by all as the Messiah (pride of life). Thus, if Jesus was tempted, it means these desires attracted him; nevertheless, he never surrendered to any and, therefore, never sinned.

I argue that these three categories define all human aesthetic desires, wills, and longings. The famous three Viennese schools of psychotherapy emphasize these desires. What Scripture calls the lust of the flesh or desire for pleasure, I believe, is aligned with Freud's psychoanalytic will of pleasure (Freud 1990, 16; Hill 1999, 882). I also argue that the lust of the eyes, or the desire for possession and power, is Nietzsche's and Adler's "will of power" (Nietzsche 2008, 2011; Gibson 1999, 44). Pride of life, on the other hand, as a desire to determine who one wants to be, involves the so-called "will of meaning" defended by Viktor Frankl's logotherapy (Frankl 2021, 124; Smith 1999, 697). While it is true that each one provides excellent insights regarding human psychology, I argue that all fail to provide solutions. Because, whether falling into a hedonist, a materialist, a totalitarianism, or an ethical lifestyle, they all locate the human being as the center of his universe. They all argue about man poetizing his life out of himself or out of the world, while the Bible shows that humans should be poetized by God. The biblical (and Kierkegaardian) approach views these desires with suspicion as sources of idolatry and slavery, where the only way to exert them authentically is through God.

Although desire is not evil, the NT presents it as corrupted by sin, moving the human being towards evil. Aesthetic sin is the desire always moving the self toward pleasing the flesh, the eyes, or the pride of life.[64] The solution to these immoderate desires is again the double movement of faith. The NT presents the double movement in the same way Kierkegaard (1994) presented in "Fear and Trembling." Kierkegaard (27) claimed that Abraham sacrificed everything, going to the extreme of his anguish in total resignation to God, while graciously received by faith, trusting that God would restore his son. This double movement is also present in the NT, where the believer is invited to: deny himself;[65] exert all his strength in the fight against sin (Heb 12:4); offering his body in self-sacrifice (Rom 12:1); while he is also challenged to trust in God's graceful forgiveness and power to overcome his sin;[66] because God's strength is made perfect in man's weakness (2 Cor 12:9). The double movement of faith requires resignation and trust, believing and acting, the human will and trust in God.

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[64] Rom 1:24; Gal 5:16–21; 1 Tim 6:9; Titus 3:3; Jas 1:14; 2 Pet 2:10; 1John 2:16
[65] Matt 16:24–25; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23–24
[66] Rom 8:1; Gal 5:16; Eph 2:3–10

Peter urged to deny the human desires and live by God's will, which means redirecting them towards God (1 Pet 4:1–6). It is only when the sinner turns his desires and wills into faith that he overcomes the anxieties caused by life's conflicting passions, finding rest and peace,[67] because faith is the desire aligned and submitted to God's will.

Each desire has God as its measure. As Augustine declared, God is the source of our happiness and the purpose of our desires (Aug. City. 10.3.2). Just as man was made satisfied in God, precisely because he was in a harmonious relationship with him, it was the disconnection of sin that led him to desire everything compulsively. As Augustine (15.13) also declared, man searches for satisfaction, only reached in God. Even before the fall, humanity was insufficient, for it needs God, becoming through sin insufficient and miserable humanity (Madureira 2017, 93). Miserable because by losing God, man also lost his own identity, the ground of existence, source, and destiny, losing the reference of the one he should aesthetically reflect (Pannenberg 2009b, 262). Consequently, humanity created "God-substitutes", idols to supply the infinite human desires (Evans 2019, 14). As Calvin wrote, "man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols" (Calv. Inst. I.xi.8). Whether it is a statue of Diana of the Ephesians, or Ganesh of the Hindus, each idol, old or new, aims to satisfy some of those three fundamental desires of human aesthetic existence.

Kierkegaard argued that paganism is more common than anything else, found in the ancient world and modern Christendom precisely because people serve the satisfaction of their idols (Evans 2019, 43). Kierkegaard's insights are actual when we redirect his criticism towards Christianized society. Kierkegaard claimed that Christian paganism is a religion that changes nothing in the subjective, for the desires and imagination are the same when the person never appropriates Christ's truths (Kierkegaard 2013, 134). Instead of believing and obeying God's revelation, going beyond paganism, Christendom chose only to understand Christianity, reducing revelation to a system, becoming another paganism (Walsh 2009, 32). The Christian culture created a new paganism of Christ's "admirers", when in fact, Christianity is a matter of Christ's "imitation" (Kierkegaard 1991a, 254). Christ's admirers can be even

[67] Matt 6:19–21, 25–34; 11:28–30

atheists and idolaters following their desires, artistically simulating Christianity, while imitators follow the road of resignation and faith demonstrated by Jesus and the apostles. Like Jesus, whose desire was his love for his disciples demonstrated in his suffering and passion, the disciple's desire must be refashioned as the love for Jesus (Kierkegaard 2019, 54). While a desire tends to change the world to serve the person, love changes the person to serve the loved one. As Smith (2020, 31, 43) argued, we are what we love; therefore, our desires must be reoriented towards God.

The worst problem with the western type of paganism is its similitude to Christianity. There are two common mistakes in Christian paganism, one that lives a religiosity without Christian ethics, and the other without aesthetics. One sins by living an aesthetic life where desires are sovereign, accommodating the biblical revelation to his hedonistic lifestyle. The other sins by living a legalistic and passionless religiosity, a type of Pharisaic Christianity. The first falls into a subjectivism relativizing the Bible, the other into an objectivism that dehumanizes man. One overemphasizes the body and the emotions, the other demonizes them. Both are paganism, pseudo-Christianity which submits humanity to different types of despair. Only by faith can a person live aesthetically and ethically the authentic Christianity, appropriating and incarnating Christ. Postmodern Christianity is pagan because it bends to serve the idol of hedonism, materialism, or self-assertion. This is because theology has yielded to the anthropological reading of psychologies such as of Freud, Adler, Viktor Frankl, and others.

5.3.4 *The Ethic of Sin and The Economy of the Self*

The ethic of sin relates to the conscience of evil within man. As Bonhoeffer (2020, 15) said, "the notion of good and evil seems to be the target of all ethical reflection". Ethical sin involves man's awareness of evil. By becoming a knower of good and evil (Gen 3:22), man became, as I argued in the previous chapter, an experienced knower of evil. His knowledge and relationship with evil are what configures the ethics of sin.

For the sinner, ethical sin has an impact different from aesthetics. While aesthetic sin attracts to error, willing only to satisfy desires and passions, the ethical sin exposes the error through consciousness by putting the self in self-confrontation. The ethical sin is self-incoherence, the state of despair depicted by Kierkegaard

(2011). While aesthetic sin involves man's senses and imagination, ethical sin involves conscience and self-perception. The sinner is inwardly fragmented, desiring aesthetically the same as what he reproves ethically, existing in self-contradiction. Two important aspects need to be highlighted here: ethically, sin can be conceived objectively as vice, and subjectively as a disrupted conscience. Below I will develop these two points.

5.3.4.1 Sin as Vices

Vices are internal dispositions to sin, inward motivations as habits tending towards evil (Taliaferro and Marty 2018, 300; Grenz and Smith 2003, 124). The theme of vices has been widely debated and explored by several Christian theologians, who produced different lists of vices throughout time (e.g., Barn. 2, 2–3; 18–20; Ign. Eph. 3.1; Just. Sec. 2; Just. Dial. 14; 93; 95; 110; Thom. Sum. 2.71; Fitzgerald 1992, 858). The Bible offers many lists of vices as sinful habits.[68]

For Aristotle, virtue and vices were not passions or desires, but states of the character, modes of choice (Arist. Ethic. 2004a, 2.5). For him, man can reach happiness through the habit of virtue (1.7). For Aristotle, virtue was balance, the middle ground between excess and lack of a particular attribute, while vice was exaggeration and imbalance (Frame 2015, 76). Thomas Aquinas followed him in this approach, conceptualizing vices as an internal disposition to sin, while virtue as a habit according to reason (Thom. Sum. 2.71). Living virtuously for Aquinas was therefore living aligned to reason.

For Augustine, however, even the highest virtues of the pagans were vices, arguing that if they are not practiced in relationship with God, they serve themselves, thereby becoming another type of pride and vanity (Aug. City. 19.25). Following Augustine, Kierkegaard (2010, 105–107) called man's virtues as "glittering vices" because only by faith a man becomes virtuous. Kierkegaard followed Luther in the rejection of a rationalistic ethic. Luther opposed Aristotle's and Aquinas's teaching that happiness could be reached by developing virtues (Luther 2006, 128; McGrath 2015,

[68] e.g., Prov 6:16–19; Matt 15:19; Mark 7:21–22; Rom 1:29–31; 13:13; 1 Cor 5:10–11; 6:9–10; 2 Cor 12:20–21; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 4:31; 5:3–5; Col 3:5–8; 1 Tim 1:9–10; 6:4–5; 2 Tim 3:2–4; Titus 1:7; 3:3; 1 Pet 2:1; 4:3, 15; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15.

95). Nevertheless, Kierkegaard did not dismiss Aristotle's ethic, only his confidence in human nature. Kierkegaard stated that the problem of vice is that the pagan has the man as his measure; therefore, he is determined to become vicious (Kierkegaard 2010, 105). As high as it can become, like in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, man's reason was never virtuous because it lacked the revelation of what it means to be human and who God is, revealed only in Christ. Only then, the virtues are made evident, and man self-perceives his own vices. Kierkegaard, therefore, presented a Lutheran-Aristotelian ethic. I believe that the vice and virtue categories must be theologically refashioned under the doctrines of sin and sanctification, having man or Christ as a paradigm of ethical life and destiny.

Imitation is a biblical teaching, it's not only philosophical. The apostle John warned not to imitate evil (3 John 11), the apostle Paul invited the churches to imitate him,[69] as he imitates God (Eph 5:1), and the author of Hebrews urged the imitation of the faith of the leaders of the church (Heb 6:12; 13:7). The human being is like an arrow, a kinetic self that moves towards somewhere, he always mirrors someone, whether God or something else. Following this concept, I agree with Smith (2020, 39–41) that the ethic of the Kingdom should disciple reformulating the human habits, aligning them to Christ.

Vices involve imitation, and imitation is a repetition, which in the fallen humanity is immanently the very recursivity of sin. There is a circular aspect of the vice that the recursive self explains. The sinner needs not merely to imitate the sin observed in society when he is a sinner and has it in his memory, reimagining and reshaping it. Whenever man sins, he does it in front of the mirror of his own conscience. Vice is the proper recursivity of sin, repeating a past sinful experience endlessly. Ethical sins become automatic as they are repeated, becoming vices, addictions, mechanisms that can be pushed into the unconscious through neurological conditioning (Smith 2020, 58–59; LaPine 2020, 297–301). They become repeated behaviors, mechanically done as the body was trained.

This understanding should help shape a new form of discipleship that considers the corporeality of sin and the psychical recursivity that makes it automatic. Christ's

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[69] 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Titus 1:6; 2 Titus 3:7–9

redemption must reach our bodies and minds, recondition our intentions, and bring our automatic thoughts and behaviors to light, breaking the cycle of vices.

5.3.4.2 The Disrupted Conscience

Ethical sin affects consciousness. As consciousness involves the whole self, relating to itself, the human changes by suffering the qualitative leap (Kierkegaard 2011, 122). As discussed in the previous chapter, the misperception of nudity after the fall evidenced a disruption between objectivity and subjectivity in Adam and Eve's consciousness. Before the fall, they were "naked", *'arom* (Gen 2:25) and were not ashamed, but after eating the fruit, they became "naked", *'erom* (Gen 3:7), and ashamed. What made *'arom* into *'erom*? What caused them to see the pure nakedness as impure? It was not nakedness that was impure, but their new consciousness.

As argued in the last chapter, a sense of inward lack affected their judgment, disrupting their conscience, making them see reality distorted (Ellison and Payne 2009, 160; Kidner 1967, 74). Augustine claimed that a disruption between soul and body occurred, where now the desire of the flesh is in defiance against reason and will (Aug. City. 14.17). This disruption reveals a lack, which Augustine defined as a deprivation of the divine grace (13.24). Indeed, Adam and Eve's sense of deprivation of something unknown affected their consciousness and how they perceived the objective world. As a result, the sensual world became sinful, as the transparency of consciousness acquired a "lens" through sin, conditioning the gaze (Dunning 1985, 16; Kierkegaard 2011, 69).

As argued earlier, Adam and Eve experienced new emotions previously never felt: fear, shame, and anger, providing a different "lens" to the lens of their consciousness (Gen 3:7–12). Guilt, as discussed, is another lens, but it does not appear objectively in Genesis 3, for Adam and Eve never recognized their fault, even though it was evident (Hamilton 1995, 14). Thus, these four emotions are a subjective "lens" affecting how people see the world. I emphasize these emotions and not others because: first, they arise from the biblical narrative in Genesis 3 and 4; second, they are not mere human desires or passions, as they are grounded in sin, as feelings of

lack, therefore, with ethical character, with the only exception being the natural fear, urged by self-preservation.

The three emotions of shame, fear, and anger are subjective reactions to sin, distinct expressions of self-aggression as embodiments of sin; the subjective anxiety resulted from the qualitative leap (Kierkegaard 2011, 62–89; Rae 2010, 91; Dunning 1985, 15–16). As argued previously, ontologically, sin acquires the substance of man, existing as the synthesis of man and nothingness, as the grasping of a lack. It is what characterizes fear, shame, anger, and guilt. Guilt, however, is an objective-subjective reality, which condenses the subjectivity of shame, fear, and anger under the revelation of God's objective law, for it always involves a conscience of transgression (Nicholls 2001, 234; Pannenberg 2004, 293). Guilt is a theological concept that involves man's self-awareness of having offended God. A sinful person has the evidence of his sin inwardly through his fear, shame, and anger, even though he does not have a special revelation of the divine law. Therefore, he has no concept of guilt. The feeling of guilt will only arise subjectively when he objectively knows the law.

Guilt requires God's revelation presented specially by the Mosaic law (Champlin 2018a, 392; Cairns 2002, 200; Stenschke 2000, 529). Guilt refashions the subjective shame, fear, and anger, reframing them as an objective reality in terms of God's law. Therefore, the subjective feelings of fear, shame, and anger should not be disregarded as unimportant expressions of sin. On the contrary, it is precisely the disruption of conscience caused by sin that separates guilt from shame, fear, and anger, where a person usually sees through one or more subjective "lenses" but hardly through all.

The evidence of the overarching nature of the concept of guilt is that in Scripture it merges with the proper idea of sin as a state of transgression, iniquity, and subjection to penalty.[70] Moreover, the proper Greek words usually translated as guilt reveal their relation to the law, an imputed state. The word ὑπόδικος (Rom 3:19), for example, means "under judgment", and ἀδικία (Rom 3:5) means "unrighteous" (Swanson 1997a, §94; §5688; Louw and Nida 1996, §56.17; §88.21). Thus, the guilty one is

[70] Rom 3:19; 4:25; 5:15–20; 11:11–12; 1 Cor 11:27; 2 Cor 5:19; Gal 6:1; Eph 1:7; 2:1, 5; Col 2:13; Heb 2:15; Jas 2:10; Champlin 2018a, 392.

theologically defined as incoherent with the law, making guilt a valuable theological concept that should not be devalued or substituted.

However, fear, shame, and anger are contact points in human subjectivity for the concept of guilt revealed in the Scriptures. It would be a mistake to present the gospel in terms of forgiveness of guilt to someone unaware of the meaning of guilt. For non-Christians, it is necessary to present God in the same historical and chronological process as presented in the Bible, because this is how guilt is introduced. Starting in Genesis and following until Revelation, after all, God did not send his Son before revealing the law; or send his apostles before Jesus died on the cross. God's actions in history are part of his self-revelation, progressively preparing for Christ, and theology should not neglect this progression.

Besides, as Steinmetz (2021, 1) wrote, "the good news of the Gospel implies bad news regarding humanity's condition," which I maintain, needs the OT. When theology divorces the gospel from the law, the New from the Old Testament, many misunderstandings happen, because the OT is essential for human self-awareness as a sinner. This self-awareness fixes the human lens through the lens of the law, making it possible for human beings to correctly perceive themselves and God again, objectively knowing themselves as guilty.

One should not make the mistake of ignoring the subjective importance of sin as fear, shame, and anger, for considering only the objectivity of guilt. Scripture did not neglect any of these emotions, addressing them throughout the Bible. About shame, Paul claimed that God gave the pagans over to ἀτιμάζω, "dishonor", or treating their bodies shamefully (Rom 1:24), abandoning them to ἀτιμία, "shameful", "dishonored" passions (Rom 1:26; Swanson 1997a, §869, §871; Louw and Nida 1996, §88.127, §87.71). Paul spoke of rejecting the shameful things hidden to have a conscience in truth (2 Cor 4:2), because even saying what is done in darkness is shameful (Eph 5:12). It is interesting how Paul addressed the pagans talking about shame to bring awareness of guilt. Regarding fear, the Scriptures display that it needs to be directed only towards God,[71] for it is wrong when directed at other people.[72] Fear

[71] Luke 5:26; 7:16; Acts 2:43; 5:5,11; 19:17; Heb 10:31

[72] Matt 10:28; Luke 12:4, 32

is what consumes the wicked.[73] Jesus rebuked the disciples for their fear as a sign of lack of faith.[74] A person dominated by fear is condemned, as fear is the rejection of love and the denial of faith.[75] Paul contrasted fear twice with the spirit of power given to the Christian, stating that the believer is no longer under fear.[76] Concerning human anger, it is typically addressed as a sinful emotion in Scripture, where Jesus compared it with murder.[77] James alerted that man's anger does not work divine justice (Jas 1:20–21). Paul warned that anger should be drawn from within the believers[78] and advised that uncontrolled anger can give space to the devil.[79] Anger is solved only by the peace given to man by God, who removes the barrier of enmity between men (Eph 2:14–16).

Augustine and Thomas Aquinas also treated these ethical emotions, raising essential ideas of how the Church saw these feelings in the past. Regarding fear, Augustine stated that a groundless fear is evil (Aug. Conf. 7.5.7). It is a type of belief because "even when there is nothing to fear, we fear none the less" He argued that if the evil feared does not exist, then the fear itself is evil. Aquinas stated that fear is a passion, with two types: the natural and the unnatural (Thom. Sum. 2.41.2–4). While the unnatural is raised in front of a future evil that surpasses the individual's power, the natural is caused by self-love, triggered by the desire to exist.

About shame, Augustine expressed his own life before his conversion in terms of shame several times.[80] He cited guilt only twice in his Confessions, evidencing how important the experience of shame was for him (1.11.17; 3.8.15). Besides, his "City of God" is also permeated by innumerous expressions of shame, proving that he

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[73] Psa 73:19; Isa 33:14

[74] Matt 14:26–31; Mark 4:40

[75] 1 John 4:18; Rev 21:8

[76] Rom 8:15; 2 Tim 1:7

[77] Psa 37:8; Matt 5:22

[78] Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; 1 Tim 2:8

[79] Eph 4:26; Rom 12:18–19

[80] e.g., Aug. Conf. 1.18.28; 2.2.2; 2.4.9; 3.1.1; 3.2.3; 3.3.6; 4.1.1; 5.6.11; 8.2.4; 8.4.9; 8.7.18; 8.11.25; 8.12.28; 10.21.30.

addressed his readers employing this subjective emotion as a point of contact.[81] This indicates that the culture Augustine grew up in was permeated by shame, for he used more terms related to shame than to guilt, contrary to what some missiologists have claimed (e.g., Muller 2013, 168–169; Nicholls 2013, 233). For Augustine, shame was the direct cause of Adam and Eve's sin, losing control over their sexual desires (Aug. City. 13.24; 14.17). For him, shame was connected to sexuality, with the urge to hide the "lustful excitement of the sexual organ" (14.19; Schlabach et al. 1999, 327). Aquinas treated shame, arguing that on the one hand, it is not virtuous as it is an automatically caused passion, a type of fear (Thom. Sum. 2.144.1). On the other hand, shame is virtuous because it leads a person to avoid shameful things. In this aspect, shame is the subjective evidence that something done by the person is wrong or ugly, which must be avoided or hidden. The fearful and the shameful are related to something or someone offended, who has the power to cause damage to the person. If looked at carefully, I argue, shame is a recursive expression of fear. Therefore, shame is a type of fear.

Regarding anger, Augustine stated that it is not caused by any passion of the body, but it depends on the will, which consents with the movement (Aug. City. 14.19). For him, anger was under the control of reason, while shame and other passions were not. Aquinas, however, claimed that anger is sin when it is not regulated by reason (Thom. Sum. 2.158.2). He stated that anger is a passion raised out of a pain inflicted, which desires punishment (Thom. Sum. 2.46.1). Anger, for Aquinas, is therefore related to self-love, as a mix of passions, with the nature of contrariety. In this sense, while shame humiliates the individual, anger is the contrariety to this shame and humiliation, rising defiantly against the object that generates frustration. Therefore, anger is a recursiveness of shame.

In objective legal terms, Augustine defined guilt as a state "under the divine law", imputed by revelation (Aug. Conf. 3.8.15). It is a state of being accused, in debt, in front of a judge or God (Wetzel 1999a, 407). Guilt is a responsibility that every person has for his sins, and as already described, Augustine asserted that every

[81] e.g., Aug. City. 1.16, 19, 23, 28; 2.6, 8, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26–29; 3.1, 6, 18; 4.7, 8, 10, 12; 5.13; 6.7, 9; 7.4, 24, 26, 35; 13.15, 24; 14.13, 17–23; 16.2, 8; 17.20; 18.13, 29; 19.19; 22.17.

person is guilty of Adam's sin (Aug. City. 14.20). For Aquinas, guilt was also a legal state, objectively imputed by God as reproval, depriving the person of God's grace (Thom. Sum. 1.23.3). Aquinas developed a system, judging certain sins more culpable than others, demanding different punishment and responsibility (Thom. Sum. 2.73).

Therefore, while fear and shame are aggressions turned inwards, anger is aggression turned outwards towards someone or something else. A failure, a frustration, urges the three. While fear, shame, and anger manage the lack internally or projecting it onto another person, guilt involves acknowledging responsibility for offending God. While man is aesthetically attracted to sin, he is ethically anguished because of sin. Fear, shame, anger, and guilt are expressions of the same subjective anxiety and consequences of sin because God conveyed the sinner to indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish (Rom 2:9–10).

The Scriptures deal with each one of these emotions, showing us that they also need to be redeemed and subdued by Christ. It is necessary to stop reducing salvation to the doctrine of justification, solving only the objective problem of guilt, ignoring the subjectivities of shame, fear, and anger as if they were non-existent problems. It is up to sanctification to work out salvation (Phil 2:12–13), redeeming fear, shame, and anger under the lordship of Christ. Through Jesus's sacrifice, through faith, one can have a clean conscience of guilt, shame, fear, and anger (Heb 9:14; 10:22). Man's guilt is satisfied by the justification in Christ (Rom 4:25; Eph 1:7), shame by being honored, learning to become sons and daughters of God (Eph 1:5). Fear is depleted by receiving and relying upon God's power through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), trusting in God's plans, living by faith (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11). Anger can be appeased by God's peace (Rom 5:1; Eph 2:14-16), daily learning to become meek and rest in the divine justice (Matt 5:5; 11:29). The four-dimensional ethical sin is redeemed through the four-dimensional aspects of salvation granted by Christ.

While guilt can be solved by faith in Christ through justification, imputed by God to the believer, shame, fear, and anger depend on progressive sanctification. Subjective sin requires objective and subjective redemption, reorienting emotions that were conditioned by sin. The lens of fear, shame, anger, and guilt can only be cleared by Jesus's grace, which heals spiritual blindness. As subjective realities, they need an

approach that applies the Gospel to the whole self, a type of discipleship that redirects the heart and conscience under the Spirit.

5.4 Implications for Theology

Theology is about God, but it is also for humans and about humans. A theology that is merely about God becomes an abstraction disconnected from human reality. God revealed himself in history for humans and as a human, the person of Christ.

Through his Christian philosophy, Kierkegaard contributed to an understanding of the relationship between theology and the existing human being, removing the barriers between philosophy and theology. Kierkegaard brought the subject of sin under the category of anxiety and despair, approaching it philosophically. He addressed the aesthetics of faith and sin, opposing thinkers such as Kant and Hegel, leading to theological conclusions. Kierkegaard's philosophy is profoundly theological, as, for him, everything pointed to God.

The main difference between theology and philosophy is not a distinction between *theo* and *sophia*, God and Wisdom, as objects of concern, because biblically wisdom is divine (Job 12:13; 28:28; Prov 3:19; 8:12–36). Consequently, every philosophy is in search of God, even if it is not admitting it. Kierkegaard argued that whatever is done by a human being is an expression of worship, whether through an aesthetic, ethical, or religious existence (Kierkegaard 2011a, 594; 2009i; Evans 2019, 14). Consequently, every philosophy is a form of theology, whether monotheist, polytheist, or atheist. Therefore, the first implication of this research is to recognize that every philosophy, or any human construction, is a form of theology. Everything in society has deep theological meaning, whether supplying the human aesthetic longing for God or ethical answers to man's anxieties. Everything has religious contours, even though the modern human is usually not aware of it.

I agree with Tyson (2019:xi) that a mistaken philosophical view of what it means to be a human being entails many mistakes that go far beyond theoretical repercussions. The effects of such a mistaken view in psychology, sociology, and politics, for example, lead to devastating consequences with profound theological meanings. Therefore, I claim that theology should rethink human sciences from a solid Christian foundation, for they lack the proper theological lens. I propose that new studies need to be carried out to rethink them from a Christian theological

anthropology. It is necessary to rethink psychology, sociology, pedagogy, the arts, and the law based on Christian theological anthropology. I hope that the theological anthropology presented in this work may serve this purpose.

The second implication is regarding the *logos*. The main difference between philosophy and theology relies not on the difference between *theo* and *sophia*, but on the *logos*. For Philosophy, the *logos* relies upon rational knowledge, while for theology, it is revealed by God, generally through reason, nature, history, but especially in Jesus. Philosophy longs for knowledge, loving it in the Greek sense; however, theology exists for the divine *logos*, where Christ is the center who needs to be incarnated in the Christian, more than just acknowledged. Kierkegaard criticized this confusion between the two concepts of *logos*, which reduced faith to knowledge (Kierkegaard 2011, 14; 2013, 34–35; 2017, 437). The Greek *logos* of Heraclitus was a pantheistic construction that elevated reason as a principle governing everything (Frame 2015, 55; Kunz 2019, 262; Tobin 1992, 348).

Nonetheless, the apostle John's *logos* is the incarnation of God's revelation, not a reference to a philosophical concept (John 1:1–14; Coenen and Brown 2000, 1531; Geisler 1999, 430; Tobin 1992, 349). The primary difference between the two is that the philosophical *logos* is abstract, static, conceptual, while the theological *logos* is kinetic, incarnating God's transcendence into humanity's immanence. The philosophical *logos* is reached by knowing, the theological *logos* by faith in Jesus, who brings God's transcendent truth into man's immanent life. Instead of focusing on knowing abstract truths of God, theology should be concerned about incarnating Christ in human life.

Theology needs to rescue its incarnational dimension. Jesus did not send his disciples to merely teach what he taught, but to teach "to obey" what he taught (Matt 28:20; NIV). Jesus's life was the *logos* incarnation, just as the disciples need to incarnate the same *logos* by faith. The incarnation involves knowledge of God's revelation, but mainly faith in this revelation and consequent obedience. The objectivity of Scripture, the historical truth about Jesus and his message, only has power if appropriated by faith and subjectively embodied by the believer. A theology not incarnated is a disembodied ghost, a new Docetism. Similarly, a theology not based on God's revelation is a merely immanent religion, another type of paganism.

I argue for an incarnational theology, as expressed in human life, first in the man Jesus Christ, then in the redeemed human being. This is the reason why Kierkegaard's thought has profound implications when he speaks of sin in terms of anxiety, despair, and untruth. By addressing sin in terms of fear, shame, anger, and guilt, theology recognizes how the abstraction of sin is expressed in human beings. Desires, imagination, vices, and unconsciousness are recognized worldwide human realities but poorly addressed by theology. It is necessary to change this. Moreover, it is also necessary to recategorize other theological terms, rethinking theology from an incarnational perspective.

The last general implication refers to the concepts raised in this work about subjective sin. The number of developments for these Theo-anthropological elements in psychology, sociology, missiology, and other disciplines of theology is countless. After all, whether the human being is a theomorphism, a recursive self, or the role of imagination or the expression of sin in its aesthetic or ethical categories, each element has a different unfolding from other theological areas. I hope this work can serve to advance towards other innovative researches.

5.4.1 *Rethinking the Anthropology of Sin*

While several implications directly related to the anthropology of sin have already been addressed throughout this chapter, I want to highlight here some of the most important. The first refers to the fact that this is not just a theological anthropology, or a hamartiology. It is an anthropology of sin, as has already been argued, because sin does not exist apart from human beings. The relationship between human beings and sin is crucial for both anthropology and hamartiology. Disciplines derived from anthropology, such as cultural anthropology, or cross-cultural missiology must also be considered from the subjective relationship of the human being to sin.

Similarly, theological disciplines such as soteriology and hermeneutics, for example, should be revisited from the perspective of their relationship to anthropology and other disciplines. It is necessary to develop an anthropology of salvation, and an anthropological hermeneutics, for example. The full distinction between theological disciplines must give way systematically to the intrinsic and inseparable connection with other disciplines.

Another important repercussion of this anthropology of sin is the need to re-humanize the human being. As a theomorphism, the human being must have God as the existential pattern. Man and woman must learn from God's revelation the true meaning of masculinity and femininity, because anything different is an existence of self-contradiction. Sin de-humanizes the human being, and to re-humanize him the biblical revelation of God's emotions and reason is necessary, not only reason. Sin is irrationality and insensibility, different poles of the same incoherence between man and God's pattern.

Another repercussion is the fact that the anthropology of sin must deal not only with sin as a universal reality, but also in its individual expression. All human beings experience sin differently, whether through bodily enslavement to sensuality, or an existence surrounded by pathological fear or shame. The anthropology of sin needs to be concerned with translating theological concepts to the level of the existent individual who is involved in sin. A Copernican revolution in the understanding of sin needs to happen. Instead of leading the individual to understand theology, he needs to understand himself! The individual only understands what sin is by knowing himself. It is necessary to make the individual perceive his own existential inconsistencies and ironies so that he can recognize his sinfulness. This is what Jesus did, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. I believe that the indirect communication can help to achieve this goal, as Kierkegaard demonstrated. This Copernican revolution also leads the individual to recognize God by recognizing himself as insufficient and incoherent. If the individual is incoherent, then God's perfect pattern is partially reduced. Only a Copernican revolution makes the individual perceive himself in denial, recognizing that he is suppressing the divine truth.

Another repercussion is in relation to the distinction made between sin and sinfulness. Even though sinfulness is universal, it also expresses differently in each one. If theologically sinfulness is understood from its historical relationship with Adam and Eve, theology can also study ethnic sinfulness, contextual to a group of people, considering their own history. By understanding the recursivity of sinfulness in a specific culture or ethnic group, theology can better understand the subjective anxieties causing these peoples anguish. There is an intrinsic relationship between sinfulness and the numerous worldviews that make up different cultures. Therefore, it is possible to develop an anthropology of ethnic or cultural sin, evaluating empirically,

biologically, historically the relationship between cultural sins and the formation of the worldview of peoples.

An important repercussion is that this anthropology of sin also points to the need for a therapeutic soteriology. As addressed before, soteriology should not be reduced to justification, because it ignores its aesthetics and the subjective guilt in terms of fear, shame, and anger. The various dimensions of sin studied here require equally intentional approaches from soteriology. The temporal recursivity of the self, for example, requires redemption to each historical moment of the individual. The fact that salvation provides the correct lens for understanding sin does not mean that the subjective anguishes of sinfulness, or the human aesthetics were indeed treated.

Finally, sin has usually been addressed in its immaterial legal reality, whether as disobedience, separation of God, or condemnation; however, as argued in this work, sin also shares the human materiality. Therefore, sin is embodied through uncontrolled passions, inward anguishes, and possibly transmitted epigenetically as argued. How should a theology of the body address the corporality of sin?

In the subsections that follow, some other applications will be raised, highlighting possible answers that theology can provide using the perspective addressed. These discussions will not be exhaustive.

5.4.2 *The Homo Virtus Challenge*

Since the advent of the internet, postmodernism has found the proper media to propagate throughout the world, creating virtuality, a liquid reality where the human being can finally be a god and create himself (Kolb 2001, 9–10). The virtual worlds became aesthetic realms fashioned with only one purpose: to satisfy human desires. The postmodern man lives more in virtuality than in the real world. Besides being more dependent on the internet and entertainment such as movies, video streaming, and electronic games, he also brings virtuality to reality. Just as a person watching a video of a roller coaster might lose his balance in his chair, or a person watching a thriller movie feels physically afraid or excited, the virtual world affects physical reality. Watching a romantic movie, a person can fall in love with a character, feeling the emotions in his body as if he lived the romance. As the human mind does not differentiate well what is virtual from what is not, man is bringing to the physical world attributes of the virtual. Now we can talk not only about virtual reality but about real

virtuality, where humans apply to the physical reality aspects of the virtual (Trimmel 2001, 109–124). The hybridization between the real and the virtual has made the differences almost indistinguishable, where the man gets lost in this liquidity, seeking to understand what it means to be human (Gehmann and Reiche 2014).

Therefore, the *Homo Virtus* has concretized, incarnated in its existence, several virtual elements, bringing virtual dynamics to postmodern society. The human body has been objectified, transformed, and manipulated like a biological machine in the service of its owner. As virtuality leads to experience disembodiment, when disconnecting from physicality to become another, a type of flowing mind in the virtual world, when returning to himself, he does it with the longing to transform the body into the image of his desire. As the internet is an amoral realm, where killing, cheating, stealing, having virtual sex are emulated, this amorality has also been brought into the real world. Consequently, society has been shaped after the image of what I call the *Homo Virtus*, composing an increasingly chaotic, contradictory, and amoral culture.

Scientists have attested that continual exposure to virtual environments leads to addiction and, therefore, to the brain's grey matter atrophy, inciting neurological changes in teenagers and children (Yuan 2011). There is a clear connection between the extensive use of the internet, games, and the dysregulation of some hormones like dopamine, leading to anxiety, loss of control, and compulsion (Lissak 2018; Zhu, Hong and Mei 2015; Weinstein and Lejoyeux 2015). These studies evidence a society in growing addiction, where the *Homo Virtus* physiology is being shaped by the virtual. The type of human that will be forged out of this is unpredictable.

Rhea and Langer (2015, 92) also argued that mental experiences, such as pornography, have a real effect on the whole person, demonstrating that it is not only the person's mind interacting but also the body. Therefore, the so-called virtual sex is not inoffensive because it occurs in the body, where the mind raises feelings affecting the whole self. These virtual experiences, supposedly practiced only in the "mind", "sculpt" impressions in the person's central nervous system, affecting the whole decision-making in the "real–world". Rhea and Langer (94) argue that during sexual intercourse, the woman's brain releases oxytocin. This hormone encourages emotional bonds, showing that mind and body are deeply interconnected, and what is done in the virtual always affects the real. Oxytocin is the same hormone released

when giving birth and breastfeeding. It proves that sexual experiences, whether virtual or real, are not disconnected acts, as they generate emotional bonds, affecting body and mind. The relation between physical and psychical is evident, involving a decision, desire, hormones, pleasure, emotional bond, love, and memory. After all, the human being is a synthesis.

The *Homo Virtus* exists in constant self-contradiction. On the one hand, the *Homo Virtus* denies the Cartesian dichotomy that separates body and soul; however, on the other, he treats his mind as if it were disconnected from the determinations of his corporeality. Consequently, as Kolb (2001, 34) argues, the human capacity of empathy has decreased, and the emotional crisis has increased worldwide. This crisis has mainly affected children and teenagers who have become emotionally illiterate, increasing crime, depression, and suicide. In addition, some shocking crimes committed by teenagers who kill their schoolmates and themselves point to an increasingly illogical and alienated society.

Some optimists of technology have argued that through the computer, the Kingdom of the heavens finally comes to earth, where man finally becomes omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, and eternal (Levy 2005; Kolb 2001, 9). With the internet, all human virtualities emerge in an artificial environment focused on transforming men into gods (Esterbauer 2001, 140–144). Online search engines bring the feeling of omniscience; programs of communication transport the users to anywhere in the world instantly, giving a sense of omnipresence; and through a cellphone, a person can date, find a mate, buy food, purchase almost anything in the world, order a car to go wherever wants, and do almost anything, feeling omnipotent. Humanity has built a new god where anyone feels limitless when connected. Consequently, humanity is becoming sicker and more disconnected from reality (Kolb 2001, 27–28).

While on the one hand, the *Homo Virtus* feels like a god, on the other, he is miserably overwhelmed by devastating anguish. His illusory existence turns his life into an illusion, into a neurosis suffering the loss of reality. His body cannot follow what his mind demands. The reality of anguish expressed in chronic anxieties, depression, self-mutilation, panic syndrome, addictions, suicidal desires, are witnesses of human failure in subjectivity. These are points of contact for ministering salvation to this alienated generation.

By considering man as a recursive self, as earlier demonstrated, man is always under two cyclical movements in consciousness: virtualization (through imagination) and actualization (concretization). The philosophical discussion about virtualization and actualization is broad, addressed by many philosophers (e.g., Pickstock 2013, 55–66; Deleuze 2006; Lévy 2005). A positive example can be perceived in the history of Abraham (Gen 12). First, God virtualized Abraham, picturing the idea of becoming a great nation, a blessing with which all the families on earth would be favored (Gen 12:1–3). God's virtualization of Abraham was not aesthetically different from what the serpent did with Eve, even though they were ethically opposed. As Eve was led to imagine and visualize a possible future, so was Abraham. Besides, Abraham started to concretize the idea by obeying God's word, leaving his land and family (Gen 12:4). Departing his home was an act of faith that moved his reality towards God's presented reality.

If God virtualized Abraham, how can Christianity virtualize the *Homo Virtus*? Today's most significant question for theology is how it can "re-humanize" the *Homo Virtus*, who is increasingly apathetic, disconnected from the real world, alienated from his own emotions, and suppressing his untruths. If theology wants to address this chaotic, complex, and liquid age of untruth, it needs to reshape its message to restore the proper meaning of what it means to be human today.

I close this subsection with some questions that may encourage theology to reason about further research. First, understanding that virtualization involves the aesthetic construction of a virtual image, where the individual is attracted to its realization; is it possible to develop theological aesthetics that engage the virtual? How to aesthetically portray Christ in a virtualizing and biblical way that touches the modern man's imagination? Second, understanding that Jesus also virtualized people, like for example, the image he painted of the blessed one (Matt 5:3–11), as well as the idea proposed to his first disciples that they would become fishers of men (Matt 4:19); how can evangelization make use of the same dynamic today? Third, how can missiology develop different approaches of virtualization for Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and animists that better depict Christ aesthetically considering their contextual imaginaries? How can Christian education, mainly discipleship, lead Christians not only to a self-virtualization of Christ but mainly to self-actualization through actions that concretize him? It is indispensable that the Church evaluates theologically the

elements of its society that serve as vehicles for the virtualization of sin in the human mind and what answers the Church can provide.

5.4.3 *Thinking Aesthetically*

When Jesus called his first disciples to follow him, he claimed that he would make them fishers of men (Matt 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:10). If theology wants to catch men, it must learn to think aesthetically, focusing on the heart instead of merely the thoughts.

The OT is filled with sayings permeated by aesthetics, starting with the creation in Genesis 1, revealing God as an aesthetic being, creating what is good. Aesthetics configures a subjective pact between God and men, where human beings perceive, intuit, feel something like what God feels. Because, as theomorphic creatures, there is a subjective pattern in human inwardness pointing to God, human beings can feel astonished, amazed by the beauty, perceiving the transcendent in nature, music, and poetry. That is why numerous OT authors made extensive use of poetry. For poetry informs man and involves him with the same feelings that inspired the poet to compose the message. Plato declared that art has the power to elicit the same feelings in the person who listens, reads, or watches a work of art (Plato. Rep. X, 605a–606e). Aristotle also claimed that emotions could be cleansed by watching their representation by artists (Arist. Poetic: VI).

Hence the drama of Israel's promiscuity is visibly represented in the tragic story of the prophet Hosea and his marriage to the promiscuous woman (Hos 1:2). Hosea was led to experience subjectively what God was feeling, evocating his sympathy for the divine pathos (Heschel 2001, 69). Consequently, Hosea faithfully described God's emotions as a husband betrayed by Israel (Hos 2:1–23). Hosea was called not just to communicate a message but to become the proclaimed message aesthetically. Similarly, Jeremiah appealed to the hearts of his listeners by poetically describing God almost as a human being, lamenting that his people abandoned him, repeating this expression repeatedly.[82] Moreover, the use of parables and allegories, stories created

[82] Jer 1:16; 2:13,17,19; 3:21; 5: 5: 7; 13:25; 16:11; 17:13; 18:15; 19:4

to express spiritual truths, was also an artistic strategy to dramatize prophetically.[83] Nathan's allegory and David's reaction to his story show the power of a narrative story, generating identification.

Narratives have the power to capture the human heart, which searches for meaning (Smith 2020, 73; Mann 2015, 47; Jothen 2018, 5). These narratives involve the aesthetic man through the passions depicted in images and metaphors. That is why the Bible is full of stories, why God chose to reveal himself in history mainly through narratives; why Christ also made extensive use of parables that connected his listeners to something transcendent. That is why the Gospel is the proper narrative of Christ's life. It is why personal testimonies communicate more of the gospel than any objective teaching about salvation. Theology should learn to use narratives to touch the hearts of this generation that increasingly spends hours watching stories in the movies and through video streaming. The OT prophets were poets, Jesus was a storyteller, and the Church today needs to be re-educated in the arts.

Narratives, such as allegories and parables, are indirect communication, which Kierkegaard considered the most important to communicate life (Kierkegaard 2013, 289; Watkin 2010, 128–129). Indirect communication is distinct from direct, as it targets human passions in the heart. It aims to elicit a person's self-awareness to free him from alienation, bringing self-conscience (Rae 2010, 30; Walsh 2009, 40–41; Shmuëli 1971, 7–8). It is through the heart, that indirect communication reaches the mind and generates self-perception. In indirect communication, the author shows and hides, speaks without speaking, communicating implicitly. The idea is to explore the self-virtualization of man, making him to be self-judged by the story. There is a level of aesthetic deception and mystery that attracts the passions and dialectically communicates the message.

Besides, there is no limit to aesthetic use in theological communication. If God cared about the beauty of the priest's clothing (Exod 28:33), the designs and figures in the atonement cover (Exod 25:18), and the adornments of the temple of Jerusalem (2 Chr 3:6–10; 4:3–4), man is invited to use all mediums to communicate beauty and harmony aesthetically. He is only forbidden to represent God (Exod 20:4). Beauty and

[83] e.g., 2 Sam 12:1–10; Ezek 17:2–10

harmony always lead the human to the transcendent, to contemplate God beyond the perceived world. Thinking aesthetically, therefore, aims to involve the whole person with the message, capturing him through beauty, wonder, suffering, and empathy.

Theology needs to learn to minister passion because knowledge, as direct communication, is not what people are attracted to as subjective selves. That is why Kierkegaard emphasized:

> Christianity is spirit; spirit is inwardness; inwardness is subjectivity; subjectivity is essentially passion, and at its maximum an infinite, personally interested passion for one's eternal happiness (Kierkegaard 2013, 38).

Christianity is inwardness, which is why Jesus preached about happiness, about the blessed ones (Matt 5). He captured their hearts and imaginations, depicting those who would gain the Kingdom, inherit the earth, and see God. Jesus's aesthetic teaching attracted their passions and led their imaginations to God. Even though people need knowledge, they are not longing for it. What man craves is directed by his sinfulness. Aesthetic sins always reveal the most powerful thirst of the human heart. As Smith (2020, 62) argued, man's unconscious reveals the "loves" of the person, whether aligned with Babylon or with Zion. These cravings are subjective hooks to be caught by fishers of men. When the gospel is presented aesthetically, it satisfies the deepest longings of the human heart. Theology needs to learn to fish men aiming at their aesthetic sins.

In biblical aesthetics, the human being is a work of art created by God, as we are made poems of the Creator (Eph 2:10), because "to exist is an art" (Kierkegaard 2016, 68). The work of art that is the human being is artistically turned to Jesus as the model. The authentic Christian carries out the poetic task in his existence, for he is the canvas and has Jesus as the image to be drawn (Jothen 2018, 1, 92; Kierkegaard 1991a, 238). The colors he uses are his talents, gifts, and opportunities of his context. The authentic Christian is authentically aesthetic, beautiful, and harmonious as well as ethical. The Christian is a living work of art that externalizes to the world the abstraction of faith made concrete in his existence (Kierkegaard 2016, 69). This is only possible through love relationships, because authentic aesthetics transforms the desires into love for God and the neighbor. Kierkegaard (2011a, 594) was assertive in stating that "your love is your god", meaning the idol, for what man loves reveals what

he believes. The authentic human learns to love God with all his life, and his neighbor as himself, becoming a beautiful work of art, attracting the wonder and offense of the world.

To close this section, I will ask some questions that may help further research on the topic: How can theology indirectly communicate the gospel without diluting its objective truth? What artistic styles have been most successful in today's popular communication, which theology can use? Could theology make use of the philosophy of aesthetics to its advantage? How can architecture communicate transcendency, leading people to contemplation? How should the church service be designed to capture the heart, bringing people to self-awareness? How could one artistically communicate, indirectly, theological doctrines to be felt, simultaneously as they are understood? How might one re-signify discipleship, reorienting the believer's passions, desires, and imagination, guiding the Christian to carve his selfhood according to Christ?

5.4.4 *Building a Kierkegaardian Theological Sociology*

One of the effects of the fall was the disruption between objectivity and subjectivity, affecting human consciousness, as discussed before. The effect of misperceiving nakedness cannot be overlooked or restricted to that moment (Gen 3:7), because the corruption of consciousness affected the entire construction of later reality. Clothes sewn to hide nudity represent the emergence of culture as an expression of an inward need. The clothes are new things created by humanity to hide something spiritual (Gen 3:7, 21). The sewing technique was created out of a sinful need, and since that moment, humanity has been occupied with the development of new technologies to serve its spiritual yearnings.

The projection of subjective shame on objective nudity reveals the alienation caused by sin, providing the formation of culture as a new imaginary. Culture, therefore, became the great lie, an imaginary construction made by the human consciousness affected by sin. This imaginary, now physically represented in clothes and acquired behaviors, is shared by Adam and Eve as an intersubjective dynamic in constant interaction and transformation. Therefore, the world that receives Cain and Abel is already transformed by an invisible culture, with unspoken laws and truths not

created by God. Thus, the culture as an imaginary reality is an alien one, distinct from God's perfect creation, yet depending on it parasitically.

Culture, I argue, points to the NT's *kosmos*, which is the big lie built from the collective intersubjectivity of society, building a reality to give meaning and purpose to subjective experiences. It is a complex system of beliefs, behaviors, symbols, and costumes continually growing. This is the reason why the NT concept of creation and *kosmos* are separate. Because of man's sins, "creation was subjected to frustration", "groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (Rom 8:20, 22; NIV); however, the *kosmos* "is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19; NIV), where Christians should not love anything of the *kosmos* (1 John 2:15), as it is responsible for the nourishment of evil desires (1 John 2:16). This is the reason why I disagree with the concept of Christian culture or Christian worldview, because such concepts reduce the biblical truth to a perspective, a reading of life. Nevertheless, the biblical revelation through the Holy Spirit brings humans to reality, to see the truth, not one truth. The gospel frees people from the lies of countless different worldviews elaborated in societies. The Bible reveals the reality, where Christ is the existential hermeneutic lens giving vision to spiritual blindness.

Without Christ as the modeler of man's subjectivity, man becomes the modeler of objective reality. Whether loving, being angry at someone or something, desiring, or despising, man's existence always expresses objectively as a search for transcendence with religious contours. As Augustine portrayed, the city of men, built by self-lovers, continues to be built as an illusory construction based on humanity's corrupted ideas (Aug. City. 14.28). Kierkegaard (2009i), and recent Christian thinkers have shown that modern society is a theological construction built from a non-Christian lens (Tyson 2019; Milbank 2006a). Understanding modern civilization, culture, art, and politics unveils how humanity is transcendentally shaping its subjective yearnings.

Scripture helps to discern some of these collective yearnings projected into the culture's imaginary. As claimed before, the consequence of humanity's expulsion from the garden affected collectively, causing an impact of which humanity still suffers the consequences. This effect produced a social longing in every society, as an aesthetic craving. The loss of the garden, the heavenly Father, and the relationship with the holy community in Eden, generated an aesthetic-social thirsty for these three elements. It is aesthetic-social because it is a shared desire, an intersubjective longing. These

social yearnings are expressions of the same three universal longings for pleasure, possession, and pride (Gen 3:6; 1 John 2:16) but redirected to the feeling of loss acquired after the expulsion from the garden. Humanity is missing something without knowing what it is anymore. I am convinced that everything humanity today tries to build is a way to satisfy these three social longings. Whether building cities, creating political parties, or establishing social theories, humanity is always trying to rebuild its version of paradise on earth.

As before discussed, the Gospel is the only one that satiates the longings of man and society.[84] Without the Gospel, man is abandoned to his compulsions, becoming social cravings to dictatorial control, land possession, and ethnocentrism. As desires generate idols, humanity has sought to quench its thirst in different ways. By looking closely at different societies and cultures, it is possible to identify some of the aesthetic elements that shape the longings of each community.

The human being longs for a father, a leader figure, evidenced in the world's history. The existence of leaders like Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, who ordered their followers to perform violent, unethical, and irrational acts, and who were blindly followed, reveals what a thoughtless aesthetic existence looks like. The aesthetic satisfaction of being led by a strong leader blinds reason, as Hannah Arendt demonstrated when reporting the trial of the Nazi Eichmann in Jerusalem (Arendt 1965). Arendt referred to Eichmann's evil in terms of banality, that is, without any reason, resulting from his "sheer thoughtlessness" and "lack of imagination". According to her, Eichmann was disconnected from reality, mindlessly following his superiors. This behavior is no different from the ones found in the increasing hedonist cultures throughout the world.

The human craving for the holy Father led people to deify chosen men who received absolute power over peoples and countries without protest. This yearning for divine fathers continues today to generate dictators across Africa, Latin America, and Asia, where leaders assume paternal roles in the face of childish societies. Childish because everything these societies want is the satisfaction of their immediate needs

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[84] Matt 4:17; 6:9; 16:18–19; 23:9; Mark 1:15; Luke10:9; 11:2; 15:11–32; John 5:18; 7:33–36; 10:14–19; 13:33.

and pleasures. The masses are not motivated to develop, but remain in the mediocrity of a sensual existence, where they submit to their leaders blindly in exchange for "bread and circuses."[85]

Through the desire for the holy place, humanity is trying to build heaven on earth, where every nation yearns to build its own interpretation of paradise. As Smith (2020, 31–32) stated, to be human is to desire a kingdom, something that fulfills a particular idealized vision of what society should be. Whether ancient Greek city-states, old empires like the Babylonian or the Roman, or even modern geopolitical nations, they are all human expressions built upon a notion of a utopian place. That is why the desire for land and community go together, like in the religious yearning proposed by Karl Marx in his utopian ideal of a perfect society of Communism. Today, several groups of people experience a recent loss of their paradise, historically repeating the frustration of Adam and Eve. Millions of Tibetans want the paradise of Tibet back from China, just as millions of Kurds yearn for the creation of Kurdistan. Millions of Syrians were recently expelled by the civil war from their homeland, surviving in western countries and longing to return home. Until a few decades ago, Jews yearned to return to the promised land in Palestine, and with their return, the Palestinians now yearn to regain control of the lost land. Most of the wars, geopolitical crises, and fights resulted from this sinful yearning, the same ambition that James wrote to be the reason for quarrels (Jas 4:1–2). Nonetheless, when the problem is looked at carefully , one can see that we are all refugees from the garden, pilgrims in a world of lies, when what we need is to find the way back to the father's home.

The societies are increasingly thoughtless, formed by aesthetic peoples with the potentiality to repeat the atrocities of Nazism and Communism on the altar of their desires. These atrocities have been repeated, such as the genocide in Cambodia between 1975 and 1979, the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the Darfur genocide in Sudan started in 2003, and countless others. These genocides reflect the submission of entire societies to fulfill strong intersubjective desires shared by the communities. The complex relationship between colonizing countries and colonies gave rise to the

[85] Expression used by the Roman poet Juvenal in his *Satire* X, in reference to the use that the Roman authorities made of entertainment to pacify and manipulate the people (Braund and Osgood 2012, 459; Pannenberg 2004, 333–334)

repetition of the father's loss, generating a loss of community identity that promoted new tensions between different ethnic groups. New local "fathers" took on the leadership, and with them came new idealized expectations. Just as Cain distortedly viewed Abel as the cause of his not achieving his goal, some leaders distortedly perceived some ethnic groups. The "fathers" led entire communities to murder thousands and millions of people by promoting their distorted views in accepted cultural frameworks.

Through the longing for the holy community, postmodern society is redefining the concept of family, distorting the meaning of masculinity and femininity, the responsibility of fathers and mothers, seeking to quench a thirst for belonging, but confusing love with pleasure. The consequence is the generation of a highly eroticized society where concepts such as sexual freedom, fluid sexuality, and "poly-love" bring new societal configurations, diluting the family. On the other hand, Islam and communism are overgrowing worldwide precisely because they bring a more attractive sense of community than aesthetic societies do. Moreover, Islam still brings order to aesthetic societies by making them more ethical and building community identity.

When the Church learns to minister to the subjective dimensions of society, presenting the gospel in a way that brings light to the different cultures, it will offer springs of living water to quench the thirsty of the nations. Some good social theories have been developed lately with a Christian theological perspective, which are good signs of change (e.g., Tyson 2019; Milbank 2006a). However, theology needs to study sociology, cultural anthropology, and politics from a Christian perspective, creating kingdom solutions, implementing them through the Church. The gospel needs to be preached and executed by a Church that introduces the Father to an orphaned generation, establishes the Kingdom by transforming society, doing God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, establishing holy and lovely communities. Only in this way, the thirst for paternity, fraternity, and belonging will be holily satisfied in God.

5.5 Final Considerations

By studying anthropology through a Kierkegaardian lens, I did not intend merely to reproduce Kierkegaard's anthropology; after all, he was against any systematization (Kierkegaard 2013; 2016; Rae 2010, 3–4). However, admitting the need for a theological anthropology that could synthesize objectivity and subjectivity while at the

same time rethinking anthropology in our time, I ended up proposing something different. However, it is not different from what is found in the Scriptures, the Church Fathers, or the Reformers. I intended to provide a comprehensive, integrated view of man considering his subjectivity. I argue that the result is both biblical and actual.

To have a theology of human subjectivity from Kierkegaard's thought that is both biblical and actual, it is necessary to restore the theomorphic character of the human being. Also, it is vital to understand the human as a kinetic being in continuous existential movement. Finally, it is crucial to see the human as a recursive creature. Regarding sin, understanding its relation to human subjectivity is crucial to grasp its embodiment as man's untruth. Sin is the synthesis between the human being and nothingness, bringing evil into existence. This subjective evil is embodied as an aesthetic and ethical sin. In aesthetic sin, the desires, passions, and human imagination become skewed by it. Now the man bends over himself, seeking to satisfy the insatiable desire of the flesh, eyes, and the pride of life. His imagination became captive to repetition through the distortion caused by sin, and his body a slave to immanent and mechanical desires. Now humanity is subjectively compelled to repeat the same mistakes. The aesthetical sin submits the self to the power of the ever-changing heart. Regarding ethical sin, it manifests as different anguishes in terms of fear, shame, anger, and guilt. The relationship with these emotions takes place in consciousness, where guilt is the highest expression because it requires the objective revelation of the law.

I also argued that sin is hereditary but not its guilt—as it is a legal category—but personal. However, in the sin-affected subjectivity of the human being, in the despair and embodied anxieties that affected his physiology, he transmits the same subjective anxieties to his offspring. The yearnings are inherited, but the responsibility is personal.

There are many repercussions for this anthropology of sin. It can help produce new answers for a society that, while haunted by shame, fear, anger, and guilt, is addicted to the aesthetic pleasures that increase its despair. The Church can give what society thirsts for; however, it must learn to incarnate Christ poetically, redeeming its own desires, passions, and imaginations, aligning them with the holy love for God and neighbor. By redeeming the self, including shames, fears, anger, and guilt throughout the self's personal history, the Church needs to learn to live ethically and

poetically, concretizing Christ and becoming spiritual. After all, man’s most powerful thirst is for God, and when a Christian embodies Christ, revealing the authentic spiritual, God again becomes visible and attractive in the world.

Chapter 6

Review of Outcome and Conclusions

6.1 Review of Research

6.1.1 *Objectives*

The main objective of this research was to discover how Kierkegaard's philosophy of human subjectivity might be employed to construct a biblical contemporary theological anthropology of sin.

The objective was met in the following manner: (1) The research studied the relationship between Kierkegaard's philosophical thought and the anthropology of sin. This provided the fundamental thought of Kierkegaard's understanding about the self, and his concepts of anxiety, despair, and untruth applied to sin. (2) It explored throughout the Church History what some theologians wrote about human subjectivity and sin. This offered many insights about the development of the doctrine of original sin and different categories of subjective sin. Many parallels with Kierkegaard's thoughts were also identified, whether influencing him or influenced by him. (3) It investigated theologically in the biblical narrative the human subjectivity and its relationship with sin. This resulted in many insights into the development of theological anthropology of sin. (4) A theological anthropology of sin was formulated. This was done as a synthesis of the other outcomes. (5) It explored some implications for the theological anthropology proposed.

6.1.2 *Design and Methodology*

This research was a literary investigation, to produce a conceptual, theological construction. The design of this research was divided in four steps: (1) The first step examined Kierkegaard's philosophy, identifying how his thought about subjectivity relates to biblical anthropology and the concept of sin. I used analytical and dialogical

methodology, examining, and evaluating Kierkegaard's concepts. (2) In the second step, I investigated some influential theologians in the history of Christianity, contrasting their thoughts with Kierkegaard's concepts. The methodology used was the dialogical and epistemological, performing a conversation between concepts. (3) The third step examined theologically the biblical texts regarding the anthropology of sin. It helped to deduce theological principles to guide in the development of a new theological anthropology of sin. Among other things, it used textual criticism, hermeneutics, and a lexical analysis. (4) The fourth step systematized a theological anthropology of sin, considering human subjectivity and the Kierkegaardian thought. It synthesized the findings of the other steps, providing a new Kierkegaardian approach to a theological anthropology of sin. It also tackled some implications for theology.

6.2 Conclusions of Research Findings

6.2.1 *The Kierkegaardian Anthropology of Sin*

Kierkegaard's biography and philosophical thought were explored, where it was recognized to be deeply theological. His concepts are profoundly Christian and biblically rooted. It identified that his anthropology of sin is related to his kinetic perspective, a term I propose because it conceives the human being as a movement. Kierkegaard addressed the subject of sin using the concepts of anxiety, despair, and untruth. Anxiety is the middle ground between innocence and guilt. Despair is the misrelation between inward dialectics of the self and presents in different ways. Untruth is the proper existential incoherence with the truth. Kierkegaard addressed hereditary sin affirming it as subjective anxiety but denying the inheritance of guilt.

By dealing with sin in terms of anxiety, despair, and untruth, Kierkegaard brought the theological concepts that are typically treated abstractly to the existential dimension. He gave human concreteness to theoretical concepts without neglecting the doctrinal one. For each idea raised, Kierkegaard also unveiled a variety of new dimensions of sin's concreteness in human beings.

Kierkegaard's concrete relationship of sin in human beings exposes the inseparable connection between sin and human nature. It does not mean that sin is a

natural part of being human; nevertheless, there is no sin without human nature[86]. Thus, sin does not exist as something objective in the world, for it exists within human interiority. I call this research an anthropology of sin precisely because it is necessary to understand human nature to understand sin, and vice-versa.

Kierkegaard rejected the objectification of faith, arguing that many Christian doctrines lost the existential meaning. His Christian philosophy urged for the appropriation of faith, in contrast to just knowing. It is important to emphasize that Kierkegaard's thought is distinct from those called existentialists. Even though they share the perspective of human existence, their philosophy distorted the categories of Kierkegaard's ideas. Only by reading with a Christian lens can one correctly assess Kierkegaard's arguments.

I concluded by affirming that Kierkegaard's approach is necessary to develop an anthropology of sin from the perspective of subjectivity, approaching sin from its human category. The Kierkegaardian thought reshapes the theological concept of sin in existential terms, making the doctrine not only understandable but bringing to deeper unfolding.

Kierkegaard's ontological definition of the self as more than a human being has special value for providing an ontology capable of dealing with some of the historical dilemmas of theological anthropology. Understanding the human being as a self, or a spirit, a synthesis between body and soul, which relates to itself, offers a Christian view regarding human constitution, consciousness, psychology, and spiritual life. Kierkegaard's anthropological perspective does not fall into dichotomic, trichotomic, or monistic opinions, nor does it neglect the integrality of the human being, but affirms it as a psycho-somatic, self-conscious, and God-related nature. I judge his anthropological view as deep and relevant, biblically and philosophically coherent.

[86] Here I do not consider the sin in the fallen angels, which would require another research project.

6.2.2 *The Anthropology of Sin in the History of Christian Theology*

The subjects of anthropology, sin, and human subjectivity were investigated in the writings of different theologians throughout church history. It was not an exhaustive investigation but studied some of the most important Christian thinkers who influenced theological thought. First, it identified an increasing departure from apostolic anthropology, when theology became progressively Hellenized. Also, a departure from the Greek thought by the reformers, and a subsequent approach to the German idealism of Immanuel Kant by liberals and neo-orthodox theologians. Every theologian engaged with philosophical questions in his time, addressing the human constitution, God's image in human beings, and the concept of sin differently.

It was evident in the study of these theologians that the concept of original sin was never homogeneous in church history and underwent numerous changes over time. Furthermore, due to the Greek influence, the segmented concept of the human being gave way to a monistic view of reality and of the human being itself. Both positions proved inconsistent, finding in Kierkegaard's Christian philosophy the best antidote. Besides, various interpretations of God's image in human beings were investigated, realizing that there was a particular biblical foundation in each one and that they were not self-excluded in themselves. Although some interpretations were more Hellenized than Biblical, the biblical-theological principle behind was recognized that should be maintained. Therefore, when their concepts are integrated, they provide a more comprehensive approach, offering an overarching idea of God's image.

The relationship of subjectivity in human beings was also studied, verifying that for the apostolic fathers, it referred to the coherence between what one says and is. This explains Kierkegaard's assertion that subjectivity is truth because Christian life proposes coherence between exteriority and interiority, between being and doing.

Over time, the Hellenization of theology turned subjectivity into terms of a tension between body and soul. Since Justin Martyr, reason has been the upper part of being human. Gradually, asceticism came to influence theology, rejecting human passions and corporeality in general. Especially in Augustine's theology, sexuality was almost demonized. It became, as argued before, a type of alienated theology for neglecting human corporality. Later, in Martin Luther, the idea of hating oneself because of sin added more tension in the relationship between human beings and

their corporeality. This led to the atheism of Nietzsche and Freud, who accused the church of neglecting the body. With that, I argue, theology gradually dehumanized the human being. It would be necessary to reestablish the role of the body, passions, feelings, and affections in the human relationship with God without necessarily neglecting the rational aspect. A more comprehensive anthropology was needed to solve the apparent tension between body and soul. Barth and Pannenberg offered good approaches to the problem.

As the soul, endowed with reason, was the higher human part, faith became synonymous with accepting Christian truths instead of embodying them. In this, Kierkegaard's Lutheran philosophy became essential for affirming the human being as a synthesis between body and soul, also reestablishing the truth that faith needs to be more than recognized but appropriated. CYB

Concerning sin, several essential concepts were identified in its relationship with subjectivity. It was identified as a "negative faith", pride, sloth, self-aggression, and falsehood. Each expression brought developments in the relationship with Kierkegaard's concepts.

It also emphasized the denial of biblical texts essential to the theme of sin, both by Barth and Pannenberg. They considered the fall in Genesis 3 as a saga, not historical. However rich in content and very useful to theology, the approach of these theologians proved to be insufficient on this topic precisely because they surrendered to elements of liberal theology. Both Barth and Pannenberg came closer to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant than to the biblical revelation of the nature of sin in human beings. A mistake that theology should not repeat.

By treating sin in the same terms as the Kantian theory of radical evil, they regarded sin as essential to original human nature. In this sense, I argue that it is necessary to return to the church fathers' theology, who recognized the historicity of the fall and built their theologies based on it. Irenaeus's theology was highlighted in this chapter for being similar to Kierkegaard's. For him, sin became a reality only when presented by the serpent because Adam and Eve were innocent and incapable of imagining evil. Thus, sin would first have been introduced to the mind and imagination and later concretized through action. With that, Irenaeus showed the importance of imagination in the process of sinning. Besides Irenaeus, Justin Martyr also asserted

the same principle, a truth Kierkegaard later emphasized in his concept of anxiety and despair.

The concepts of the image of God, the constitution of the human being, and the different concepts of sin discussed in history became evident from the perspective of Kierkegaard's philosophy.

6.2.3 *A Theological-Biblical Examination of Human Subjectivity*

When carrying out the biblical investigation, a study about the human being and sin was realized, considering numerous vital Scripture texts. The examination of these texts demonstrated that Kierkegaard's definition that the human being is a synthesis between the physical and the psychical is more coherent with the biblical account. Furthermore, numerous concepts of the image of God identified in history were confronted with the biblical account and synthesized. Besides, a study of the fall brought numerous aesthetic and ethical elements about sin, and the NT study of the theme corroborated the findings. In addition, the investigation identified numerous examples of how Jesus subjectively dealt with people.

It became clear that the biblical authors had a much broader understanding of sin than simply an objective definition. Sin was approached aesthetically by the apostles in terms of the dialectic between flesh and spirit and ethically in the dialectic between law and grace. The apostolic approach considered diverse dimensions of sin.

This chapter identified several elements of sin in its aesthetic dimensions, such as the desire of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life. These three aesthetic dimensions of sin refer to what attracts a human being to evil, operating in both the body and the mind. They are aesthetic elements related to the human being's imagination, which can incubate or become "pregnant" of sin. Furthermore, the ethical aspects of sin were also highlighted as consequences of sin directly related to human conscience, affecting how the world, the other, and itself are perceived. Therefore, the ethical dimensions of sin were identified, based on the narrative of the fall, as fear, shame, anger, and guilt.

A person stuck in the aesthetic sphere lives dominated by the passions of the flesh, seeking to satisfy itself with pleasures. The sin here controls the senses, keeping the person trapped in a sinful cycle involving imagination and the flesh. On the other hand, the person who lives in the ethical dimension seeks to fulfill a higher purpose,

usually in the form of a law, an ideology, or something rational that brings meaning to life. Usually, this sense of life is a substitute, an idol created by a lack of self-knowledge and divine revelation. The aesthetic sinner lives in the service of his sinful immanence, while the ethical submits to something transcendent, serving a higher cause religiously. Whether a person builds himself based on the immanence of imagination and desires or a transcendental ideal, the person lives in idolatry, trying to satisfy a religious longing.

An important point highlighted in this chapter was the development of the concept of guilt in the OT. While fear, shame, and anger are immediate consequences of sin in human consciousness, precisely because they are primarily subjective, the Mosaic law introduced guilt essentially as objective. Thus, the concept of guilt requires the law as objective and external, revealing responsibility, consequence, and debt in front of God. Therefore, while fear, shame, and anger are subjective ethical consequences, guilt is objective.

Besides, sin has a religious expression in terms of untruth, pride, and sloth. As pride, Eve defiantly disobeyed God, while Adam in sloth disobeyed in neglection. In pride, people try to become what they are not supposed to become. While in sloth, people do not become what they were supposed to become. Regarding untruth, it is the state where humanity sees the world, itself, the other, and God with a distorted lens because their consciousness was affected by sin. It is the proper subjective disruption between subjectivity and objectivity. People live in untruth as a state of incoherence, perceiving the world also incoherently.

Furthermore, sin was also highlighted as a subjective longing in its social expression. Upon being driven from Eden, Adam and Eve lost their father, their sacred community, and the garden of delight. Since then, people have aspired for a father to give direction and purpose, land on which to build their versions of paradise, and an ideal community to become a perfect society. These idealistic constructions of society have deep religious roots, and Jesus knew very well the yearning of nations. That is why Christ presented the Father who adopts people in Christ; introduced the Kingdom as the new dwelling place for God’s children; and the church as the family of God, his redeemed community. Jesus provided holy solutions to the three yearnings, bringing peace and satisfaction.

Four categories of subjective sin in human beings were identified: (1) Aesthetically as the desire for pleasure, power, and being, represented by the lust of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life. (2) Ethically, sin is an offense to God, objectively called guilt, but subjectively manifested as fear, shame, and anger. (3) Religiously, sin expresses itself as untruth, pride, and sloth. (4) Socially, sin is the thirst for the Father, the lost garden, and the holy community.

6.2.4 *A Theological Formulation for a Contemporaneous Anthropology of Sin*

This last chapter systematized all the concepts found earlier, raising new insights from the conversation with contemporary theology and philosophy. First, it formulated a theological answer to what it means to be human. Based on a Kierkegaardian approach and the biblical investigation, the human being was presented as God's theomorphism, a kinetic self, and a recursive self. The categories synthesize the biblical teaching about who the human being is, also summarizing different interpretations by theologians throughout history. They are not three parts but three perspectives of the same human.

As theomorphism, the human being was created as an analogical expression of God. Only when directly related with the Creator can man perfectly reflect God's image. Therefore, even though human beings have the inherent potential to reflect God, subjectively imbued with capacities given by the Creator, such as love, mercy, reason, and creativity, human beings cannot realize their potentialities without a direct relationship by faith with the one they should mirror. As theomorphisms, humans only find satisfaction when reflecting on their Creator. Besides, it was argued that God is not apathetic, indifferent to feelings. As the human being is God's theomorphism, the biblical expressions attributed to God regarding his emotions should have great theological importance. Contrary to idealizing apathy, as the ancients did, it is necessary to relearn from divine empathy, as the authentic model for human beings. Thus, today, the church has an imperative task of re-humanizing the human being and theology by recovering the importance of holy emotions and affections.

As a kinetic self, the human being was theologically addressed as a synthesis between the physical and the psychical, as a self-conscious synthesis, and in his

relationship with God. As a recursive self, it studied the concept of recursivity, its meaning in human immanence, and its relationship with its transcendence. Besides, it addressed self-consciousness as a self-recursivity and the relation between the self and time. The approach that considers the recursive human nature raised many indispensable insights that implicate different areas of theology.

I think that the existence of disciplines such as clinical psychology, psychoanalysis, and psychiatry is evidence that the church, in general, has neglected the subjective dimension of the human being. The church's concession to the use of therapies with an explicitly atheistic metaphysical and epistemological foundation comes from its inability to deal with some of the most profound existential questions of the human being. Sadly, the church has become illiterate in matters of interiority. In part, this may result from the refusal to think, talk and reflect on existential questions of the Christian faith applied to human beings in their current demands. Part of this is because of the blindness regarding the subjectivity of sin, usually addressed only in objective terms. By treating the sin problem only in its legal dimension, salvation is reduced to justification. As a result, faith in justification replaces the faith in Jesus, thus becoming merely cognitive. By reducing faith to the cognitive, Christianity becomes an aggregation of doctrines to be known and accepted, like a society where members submit to its rules.

Moreover, the chapter also developed the answer to what it means to be a sinner. First, it summarized the history of the concept of hereditary sin, then presented a modified version of Kierkegaard's answer to the problem. Next, it inferred that subjective anxiety is transmitted from parents, not guilt, as it is a legal category in Scripture. It also developed an ontology of sin, constructing a kinetic view, producing a more comprehensive conceptualization. In addition, it approached the aesthetic of sin in terms of relationship with imagination and desire; and the ethical sin, as vices and the emotions produced by a disrupted conscience. Finally, it concluded the great importance of the subjective dimensions of guilt, such as fear, shame, and anger.

Finally, some direct implications for theology were addressed. A comprehensive reading of the subject of the anthropology of sin can reveal the theological danger of using psychologies, anthropologies, or sociologies that are not biblically coherent. Therefore, one of the main implications is the proposal that the human sciences not grounded on coherent theological anthropology should be

rejected because they promote theological developments that contradict the scriptures. Another implication is for the *Homo Virtus* because this theology offers tools to approach the current virtualized generation. Still another was the challenge of thinking aesthetically, and finally, a proposal for a new Kierkegaardian theological sociology.

The objective of the work was reached. Kierkegaard's philosophy was employed in the construction of a biblical and contemporaneous anthropology of sin. It demonstrated how abstract theological categories, such as sin and guilt, can be approached concretely, aiming at the human being in his subjectivity

6.3 Contributions of this Research

The benefit of this thesis lies in its existential, subjective approach to an abstract theme that has been degraded in society, which is the theme of sin. It provides tools for practical theology, missiology, soteriology, psychology, and probably other disciplines to comprehensively deal with the subject of sin. Another significant benefit is the approach of the human being as a kinetic self, providing dynamic and relevant anthropology for the human being. It can also be of great help to numerous theological disciplines.

In particular, the benefit of understanding guilt in its subjective expressions, in terms of fear, shame, and anger, can provide new insights for theology and especially for cultural anthropology. The understanding of aesthetic sin in terms of the will for pleasure, the will to power, and the will to meaning, especially sheds theological light on secular psychological approaches. Furthermore, the benefit of interpreting sin as an existential yearning addressed here in so many ways can be of great value to evangelism and missiology in general.

This theological work is sensitive to the demands of modern human beings, providing answers to existential demands. The work also paves the way for other research that wishes to study some of the existential categories of sin highlighted, with psychological and sociological implications. The work also benefits the Church as it provides a theological anthropology that responds to current relativism through a subjective approach that does not abandon objectivity.

6.4 Recommended Topics for Further Theological Research

(1) Implications for a Kinetic Soteriology.

(2) Atonement for the Four-dimensional Sin: Guilt, Shame, Fear, and Anger.

(3) Developing a Recursive Hermeneutics.

(4) The Aesthetics of Indirect Communication in the Prophetic Books

(5) Research in Practical Theology about Cultures of Anger.

(6) The theological Longing for the Father, the Garden, and the Community in the writings of the Church Fathers.

(7) Redemption and Consciousness: Bringing the Fullness of Time to the forgotten Self.

(8) Developing a Theological Psychotherapy

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