

A thinker erects an immense building, a system, a system which embraces the whole of existence and world-history, etc. —and if we contemplate his personal life, we discover to our astonishment this terrible and ludicrous fact, that he himself personally does not live in this immense high-vaulted palace, but in a barn alongside of it, or in a dog kennel, or at the most in the porter's lodge. If one were to take the liberty of calling his attention to this by a single word, he would be offended. For he has no fear of being under a delusion, if only he can get the system completed.... by means of the delusion.

Kierkegaard, Søren. Anti-Climacus in The Sickness unto Death, pp. 176-77 (SV XV 100)