

Univerzita Karlova v Praze

Filozofická fakulta

Ústav filosofie a religionistiky

Diplomová práce

Andrej Šimeček

Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Existence

Kierkegaardova filosofie existence

To my dear parents

Prohlášení:

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně a výhradně s použitím citovaných pramenů, literatury a dalších odborných zdrojů.

V Praze, dne 17. December 2012

.....
Jméno a příjmení

Abstract

This work takes as its central issue the *existential movement* as it appears in the philosophy of Soren Kierkegaard. There appears to be relatively little secondary literature on this topic, so it is a very fruitful area to explore. The texts explored include Kierkegaard's 'psychological' books, in particular *Concept of Anxiety* and *Sickness unto Death*. These provide our work with the crucial concepts of innocence, guilt, despair, anxiety, existence and spirit. From the more traditional philosophical works, *Philosophical Fragments*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* and *Johannes Climacus* have been utilised. These texts inform the work mostly on the meaning of movement, doubt, contradiction and absolute paradox. From the more lyrical works, this work is informed by *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition*. Inquiry into these texts combined will provide a picture of existential movement as it is presented by Kierkegaard. This work attempts to capture the 'becoming subjective' which is so central to Kierkegaard's thought, through the reconstruction of the existential stages. It is also the purpose of this work (in the process) to treat areas of Kierkegaard's thought that are usually left untreated. The latter are for example, the problematic of the leap of sin, the unclear status of the aesthetic stage of existence, and the often neglected 'Religiousness A'.

Key words

Movement, becoming, innocence, guilt, anxiety, ethical, spirit, self, relation, despair, religious, leap, existence

Abstrakt (Slovensky)

Ústredná téma tejto práce je *existenciálny pohyb* ako ho nachádzame vo filozofii Sorena Kierkegaarda. V tejto oblasti nachádzame relativne malo sekundárnej literatúry, a preto je to téma hodná výskumu. Medzi skúmané texty patria Kierkegaardove ‚psychologické‘ knihy, konkrétne *Concept of Anxiety* a *Sickness unto Death*. Tieto knihy nam poskytujú dôležité koncepty ako nevinnosť, vina, zúfalstvo, úzkosť, existencia a duch. Z tradičnejších filozofických textov boli použité: *Philosophical Fragments*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* a *Johannes Climacus*. Tieto texty informujú prácu predovšetkým o význame pojmov ako pohyb, pochybovanie, rozpor a absolútny paradox. Ďalej táto práca čerpá z takzvaných lyrických textov, konkrétne *Fear and Trembling* a *Repetition*. Kombinované čítanie týchto textov nám poskytne obraz existenciálneho pohybu ako nám ho prezentuje Kierkegaard. Práca sa snaží zachytiť a vykresliť takzvané stávanie sa subjektívnym, ktoré je centrálné v Kierkegaardovom myslení, cez rekonštrukciu existenciálnych štádií. Ďalej si práca dáva za cieľ (v procese) objasniť oblasti Kierkegaardovho myslenia ktoré ostávajú zväčša nepovšimnuté. Medzi tieto oblasti patria napríklad: problematika ‚skoku hriechu‘, nejasné postavenie estetického existenciálneho štádia a často nepovšimnutej ‚Náboženskosti A‘.

Kľúčové slová (Slovensky)

Pohyb, stávanie sa, nevinnosť, vina, úzkosť, etika, duch, vzťah, zúfalstvo, náboženosť, skok, existencia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	7
1 The pre-ethical	9
1.1 Aristotle's concept of κίνησις	9
1.2 Kierkegaard's adaptation of Aristotle's κίνησις	10
1.3 On the use of the term <i>guilt</i>	12
1.4 The concept of innocence	14
1.5 Anxiety (before the prohibition)	17
1.6 Anxiety (after the prohibition)	18
1.7 'Self-positing' through the act of defiance	19
1.8 In closing	22
2 The ethical	24
2.1 Spirit, self, the relation relating to itself	24
2.2 Despair	26
2.3 Unconsciousness of despair in relation to possibility\necessity	28
2.4 In despair not wanting to be oneself	31
2.4.1 Despair over the earthly or over something earthly	32
2.4.2 Despair of the eternal or over oneself	35
2.5 Despair of wanting in despair to be oneself- defiance	39
3 The religious	44
3.1 The ethical-religious, Religiousness A	46
3.2 Guilt as the decisive expression of existential pathos	48
3.3 The paradoxical-religious, Christianity, Religiousness B	52
3.4 Paradoxical-religious as a concrete relation to God	54
3.5 Conclusion	58
Bibliography & List of abbreviations	59

Introduction

This work is not a disinterested reading of Kierkegaard; of course by 'disinterested' we mean 'objective' or 'without prejudices'. It is a search for something that it is *impossible* to be disinterested about, that is, about human consciousness. But we do not look at human consciousness as separated from what it is conscious of: *one's existence*.

Kierkegaard is considered the first existentialist thinker, and rightly so. But we have a certain paradox at hand, how does one *think* existence? Is not thinking a part of existence, so that sometime we think and sometime we do not, though we exist all the same? Then how does part think the whole? Kierkegaard will, of course, claim that it cannot, that there is something that *eludes* thought. Furthermore, it is precisely the unthinkable that causes so much distress in philosophy; the unthinkable is what constantly threatens to swallow up a nicely built system. Yet we will see that the unthinkable is what Kierkegaard's thought stands on. Or to put it a little more coherently, the unthinkable *precedes* and *surpasses* thought.

We are not so much presented with thoughts about existence, as much as with a *thinking existence*. We have as a subject of our study an individual consciousness which thinks *about* itself. But then again, who does not think about themselves? And here we have a clear indication that we are not concerned here with consciousness *in general*. If this consciousness is not concerned with itself, it is of no concern to us. But the concern for oneself is perhaps the human situation at its basic.

We can see that here the thinker is no different from what he thinks about. Kierkegaard in no case pretends to *know more*; he writes from the stand point of an individual who knows in fact very little. It is therefore no surprise that Socrates holds such a high place in Kierkegaard's thought. And why was Socrates the wisest of all men? It was precisely because he *knew that he knew nothing*. "Socrates, Socrates, Socrates! Yes, one may well invoke your name three times; it would not be too much to invoke it ten times if that could be of any help. People think the world needs a republic, and they think it needs a new social order, and a new religion, but it never occurs to anyone that what the world really needs, confused as it is by much learning, is a Socrates" (*SUD*, 113).

The place from where we ask about existence is not *other* than that of existence. It is in this sense that we can call this enquiry existential. Kierkegaard is not speaking to 'humanity' but

to each particular reader. One cannot read Kierkegaard and not think about themselves; if one reads Kierkegaard 'disinterestedly', he is not reading Kierkegaard.

We will follow a *movement*. In Part 1 we shall observe the leap of sin, the qualitative change from unconsciousness to consciousness. In Part 2 we will observe the movement from relating *abstractly* to relating *concretely* to oneself. In part 3, subsequently, we will observe a movement from relating *abstractly* to relating *concretely* to God. But surprisingly enough, this movement does not result in more and more certainty, but the reverse. For where certainty recedes a space opens for *faith*. But let us get to work.

1 The pre-ethical

Existential movement, what is it? We are immediately pointed towards the theory of the stages; existential movement will be a movement from one stage to another. Generally the stages are well known, they are: *aesthetic*, *ethical* and *religious*. Immediately we see that we could exchange the word movement for 'transition' or 'change'. All these terms signify one thing: *a becoming*. What is central to us, then, is the becoming of A into B; the becoming ethical from aesthetic.

1.1 Aristotle's concept of κίνησις

Let us begin with the most basic principle: *the principle of contradiction*. In short it states *either A or ~A*, but not both (and here we have a clear reference to Kierkegaard's *Either/or*). To be more exact, quoting from *Metaphysics IV*, "It is impossible for the same thing to belong and not to belong at the same time to the same thing and in the same respect... This sort of principle is the firmest of all." (*Selections*, 251). So in speaking of movement, we must add another crucial element: *time*. Water can indeed be both cold and hot, these are its possibilities, but it can never be both *at the same time*. Becoming hot from being cold requires time, and we are pointed in the direction of actual becoming.

Nonetheless we must be more specific as to the nature of this movement, "The transition from possibility to actuality is, as Aristotle rightly teaches, κίνησις [kinesis], a movement" (*CUP*, 342). Here we have an important clue towards our understanding. First, let us briefly mention *Physics* (especially Book II).

Aristotle distinguishes between things which have and which do not have the principle of motion within themselves; the principle of motion being their *nature*. What is the difference between a tree which grows of its own accord, and a bed made out of wood? Clearly the former has its own principle of *transition\becoming*, which the latter has in another (in the carpenter). What will be crucial for Kierkegaard is the fact that Aristotle places the principle of becoming *within* the individual itself. The seed has a potential (δύναμις) *to produce a change*, to become a tree, yet this potential might not be fulfilled, it is not necessary that it do so, yet it is not a pure chance either; but we shall turn to the question of necessity a little later. Potential or (as

Kierkegaard uses it: possibility) is an inner power, which *becomes* through self-actualization, through a transition from possibility to actuality. Nature is a principle of motion, it is the nature of the tree to become 'what it is', or to become a *form* (since form is actuality). And in turn form is the nature of the given thing, it is 'that for the sake of which' everything else happens. Form is a telos (a final cause), which is present only potentially, but actualises itself as it becomes what it is. There is an inner dynamic of becoming.

We must introduce yet another important term: *substance*. All predicates are always said of it, yet substance\being is not predicated of anything else. Consider something becoming large after being small; we see that here we have a pair contraries. On the other hand that which is the *subject* of change has no opposite. Hence all change happens to a subject which underlies these opposites. We can also call this substance the *ground*, but this notion will acquire more meaning in a bit.

Now consider the given substance while it is small; the largeness is in it only potentially, it exists *as a possibility*. In coming into existence, the largeness is a certain actualisation of an inner power. But once the thing is large, the smallness disappears, it is left behind. The subject is no longer small but large; the tree is no longer a seed, but a full grown oak. Hence this *act of becoming*, which is present within the individual itself, when it becomes actual, is what we call *movement*. "In each kind of thing we distinguish what is actually F from what is potentially F. Hence the actuality of what is F potentially, insofar as it is F potentially, is motion" (*Selections*, 121).

1.2 Kierkegaard's adaptation of Aristotle's κίνησις

We have outlined the general meaning of movement. At this point I would like to outline an important difference (for our purpose) between Kierkegaard's and Aristotle's conception of kinesis. The difference concerns the *necessity* of becoming 'what it is' of that which becomes. But an important note must be made. Where Aristotle is concerned with becoming in nature, Kierkegaard is *exclusively* concerned with *spiritual* becoming. What do we mean? As will become clear later, but must be mentioned now, we are concerned with becoming guilty after being innocent, that is, from being *unconscious* of oneself to being *conscious* of oneself. But let

us put this off for now, but keep in mind that we are moving from the sphere of nature into the sphere of the spirit or consciousness (of which this is all about).

Kierkegaard agrees that becoming is a transition from possibility to actuality, the actualisation of possibility. Returning to our example of the seed becoming a tree, we say *unless* the seed is not planted or otherwise kept from growing, it is *necessary* that it will become a tree. I am not contradicting what I said earlier when I said that it is not necessary that something reach its form, though. It is indeed not necessary that a seed become a tree, it might be defective etc., but this has nothing to do with the necessity that an oak seed necessarily becomes an oak tree (even a defective one). Let us cite Aristotle from *De Interpretatione*, "...that which is of necessity is actual. Thus, if that which is eternal is prior, actuality is also prior to potentiality. Some things are actualities without potentiality, namely, the primary substances [man, tree, horse]..." (*Selections*, 28).

Kierkegaard will argue that not even the form, the actual, becomes of necessity. Why? "The change of coming into existence is actuality; the transition takes place in freedom. No coming into existence is necessary- not before it came into existence, for then it cannot come into existence, and not after it has come into existence, for then it has not come into existence" (*PF*, 75). Since the form as the actual is potentially present before it is actuated, it is not present there necessarily. It becomes necessary the moment it becomes actual, *not before*. In short, *actuality is not prior to possibility*.

But in turn, this would mean that the very subject of change (the ground) comes into existence, since it does not precede itself. This idea is central. Remember, it was said that contraries are always predicated of a subject, the subject is what persists; it is the *ground* of change. Now we are making the very ground of change come into existence. We are moving, as if, a level lower, or making one more step back. But come into existence *from what?* The subject of predication has no opposite, it is not as with hot and cold. Indeed the difficulty is that *if* the subject came into existence, its only opposite is nothing, hence something would come from nothing, and this is impossible. This is why the ground of change must precede its own particular changes and transitions. And we are pointed back to the fact that form (as actuality) is prior to possibility. If we claim that actuality *becomes in freedom* then it must not be present beforehand, but if we assume this, then we must deal with the question of *where* did it come from, more

particularly, we have to deal with the question of *nothing* (and its meaning), as unintuitive as it sounds. But let me in closing quote from *Philosophical Fragments*:

This change, then, is not in essence but in being and is from not existing to existing. But this non-being that is abandoned by that which comes into existence must also exist, for otherwise “that which comes into existence would not remain unchanged in the coming into existence” unless it had not been at all, whereby once again and for another reason the change of coming into existence would be absolutely different from any other change, because it would be no change at all, for every change has always presupposed a something. But such a being that nevertheless is a non-being is possibility, and a being that is being is indeed actual being or actuality, and the change of coming into existence is the transition from possibility to actuality (*PF*, 73-4).

The purpose of this introduction is to set the stage. The most general working definition of movement as *transition* from possibility to actuality has been given. I am aware that the reader must be perplexed. “What is all this talk of something coming from nothing?” one is forced to ask. And this difficulty will be taken up in the next section; but a slight detour must be made, there is something that did not quite receive its introduction, and that is *guilt*.

1.3 On the use of the term *guilt*

What relation can guilt possibly have to movement? The answer is: very intimate. But the concept must be clarified first. What is guilt in general? Guilt implies *responsibility*. This term must not be underestimated when reading Kierkegaard. Guilt is the *feeling* of responsibility, and let us also not underestimate the term *feeling*. Guilt is a feeling of responsibility (for oneself), it is something *actual*. Feeling is *experiencing*, or *being aware of/ being conscious of...* This is what, I believe, makes Kierkegaard an existential thinker, a thinker of an actual person, why? Is not the responsibility for oneself something that is actual for everyone? Responsibility, and the feeling thereof *is* existence. No one can escape this ever-present heaviness. You are your-self, and nothing may change that. Kierkegaard is the thinker of the singular, of the individual. No one is responsible for me being myself. We will see later on that the aesthetic will be the denial

of precisely this; it will be nothing short of denying of existence. But I am getting too ahead of myself.

We are closer now to the relation, which will become clearer as we proceed, between movement and guilt. We are concerned with *becoming oneself*, with becoming *this* concrete individual.

Movement is a transition from possibility to actuality; since guilt is actuality, this will be a movement from innocence (as possibility) to guilt. But such a transition requires a subject (a something) which undergoes this change. Yet it was also stated that for Kierkegaard the subject is in no case *prior to* the becoming. This resulted in the paradox that (ultimately) something comes from nothing. It is the purpose of this part, which is a reading mostly informed by *The Concept of Anxiety*, to show how precisely this is the case in movement from innocence to guilt. This movement is the first movement, a movement prior to the stages. Hence we shall turn now to the question of coming into existence of *subjectivity* through the act of sin. The act of sin will be the actualisation of a possibility, a movement. Hence it is in transition from innocence to *guilt* through the act of *sin* that we find a first *qualitative leap*: the first movement, the leap of sin. The aesthetic can arise only *after the fall*.

What is important is that this is also a movement from unconsciousness to consciousness; it is a movement *of* consciousness. Aristotle's kinesis was interpreted to the extent, and in order to, show its importance for the understanding of Kierkegaard's movement in general. But now we will move to a different plane of becoming. Aristotle describes the becoming in nature; Kierkegaard seeks this becoming in consciousness. Hence, this will be a movement from unconsciousness (as a feeling of responsibility for oneself) to consciousness of a self.

But once again, guilt discloses responsibility. In this sense it will be a movement from irresponsibility (which will later be the impossible goal of the esthetic) to responsibility. But responsibility for what? for one's *life*, or existence. But at the same time one always feels responsible, and cannot quite *imagine* such a state. This points towards the paradoxical nature of innocence. Ultimately we cannot say anything about it, it is a state *prior to* consciousness, and as such can never be an *object* of consciousness. What *can* be an object of consciousness, though, is the *loss* of innocence. The moment innocence is lost is the very moment consciousness appears, but it is always-already a consciousness of a loss. And this is the paradox we shall bring into the foreground: the fall (the loss of innocence) is an act of free choice, yet it is (necessarily) an

unconscious act. This act decides the eternal character of the one who commits it; it decides what I shall forever be. This is the paradox: I chose myself, yet this choice was not (properly speaking) mine, since I (as this particular consciousness) was not there. But let us proceed to make this clearer.

1.4 The concept of innocence

It ought to be stated now for the reader to keep in mind, that innocence can only occupy a position of a *theoretical assumption*. Why? Because it helps to explain something. We might repeat a simple (existential) fact; everyone feels responsible for their existence. I am responsible for what I am. Yet at the same time we feel that we did not quite choose what we are. How to resolve this problem? Either we are free, and radically this means free to choose ourselves at the very moment of our conception; or else we are not free, and this character is something imposed upon me outwardly, in which case, how can I possibly be responsible for *anything*? We side, of course, with the former. One, properly speaking, chooses oneself, one's eternal character. But, in keeping with the concept of kinesis, we must presuppose a state *prior* to this beginning, or else I chose myself before I chose myself, which is impossible. This state prior to the choice is the state of *innocence*, and in turn innocence is a theoretical presupposition.

But innocence intuitively seems a little more than that. *Ethics* presupposes innocence as well. How could I have ever *become* guilty/responsible if there was not a state when I was not guilty? We again stand in front of the same choice as in a minute ago. Either there was a time when I was not responsible, and through an act (later sin) made myself responsible, or I was always guilty/responsible. We see that in the latter responsibility makes no sense; if I did not make myself responsible, if it was not my doing, than all ethics falls apart.

We must be careful, Kierkegaard is first and foremost a Christian thinker, he does not choose the term innocence arbitrarily; we are always to keep the dogmatic text which is Bible in mind. It must be first explained *how* does Kierkegaard read the story of Adam, who is Adam? "Let us now consider Adam and also remember that every subsequent individual begins in the very same way, but within the quantitative difference that is the consequence of the relationship

of generation and the historical relationship. Thus the moment is there for Adam as well as for every subsequent individual" (CA, 90).

It is crucial to understand that *quantitatively* there *is* a difference between each one of us and Adam; he was the first, and then each subsequent 'first sin' that entered into the world through each individual is an addition to the sinfulness of the race. BUT, *qualitatively* there is no difference; each of us stands before the same choice (i.e. to choose). The *what* (the quantitative) might be different with each generation; the *how* (the qualitative) of this choice is the same. If we treat Adam as somehow standing outside of humanity, we misunderstand the narrative of the fall, and Kierkegaard devotes a fair amount of time to this problem, which though, I wish to omit, the reader is welcomed to consult *The Concept of Anxiety* for further clarification. But let us now turn to the concept of innocence, we listen to Kierkegaard:

Innocence is a quality, it is a *state* that may very well endure, and therefore the logical haste to have it sublated is meaningless... Innocence is not a perfection that one should wish to regain... Innocence is not an imperfection in which one cannot remain, for it is always sufficient unto itself... The narrative of Genesis also gives the correct explanation of innocence. Innocence is ignorance. It is by no means the pure being of the immediate, but it *is* ignorance. The fact that ignorance when viewed from without is regarded in the direction of knowledge is of no concern whatever to ignorance. (CA, 37)

Unlike immediacy which is directly defined by mediacy (as its dialectical opposite), innocence is "sufficient unto itself"; innocence does not signify a lack of being. This is why Kierkegaard says that innocence may "very well endure", because it is not intrinsically ordered toward self-surpassing. Innocence is the existence of a possibility, and *as such* is nothing. Recall that the transition from possibility to actuality comes by an *act of freedom*, not of necessity. So in the state of this naiveté, there is a possibility for self-surpassing, but this possibility might never be fulfilled, it is not necessary that it come by. Let us turn to the possibility itself that lies waiting to be actualised by an act of freedom.

Innocence, then, is (paradoxically) a *nothing that is a something*; it is a possibility of a possibility. The possibility is the possibility of knowledge of difference; but since this is an

ethical concept, this difference means the difference between my *self* and the other. Spirit, or the self, is implicit, but not yet posited as such; it floats within a certain potentiality to be. This is why innocence is ignorance, it is not aware that it can be a spirit. So this possibility that awaits actualisation is the possibility of a self, a self different from everyone else.

And let us make a quick return to Aristotle, in particular to our discussion that subject as the ground of change (that which persists throughout change: substance) will itself come into existence in kierkegaardian kinesis\movement. Of course the ground in our case will be the *spirit* or *subjectivity/awareness*. It will be the ground that is as yet only a possibility, or rather, in innocence there is the possibility of this possibility. Through the act of original sin, the spirit (as possibility) will be actualised.

But recall what was said at the beginning of this part concerning consciousness. The state of innocence is a state of ignorance, ignorance of something that, properly speaking comes after the fall. Innocence is unconsciousness of sin/guilt/responsibility. This would agree with the biblical reading of the fall. We are all born sinful, and we read in *The Sickness unto Death*, simply enough, that "Sin is ignorance" (*SUD*, 107). So the state of the unconscious innocence is that of sin already. Innocence is the lack of this knowledge, yet is something at the same time it is a possibility of this knowledge, or consciousness of... But the requirement for sin is that it be committed, and committed in freedom, unless this is held then the fall comes of necessity, and freedom makes no sense. The former would mean that innocence is a possibility for that which is not there (sin), and the latter a possibility of awareness of something that was already there (sin). Paradoxically enough it will be both. Innocence is a possibility of *defiance*, that is, the act of sin, *and* this very act of sin brings forth a consciousness of sin (as consciousness of a loss).

But let us return to *Sickness unto Death* one more time. At the beginning we read that spirit is a relation between psyche and the body, which relates to itself. What are we to make of this? In innocence the spirit is present, it is 'dreaming' as Kierkegaard puts it, because it does not yet relate to itself. What is 'dreaming' is the possibility of relating to itself, that is, of being conscious of itself *as such*. Now, there is something that continually disrupts the otherwise peaceful state, something that conditions the act of self-relation, something that forces spirit to emerge out of its dream. And of course, this is nothing other than *anxiety*.

1.5 Anxiety (before the prohibition)

It should be stated at the outset that anxiety will require two things. First, that the future not be determined; and secondly that there be, along with the unlimited factor, the limiting factor of *prohibition*. We will take these two in terms in 1.5 and 1.6. Yet these are not simply equal factors, for we will see how prohibition *intensifies* anxiety.

So to make this further step, we must introduce the concept of *anxiety*; “[t]hat anxiety makes its appearance is the pivot upon which everything turns” (CA, 43). We have seen that in order for kinesis to occur there must be a state of non-being (which nonetheless is a being of possibility) that falls prior to becoming. This state is innocence. By the introduction of *anxiety* we explain the eruption of sin “retrogressively in terms of its origin” (CA, 46). Innocence is ignorance; it might as well remain in this state if it were not for anxiety. Anxiety is a relation, but a relation to what? It is a relation to the *nothing* of innocence, and this nothing is precisely its possibility.

Anxiety, as we know from our own experience, is always a relation to *myself*; I am anxious about myself. In the case of innocence it is still a relation to myself, yet since I am *not yet* myself (only a possibility thereof), it is a relation to nothing. Here, anxiety has no particular object yet.

There is an important aspect of the possibility of possibility: it is in excess of any determinate telos. *This* is revealed through anxiety. We must keep in mind that ‘possibility’ here as elsewhere in this work signifies *freedom*. Hence we can read ‘possibility of possibility’ as ‘possibility of freedom’ or ‘freedom of freedom’.

Let us elaborate on this important aspect of anxiety. If the possibility was a *determinate* possibility (as it is in Aristotle, but this is not a polemic with him) then there would be no anxiety, since anxiety is precisely the experience of a lack of any determinate possibility. Say, for example and speaking very loosely, a seed has a determinate possibility to become a given species of a tree. Since the form as actuality is present in the possibility *necessarily*, so there is no question as to ‘what’ will become of this seed; the possibility is predetermined, there would be *no anxiety*. It is precisely because innocence is the possibility of possibility, that is, a possibility without any telos (form) that there is so to say only possibility of a possibility to come forth. But this will become apparent in a moment, for now,

it is important that anxiety arises because there is a lack of any predetermined possibility. Innocence is the state of possibility of possibility.

It must be kept in mind that the object of anxiety is nothing, and in this way it differs from fear. The latter has a definite object, say an angry dog which I see in the distance. Fear deters me from moving closer etc. Not so with anxiety, for it not only deters, but also attracts.

1.6 Anxiety (after the prohibition)

Let us now intensify anxiety and add the factor that will do precisely this: *prohibition*. Kierkegaard reads Bible with the eye of a psychologist. Anxiety that we found so far had absolutely no object, but once the word of prohibition is pronounced “the possibility of *being able* is present as a higher form of ignorance, as a higher expression of anxiety” (my emphasis, CA, 45). Now there is still no more knowledge of the difference between good and evil, but anxiety has a determinate something to hold on to.

Let us return to the narrative of the fall from Genesis. When God prohibited Adam from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam did not understand the word, for “how could he understand the difference between good and evil when this distinction would follow as a consequence of the enjoyment of the fruit?” (CA, 44).

The word of prohibition is pronounced. Adam might as well speak the language, but this does not mean that he understands what is said. We know only too well what this means; adults speak in irony, for example: “sure he is a good man”. The child strictly speaking understands these words, but takes them literally. So we say, they do not understand. Or conversely, when children say the most obscene things, everyone readily admits that they do not *know* what they are saying. And we must recall that the condition of Adam before the fall is the same as that of every subsequent individual.

So, the word of prohibition is pronounced; anxiety “caught its first prey” and instead of “nothing, it now has an enigmatic word” (CA, 44). It is through prohibition that the freedom's un-actualized possibility of a possibility first appears as an *actual possibility*. Innocence does not know what will happen when it disobeys\defies; of this it is ignorant. But anxiety now has a particular nothing (the word it does not understand) rather than a ‘global’ abysmal nothing of possibility of possibility.

Hence anxiety is the dizziness of freedom, which emerges when the spirit wants to posit the synthesis and freedom looks down into its own possibility, laying hold of finiteness to support itself. Freedom succumbs in this dizziness. Further than this, psychology cannot and will not go. In that very moment everything is changed, and freedom, when it again rises, sees that it is guilty. Between these two moments is the leap, which no science has explained and which no science can explain. (CA, 61)

Adam ate of the tree of knowledge; the child did what it was not to do. At this moment, everything is changed, a possibility was actualised. Now we can see what was the possibility dormant in innocence, it was the possibility to *act according to one's own freedom through the act of defiance*. Yet without prohibition, no such act could be accomplished. The first act, the act that actualises the spirit, the first movement, is the act of *sin*.

But we must delve deeper into this self-positing act of the spirit. We stated that the difference between Aristotle's and Kierkegaard's conception of kinesis is that for the latter the ground itself comes into existence, which for Aristotle is impossible since the form (as actuality) is prior to possibility. Hence the ground comes into existence through the act of sin, through the act of self-positing. Or in other words, the ground brings *itself* into existence; this is the same as saying that sin presupposes itself.

1.7 'Self-positing' through the act of defiance

Let us return to the last quote and repeat once more something of utmost importance, "Hence anxiety is the dizziness of freedom, which emerges when the spirit wants to posit the synthesis and freedom looks down into its own possibility, *laying hold of finiteness to support itself*" (my emphasis, CA, 61). Here we find a clue towards the solution of the question of self-positing. What does "laying hold of finiteness to support itself" mean?

Let us seek an answer in the text itself. "*For selfishness is precisely the particular*, and what this signifies only the single individual can know as the single individual, because when it is viewed under universal categories it may signify everything in such a way that it signifies

nothing at all" (my emphasis, *CA*, 77). So it seems that to lay hold of finiteness is to take a hold of something particular; and the selfish is the particular. How are we to read this?

In keeping with what has been said before, it means that 'I' can decide; it means relying on *myself* to decide to obey or not to obey the prohibition. It means positing myself as a standard of choice. But I decide in such a way that I take a hold of something quite arbitrary, in the sense that it is by no means *necessary*. There is naturally no necessity in me disobeying, this we took up earlier, in discussion about innocence. Since this decision is made in (radical) freedom, that is, in freedom without any precedent, it is made absolutely arbitrarily.

Let me repeat, the act that *changes all*, that makes me aware of my *will*, is based on something arbitrary. This is what Kierkegaard also means by stating that sin presupposes itself. The decision, the act of defiance or of preferring *one's own particular will* is ultimately based on itself.

But let us turn return once more to the discussion of necessity and possibility, in order to answer the question of how can something necessary come into existence from nothing, or radical freedom.

We see that in the state of innocence there is no necessity; innocence is a being of possibility (freedom), the unbound possibility overreaching any determinate telos. Innocence is a possibility of freedom. In the transition of becoming, freedom *posits itself as necessary*; a certain necessity comes into existence, or at least it appears as necessary to the self that posited itself. After the fall, one cannot *but* be free, freedom becomes a *necessity*. This is what is meant by actual freedom; from now, I am *necessarily* free, that is, necessarily *myself*.

So, in terms of possibility/necessity, we might put the latter in this way: the movement from innocence to guilt is the movement from possible freedom to necessary freedom. Or rather, the positing is the positing of freedom *as* necessary. After the fall, one cannot escape one's freedom; one is 'sentenced' to be free.

The unconscious act, the absolutely free leap of sin, turns out to be its opposite, an absolute necessity. It is enough now to state that by self-positing we understand the positing of one's freedom as necessary; and this is selfishness. It means the attempt to rule over the 'anarchic' freedom which caused anxiety and made one leap into sin. By 'rule over' we mean posit itself as a necessity in the face of absolute possibility; it is an attempt of defiance.

In turning to the aforementioned movement from unconsciousness to consciousness we might now be able to see more. In the state of innocence one is not conscious of possibility; innocence does not know what it means. In the first act of choice, in choosing to choose -and this happens only once in one's life- consciousness comes forth. What is consciousness? It is a relation. Husserl's conception of intentionality is analogical on this point. It states that consciousness is always an awareness of something, it is always *relational*. So here too, what arises is not some particular content, but simply an awareness of... But, paradoxically, the moment awareness arises it brings with itself an awareness of guilt, as a loss of innocence (as a lost object). Or it might be put this way, awareness is always already an awareness of *responsibility*. One always discovers oneself as an ethical subject, be this in relation to himself or to the other, since awareness always only relates.

Through the fall the self-consciousness posits itself as necessary, it is necessarily of 'this' particular existence. This once again reminds us of the aforementioned paradoxical nature of the fall. Through the unconscious act the self posits itself in complete freedom, but posits itself as necessary. On the one hand this act was free, and on the other it was necessary. After the fall, the character of an individual is decided *forever* by an act, keep this in mind, that the individual cannot recall, since 'he' was not there.

But ultimately, the subject is based on something arbitrary; hence the fact that positing oneself as necessary is a misunderstanding, ignorance, sin. Freedom takes hold of something that came by chance, and it takes a hold of this with all its strength. Yet, it is only ever grounded in itself. If the ground (the spirit) comes into existence with the act of sin, then it is *indistinguishable* from it. So spirit like "sin presupposes itself... it comes into the world in such a way that by the fact that it is, it is presupposed. Thus sin comes into the world as the sudden, i.e., by a leap; but this leap also posits the quality, and since the quality is posited, the leap in that very moment is turned into the quality and is presupposed by the quality and the quality by the leap" (CA, 32).

Positing of sin, as actualisation of a possibility, is a positing of consciousness of sin. Although it is crucial to understand that innocence, as such, only comes into existence when lost. Hence to speak of innocence is always to speak of something lost, one was never there to experience it. Innocence exists only for the guilty one. And finally this is what is meant when

we said that *innocence is a nothing*, it is the nothing that came *before* consciousness; or rather, innocence is the unexplainable 'hole' in the middle of being, but more on this later.

1.8 In closing

In closing of this part, let us return briefly to the following warning, "Further than this, psychology cannot and will not go. In that very moment everything is changed, and freedom, when it again rises, sees that it is guilty. Between these two moments is the leap, which no science has explained and which no science can explain" (CA, 61). We can speak of innocence and anxiety as presuppositions of the consciousness of responsibility, or of *spirit* itself, but we can *never* describe the qualitative change that occurs in becoming responsible. Recall what we said at the beginning; Kierkegaard is the thinker of the singular, of the individual. He speaks from the point of view of actually existing person, who *himself* has committed the act of defiance. The qualitative change, the act must be done or lived, and not described. Kierkegaard leaves this question open, exactly in order to open a space for the reader's own particularity or singularity.

Or to cite Kierkegaard one more time: "For selfishness is precisely the particular, and *what this signifies only the single individual can know as the single individual*, because when it is viewed under universal categories it may signify everything in such a way that it signifies nothing at all" (my emphasis, CA, 77)

But, can we none the less attempt an illustration despite this warning? Is it impossible to illustrate without describing. Even if Kierkegaard would disagree, let us sketch out what such a defiance could possibly look like. The purpose is to show, as I believe contra the popular belief, that the act of defiance does not necessarily have to be something *traumatic*. Imagine a child of about seven or eight years. Every child knows not to swear, since they believe they will be punished. Now, the child has no desire to curse outwardly he would get punished by elders, and saying it outwardly in front of no one is the same as to say it inwardly. Now let us imagine this child does it, he swears in his mind while the elders are around. Nothing happens, no punishment. But now the child *sees* something; perhaps he tells himself, "here, I can do *anything I want*". We can see the *becoming aware* of the child of something he was not aware of before, that is, becoming aware of his inwardness, of its

secrecy. And is there no punishment? Perhaps it lies the fact that now *there is no way back*. The child cannot again look away from his inwardness, there is this secret accounting. But, this is only a sketch, and should be treated with reservations; nonetheless it has some value.

So, we have observed the work of two concepts, those of innocence and anxiety. We see that in order to feel responsible for one's existence there must be a presupposition of a state prior to this responsibility. Denial of this state results in denial of ethics; how can I be responsible for myself, if there was not a time when I was not responsible. That is, if I was always responsible, then I might as well never have been responsible.

Next, the movement from innocence to guilt also presupposes the concept of anxiety. Anxiety is the relation to the *overabundance* of freedom; it is the experience of uncertainty in the face of the future. It is important to note that anxiety is not eradicated with the act of sin; it persists, so in this sense the 'concept' is more than just a concept, it is a part of every individual's existence. Simply put, I am worried of what I might become or do, and this is anxiety. In the next part we shall turn our attention to the *spirit* as that which results from the qualitative movement.

2 The ethical

Let us recapitulate. The transition from innocence to responsibility/guilt brings forth a subject, and this transition is an act of free will. The subject, the spirit, then, must bring itself into existence (in freedom). It is a ground which brings itself into existence. Here, in Part 2, we shall be concerned with analysis of an existing (conscious) individual, an individual after the leap of sin.

We now turn to this subject itself, that is, to the question “what am I”? This part takes for its aim to *heighten the contradictory* character of this subject, and is mostly informed by *The Sickness unto Death*. Why contradictory? It is one thing to say that the subject brings itself into existence; it becomes truly contradictory the moment we claim that this subject is *eternal*. It strikes us immediately. How can something eternal come into existence in time? Is it not the very definition of the eternal that it precisely *not come into existence*? And it is the author's wish that this part ends with this contradiction in full view. But before we get there, we must make sure we show that indeed the spirit *is* eternal; we have (I hope) already seen that it comes into existence in time.

But we are concerned with *movement*, and we are not changing topic, since contradiction requires a resolution, and a resolution of a contradiction *is* movement. But more on this later, let us begin.

2.1 Spirit, self, the relation relating to itself

It is clear by now that all our discussions center on the *self*. There is an essential difference between Plato or Descartes on the one hand and Kierkegaard on the other. For the latter, the self is a *part* of a human being. What is important on this view is to determine which part is truly me, and then repress the other part.

For example in Plato, man is made up of three parts: the rational part, the spirit and the body. Only the rational part partakes of the eternal Ideas, hence it is the one that deserves to rule all the other parts. In other words, all the other parts are *subordinate* to it. What I *really* am, the real me, is the rational part.

It goes similarly for Descartes. I can doubt everything, even that I have a body. What I cannot doubt is the act of doubting itself, and doubting is thinking. I cannot think that I am not thinking; this is the only certainty I have, and hence the famous *cogito ergo sum*. The body assumes a position of a radical other to the cogito, something wholly separated from the mind. Though even he has great difficulties distinguishing how exactly the body acts on the mind and the mind acts on the body. But this much is clear: what I really am is a thinking thing, *not* my body. Hence an individual is made up of *parts* once again. And once again, one is to live at the advantage of the other.

The first step, then, will be to begin by critique of this conception. We read, "A human being is a *synthesis* of the infinite and the finite, of temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity. In short a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two terms. Looked at in this way a human is not yet a self" (my emphasis, *SUD*, 9).

There is an essential difference between saying that a human is made up of parts, and that man is a synthesis. In the latter the two factors are *equal*; the factors complement each other. What is more, they are inseparable since without the other the synthesis would not make sense. So here we have the first step; a human being is not two separable parts where one can separate itself from the other, a human is a synthesis. This is quite intuitive. Imagine pointing at a coffee with cream in it and saying, "this is coffee and this is cream" while pointing at the same thing. That is, we *know* there are *two* things, but they are indistinguishable from one another. Perhaps we can *think* about them as separate, but cannot actually separate them. This example is rather vulgar, but illustrates what is aimed at.

Further, we read that "looked at in this way, a human is not yet a self". Perhaps we can backtrack here briefly. Does this not remind one of the state of innocence? Indeed in innocence one is a human being, that is, a relation or synthesis, but is not yet posited *as such*. In the qualitative leap of sin the relation looks back at itself, and establishes itself. Through this act of redoubling the spirit comes into existence.

And if we say "looked at in this way, a human is not yet a self", we sense that, according to Kierkegaard, neither Plato (and the whole pre-Christian tradition for that matter) nor Descartes had the right conception of a self. This is a very serious charge indeed, and we shall return to this charge a little later.

So, moving on, we read, "The self is a relation which relates to itself, or that in the relation which is its relating to itself. The self is not the relation but the relation's relating to itself" (*SUD*, 9). Now, to experience *myself* is precisely to *relate* to myself. In order to relate to myself a certain 'gap' is required between this synthesis/relation and the relation relating to itself. The synthesis itself is, properly speaking, never an object of experience, as was shown in the previous part. Experience of this synthesis arises precisely at the moment it disappears. What disappears is the 'harmonious' relation between the two factors; the moment there occurs a brake in this 'harmony' is the moment the subject arises and the 'harmony' functions as a lost object. Innocence, in any way, also signifies a lack of struggle. How interesting, to note, that spirit arises the moment things go 'badly'.

But, reading on, "In a relation between two things the relation is the third term in the form of a *negative unity*, and the two relate to the relation, and in the relation to that relation; this is what it is from the point of view of soul for soul and body to be in relation. If, on the other hand, the relation relates to itself, then this relation is the *positive third*, and this is the self" (my emphasis, *SUD*, 9).

When we spoke about Plato and Descartes we spoke of the *negative unity*. Consider Descartes. I am *not* my body; the cogito is whatever the body *is not*. Or we can reverse this order, and say that what I am is the body, and the soul is an imaginary construct that is simply a negation of the body, that is, the soul is whatever the body *is not*. Here the unity is negative because body and soul are together, because they are opposites. The unity then is a negative one. But what does it mean for the unity to be positive? In the first place it would imply that I am *both* the body and the soul, hence the unity forms one positive 'being' which relates to itself in turn, and this *relating* (as activity\becoming) is the spirit or the self.

2.2 Despair

"Despair is the imbalance in a relation of synthesis, in a relation which relates to itself" (*SUD*, 12). Despair, like anxiety discloses something to us. Despair is classified by Kierkegaard as falling into two categories, of *wanting* and *not wanting* to be oneself. Both of these signify to us a certain discomfort, a discomfort of *being oneself*. But what is the origin of this discomfort? It is a certain inability to be someone else.

It was said in the previous part that after the fall the one cannot help feeling responsible, one is 'sentenced' to be responsible, but again, responsible for what? For oneself. An absolutely free unconscious act results in awareness of having a self. Awareness is the spirit, and spirit is the relation relating to itself. Since one cannot help but be aware of himself, the same can be said about relating to itself. Yet it must always be kept in mind that at the same instant the spirit comes to existence is the very same instant despair comes into existence; the mode of being of spirit *is* despair.

In relating to itself, the self can take a stand on itself. And hence to either want or not want to be itself. Yet, as Kierkegaard says, both forms of despair can be collapsed into each other. Consider not wanting to be oneself; why does one not want to be oneself? because he wants to be a *different* self. Yet, on the other hand, to want to be oneself is also a form of not wanting to be oneself; in order to be oneself, one must first discard the self he is, so that he may have a new one. In short, despair is the hopeless feeling of 'being stuck' with this *particular\singular* self. Once again, we see how Kierkegaard is concerned with the single individual, not the individual in general. Despair, then, is a mode of relation to oneself, hence all the talk of relation relating to itself.

But now Kierkegaard does something rather amazing in introducing *death* into the picture. He reverses the ordinary notion whereby I feel that death will finally release me, that it will be the *end* of me. Ordinarily we tend to think that it is a sign of weakness to wish for afterlife, to hope to survive death itself. Now the reversal consists in this: it is weakness to hope that death will be the end, "the torment of despair is precisely the inability to die... the hopelessness is that even the last hope, death, is gone" (*SUD*, 15).

Where does Kierkegaard take these strong words? We must admit that no one (except for Christ) ever came back from the dead to tell us that either we are or that we are not going to die. We saw already at several instances Kierkegaard 'existential' scepticism. Again, *no one can die for me*. The case is the same as with the loss of innocence; no one can commit the sin for me. Hence *for all I know* I will live forever, or to state it more mildly but none the less essentially: I am *forever* myself, that much is certain. Now imagine the terror this thought should inspire in us; but does it? Is it not simply the case that Kierkegaard and several other individuals feel this way about themselves, but the majority of us are rather satisfied with ourselves? Imagine being yourself forever, if anything is hell, this is it.

“The common view of despair...altogether overlooks that the very fact of not being in despair, of not being conscious of being in despair, is itself a form of despair” (*SUD*, 22). It will be the task of the following pages to clarify this point. Here we will also find the movement we are looking for. For there will be a movement from unconsciousness of one's state being that of despair into consciousness thereof; following this there will be a further *intensification* of this consciousness. Consciousness is *always in a continual state of becoming*, this must be held firmly; it is the continual self-relating, which amounts to the same thing as the latter.

Of course, here a warning must be made. This is not the same ‘becoming conscious’ as in the previous part; no, here we already have an individual, a self *which* is not conscious of being a self. “Granted, when raised to the level of a concept all despair is conscious, but it does not follow that the person who is in despair, the one who according to the concept may be said to despair, is himself conscious of it. Thus consciousness is the decisive factor” (*SUD*, 30). Where in innocence there is no self or consciousness, so at the level of a concept there is no consciousness without despair. But to paraphrase what was cited, it does not follow that the despair is conscious of itself as such.

Furthermore, stating the problem this way opens up a possibility of the aforementioned *becoming*; in the present case it is the becoming conscious of one's state as a state of despair. “It is the rising level of consciousness, or the degree to which it rises, that is the continual intensification of despair: the more consciousness the more intense the despair” (*SUD*, 47). So we shall observe this rising degree of intensity of the self.

2.3 Unconsciousness of despair in relation to possibility\ necessity

It might be hypothesised that this particular despair is the despair of pre-Christian people, that is, pagans. For it is the standard reading of the Christian dogma that one's acts *in this life* have eternal character. That is, one's acts in temporal world decide whether one will be eternally blessed in heaven or eternally condemned in hell. So Kierkegaard, being an uncompromisingly Christian author, bases all his thought in this idea. Since pre-Christian pagans had no way of ‘knowing’ this, they can be ‘excused’. They had no way of knowing. Under the rubric *The despair which is not conscious of being despair or the despairing*

ignorance of having a self and an eternal self, Kierkegaard states: “The pagan lacked the spirit’s definition of a self...[but, even though] paganism lacks spirit it is pointed in the direction of spirit, while paganism in Christendom lacks spirit in the opposite direction, away from it or in a defection, and is therefore in the strictest sense spiritlessness” (*SUD*, 53-54).

In the state of unconsciousness of despair, one is similarly not conscious of being a spirit. If spirit is the relation relating to itself, and this relation is not conscious\awake we are immediately pointed in the direction of the synthesis only. A human being in this state is only conscious of himself as a relation between body and spirit, or as we shall look at them, necessity and possibility.

There are essentially two ways of *losing* one’s self. Since if one remains in this state of unconsciousness (of having a self), one only gets further and further away from it. So what we will describe are more or less two ways of losing a self, instead of winning it.

We mentioned earlier that to see oneself only as a whole consisting of parts tends to lead to the one part completely taking over the other. Recall Descartes, what I really am... So too here, on the one hand we have possibility taking over necessity and vice versa. There are two ways to lose a self, but they have the same result.

When one exists in a way that “possibility outstrips necessity, the self runs away from itself in possibility so that it has no necessity to return to... Here the self becomes an abstract possibility; it exhausts itself floundering about in possibility, yet it never moves from where it is nor gets anywhere, for necessity is just that ‘where’... Becoming is a movement *from* some place, but becoming oneself is a movement *at that place*” (emphasis original, *SUD*, 39).

To be sure, there is a soul. But self that we defined as a relation relating to itself is not quite present. One exists in such a way that, what he *really* is, is a possibility and no necessity applies to him then the self dissipates until he “ finally becomes nothing but an atmospheric illusion” (*SUD*, 40).

How would we portray this kind of existence? It would perhaps be someone who is not willing to obey. We can imagine a person goes through life, they may even be successful in the public eye, yet they are at every moment captured by a new possibility, without ever consulting actuality. This is an individual who may become anything, for whom everything is possible. Yet we know that if everything is true, then nothing is really true. And this goes for our individual, everything has become possible, and at the same time all has become

impossible. The point is that it now makes no difference whether one exists as a pure possibility or pure necessity. And this is the reason this existence never amounts to much, precisely because *it does not make a difference*. It does not make *itself* a difference.

But we shall turn to the other extreme, to the one who lacks possibility and exists in such a way that everything is necessary. This will help us in two ways; first we shall see that this 'self' is no different from the latter, and secondly we shall see that this kind of despair is most prevalent in society. In terms of *imagination*, the former has a fantastic imagination, the following will have *no* imagination.

Here we may offer examples which are perhaps more concrete. One becomes necessary to the point that he becomes *inhuman*. What is important is 'the others'. We can imagine people so immersed in the global affairs and the welfare of humanity that they gain an inhuman sentiment. What drives them to madness is the injustice around the world, yet injustice they perpetrate on others goes unnoticed by them. What is important is that the person himself has become *unimportant*. What is important is all of humanity. But ask this individual, "what about you? Where do you fit in with this grand scheme of things?" And soon we find out that they must admit that they occupy a very lowly place.

What is important to notice is that even though these two tendencies move in opposite directions, one towards absolute possibility and the other towards absolute necessity they share the same fate. The fate they share is becoming *nothing*. One flies off into possibility and becomes impossible, the other is tied down to necessity and becomes nothing but a variant of a human, no more no less. They both make no *difference*. But of course, we speak of making a difference *of themselves*. So when either would be asked, 'what are you?' the first would answer 'anyone' (which is really no one) and the other would be forced to give the same answer. They are essentially the same. It must be kept in mind that a spirit (which *is* difference) is the relation relating to itself. Here, there is simply nothing to relate to.

Before we move onto the next level of intensification of the self, let us mention a wonderful analogy that is found at various places of the *Sickness unto Death* (i.e. p. 43, 45). This is the analogy with *breathing*. Suppose that possibility is the act of inhaling, and conversely necessity is exhaling. The one is unthinkable without the other. The person who flies off in possibility wants only inhale, for possibility is an expanding factor; conversely the

one who has become necessary is stifled, since he cannot inhale, since necessity is the confining factor.

Moreover, what has been described can also be labelled the *aesthetic*, even though we will see that aesthetic will appear again as demonic. But if you will, this is the aesthetic at its most primitive. The essential feature, though, that all aesthetic will share is the *inability of movement*. If we take contradiction as a condition of movement, where the outcome of this contradiction is a *resolution* then the aesthetic is inherently incapable of resolution. The aesthetic wants the impossible, once again, it wants to be possible without the necessary. And the aesthetic can be quite inventive.

To illustrate the aesthetic deadlock let us use another example, that of decaffeinated coffee. What is it? It is a coffee without caffeine of course. But then, you are *not really* drinking coffee, are you? What is important is that this example illustrates what happens when one wants possibility\necessity without its uncomfortable side-effect, and ends up *not really* living. So, the aesthetic 'makes believe' that it lives, but is the opposite, and we will see later on when we discuss the aesthetic again that this fact will remain the same even with more self-conscious form of aestheticism. Now we shall move on and discuss despair under the aspect of consciousness.

2.4 In despair not wanting to be oneself

Whereas the spiritlessness described above does not even know that there is a self, now we introduce this knowledge into it. But what is this knowledge? Simply put, it is the knowledge that one is eternal, but eternal in such a way that one's acts in time have a temporal character. So to put it differently, this knowledge is the knowledge of Christian dogma.

But can we show immortality of the soul without recourse to the Christian dogma? Can we point in the direction of eternity simply from the point of view an existing individual? And it is *despair* that shows us this way. Despair, as an imbalance in the relation's relating to itself, shows us that I cannot (ever) be another. Conversely, I am myself *forever*. Despair is the expression of the inability of being someone else; despair is the consequence of *wanting* to

be someone else, or of not wanting to be oneself. And it is the lowest form of despair, that of wanting to be someone else that we shall turn our attention to now.

2.4.1 Despair over the earthly or over something earthly

This despair is the most prominent in Kierkegaard's and perhaps even more in our own society. It is marked by *certainty*, a certainty of the immediate. But spirit must be at the forefront of our thoughts. So, the question is, *how* does immediacy relate to itself? "[T]he self coheres immediately with the Other- desiring, craving, enjoying, etc., yet passively; even in its craving this self is in the dative case, as the child's 'me'" (*SUD*, 60).

The following discussions are partly informed by the reading of *The Present Age*. So the relation is the certainty of the Other, and insofar as the Other is certain, then I am certain. What is 'the Other'? It is an *abstract* entity; it is humanity *in general*. So that in search of identity, the most important fact is this: what is *everyone* else? Or, in search for desire, it is this: what does everyone else want? This is where the certainty of the spiritless person comes from. But here the spirit disappears precisely because the universal is the possible, and in turn identifying with the possible makes one possible. We see that so far, there is no spirit, one relates to oneself as the Other; in other words, one relates to oneself *abstractly*, and this is extremely important.

I think an appropriate way to illustrate this point is to look at our obsession with the *normal*. There is a certain *standard* of a normal human being. And, we are all measured against it. If you are not sure about yourself, consult this standard. It is the obsession of our age to be normal, that is, to be universal. The normal is the Other; it is the universal, and as such it is abstract.

And the latter does in no way go against the fact that we are 'forced' to be *unique*, indeed it is normal to want to be unique. But again, one is to be unique in a normal way, but what does this amount to? It amounts to imbecilic statements of the sort, "be unique, and be like us". Kierkegaard calls this the *leveling*. It is the supreme purpose of leveling that people become *replaceable*, so that after all, anyone can be like me.

But what is at the root of this desire to be normal and replaceable? It is to be rid of the responsibility to be oneself; yet this responsibility is *unavoidable*. As we saw in the loss of

innocence, after the fall one cannot help but relate to himself. And in turn this desire to avoid responsibility for oneself betrays the *despair of not wanting to be oneself*. We see that in the leveling process one 'displaces' the responsibility for oneself unto the *abstract Other*. So, there is no despair, and the 'normal' are right in saying that they are not in despair, but it is also worth reciting that " ...the more consciousness the more intense the despair" (*SUD*, 47).

This is why Kierkegaard calls petit-bourgeois spiritlessness, or unconsciousness of having a self. But this view is not elitist; Kierkegaard is in no case saying that most of the people have no self, that they are simple numerical repetition of the same. The choice, or the possibility, is there for *everyone*. Let mention this wonderful parable:

If one were to imagine a house consisting of basement, ground floor and first floor, tenanted or planned in such a way that there is, or is meant to be, a difference of social class between the occupants of each floor- and if now we were to compare being a human being with such a house, then the sorry and ludicrous fact with most people is, alas, that in their own house they prefer to live in the basement... Moreover, he not only prefers living in the basement- no, he loves it so much that he is indignant if anyone suggests he occupy the fine suite lying vacant for him; after all he *is* living in his own house! (*SUD*, 49).

But of course, no life is lived in this blissful ignorance, and sooner or later something happens, despair comes from the outside. But it must be kept in mind that despair *always* comes from the person as an *action*. But since our present self is a passive self, everything comes to it from the outside, its identity as well as its despair. So what could be the despair? It is *over the earthly or over something earthly*. It despairs precisely when the earthly *fails*.

The supreme imperative of the Other is: 'enjoy your life!' Suppose that someone dreams of nothing more than moving to a rich country, because he lives in a poor one. He despairs because the source of his despair is his present country of residence which does not give him the opportunity to *enjoy* his life. We see that here, the source of despair is clearly outside the person; and the person is the passive recipient of despair. Now, grant him this wish, let him move and see what happens. To his amazement, he sooner or later finds out that *he* is the same miserable person he was before moved. Or, say someone has trouble finding a

sex partner, and dreams of becoming a powerful man so that once there, his dream will surely be fulfilled; grant him that wish, and make him powerful. To his amazement, he is the same, still having problems with the opposite sex. This is the source of trauma for the immediate person.

Or, consider a third instance, and one that is broader in scope. In our time, we are of course 'forced' to enjoy, hence the aforementioned imperative. And it is particularly telling that when asked "what am I to do in this life" the answer always seems to be "enjoy it". But enjoy what and how? We see that the answer is: 'enjoy the earthly'. And here we run up against a difficulty of *unattainability* of this kind of enjoyment. The person thinks, "everyone is enjoying, but me. Why can't I enjoy life too?" The case seems to be the same for both, those who are denied this apparent enjoyment, and those who are granted it. On the one hand, the one who never received it despairs because *it* is what would have made him happy (that is, stop despairing); on the other hand, the one who receives it, does not recognize himself in it, that is, he cannot assume the role of the one who enjoys, and why? Because he is still *himself*, the enjoyment did not succeed in getting rid of his self, which was really what it was all about. This is why this despair is the despair of not wanting to be oneself.

But it is not necessary, as might seem from the latter illustration that the desire be fulfilled for the person to come to grief about the earthly. I only used it to portray it the more strongly our case at hand; one can easily imagine a person who never got to have the earthly desires satisfied, but nonetheless desired them all along to suddenly realise that they are impossible to fulfill.

And here we see a *change*, a *transition*, a *movement*. All of the latter consist of a certain *realisation*. The failure to achieve (or fully assume) the earthly enjoyment discloses one's self to himself. There is this self which I cannot get rid of. Something opens up on the horizon of the one who despairs over the earthly, and this is the *self*, and now the qualitative change occurs, he starts to *reflect* on himself. He realises that there is something in him which he is to be *forever*. And it is this thought that makes him despair. So we see that in the former case the despair came from the outside, it was a 'jolt' that hit him, as in the case of the one who fled his country in search of another self. But now despair does not require this outside stimulus, or to cite Anti-Climacus: "The progress compared with pure immediacy becomes apparent immediately in the fact that the despair does not always come about through some

jolt, through something happening, but can be brought on by the very reflection it contains in itself, so that, when it occurs, the despair is not mere passivity in the face of, and a succumbing to, the outside world, but is to some extent self-activity, an action" (*SUD*, 64).

2.4.2 Despair of the eternal or over oneself

Here we perceive the movement from aesthetic to the ethical. "Now this despair is a significant step forward. If the former despair was despair in *weakness*, then this is: *despair over one's weakness*" (emphasis original, *SUD*, 73). Why weakness? Consider this: it takes *strength* to be oneself, to face oneself and embrace oneself. The prior state was the state of weakness that was not *aware* of itself *as* weakness; now, in turn, the weakness becomes conscious of itself, and it despairs over itself. Or to quote Anti-Climacus again, "the previous form has weakness's own consciousness as its final form of consciousness; whereas in this case consciousness does not stop here, but heightens itself into a new consciousness, namely consciousness *of* its weakness" (emphasis original, *SUD*, 74). And we see here, as we saw before in Part 1 that movement consists in *becoming conscious* or *aware*. Here we have a qualitative change. One is not 'more or less', one is different.

It must, of course, we must keep in mind that "in spiritual terms the human being does not arrive over the years and as a matter of course at anything" (*SUD*, 70). As was stressed in the fall, so it should be stressed here: the qualitative leap is done in freedom; one chooses to become aware of his condition. I say this because the reader might assume that what was said relates to one becoming an *adult*; one *of course* realises that enjoyment is not really what life is all about, that there is something *more* to life. But this is not so, it is not necessary that one embrace the ethical. Simply enough, consider the masses of people who sustain the illusion that youth was the time of real enjoyment, whereas now (as adults) they find that life is joyless. The point is precisely that they have not moved anywhere; they are so to say grieving children. But to come back to our discussion, we continue.

But, we must interpret the meaning of "despair of the eternal or over oneself". There is a certain contradiction at play here, we read, "he despairs over himself, that he could have been so weak as to attach such great significance to the earthly, and this now becomes his despairing expression for having lost the eternal and himself" (*SUD*, 74). We said that by

becoming conscious of having a self, there appears something on the horizon, and now we say that what appears is something lost? Can we say this: I am forever not myself?

If we recall that, in the fall from innocence, what was desired was to decide according to one's will, to *be* oneself. Yet in this very act the immediate self disappeared, and the consciousness is only ever consciousness of the loss. Innocence comes into view as a lost object. Can we say the same here? That is, in recognizing that one is *forever* oneself, one in that very act *loses* this eternal self? And further, the eternal self comes into view only as something lost? In that case, what is the difference between innocence in Part 1 and the immediacy in Part 2?

The difference is that the aesthetic *wants* to be innocence. Innocence is the state of genuine lack of consciousness of the self, of the responsibility for oneself. The aesthetic is the state of the *denial* of responsibility for oneself. In turn, the ethical is the *acceptance* of the responsibility for oneself, forever. But oddly enough, this acceptance carries with it the *loss* of the eternal and oneself.

The moment of destruction expresses eternity; what is destroyed\lost once is lost forever. Innocence that is lost once is lost forever. Now, what is lost in the movement from the aesthetic to the ethical? What is lost must be a possibility, just as innocence was a possibility. The aesthetic was the possibility, that is why such an individual related to himself as the universal human being, the Other. Can we then say that the loss here is the loss of the Other? That one, so to speak, falls from the grace of the Other, forever being denied the possibility of being another in the Other? If we assume that the immediate person was characterised by his *certainty* as to his identity, then what indeed is this *certainty* that is lost; what is lost is a possibility of relating to oneself abstractly. The opposite of certainty is doubt, and despair is doubt. In becoming aware of the eternal in oneself, one loses certainty in oneself. Once again, despair is the imbalance in the relation's relating to itself. In the aesthetic this imbalance was not aware of itself as such, it had certainty. In becoming aware of oneself, one becomes aware of one's state as being one of despair. One becomes aware of the imbalance in relating to himself. One can never again be oneself. One's self is lost.

What happens after this loss? One becomes *reserved*. This term is central to the definition of despair over oneself. What does *being reserved* mean?

First of all, we read, “[reserve] is the direct opposite of immediacy and has great contempt for the latter” (*SUD*, 76). But, since immediacy was the existence in the Other, the existence where the mass of humanity takes place, does this mean a *flight* from the normal and average? Does the reserved person flee from reality into madness or seclusion? *Outwardly* he is the same; to all appearances he is like anyone else, but inwardly it is a different story. The intensification of consciousness, that is, intensification of despair results in an *opening* of a certain ‘space’ or plane. To all appearance he is like anyone else, but he *hides* something, he keeps something *secret*. The secret is his (lost) self. What a splendid paradox! In relating to oneself *concretely* one relates to oneself uncertainly.

To be sure we might say he dissociates himself, but not outwardly, but inwardly. And it is this flight from others that takes place only inwardly. This is why reserve makes no sense to immediacy, and is intolerable to it. Immediacy cannot *imagine* reserve. Immediacy places a demand on disclosure; your *feelings* are *useless*, even more so if they cannot be communicated. Communication requires the universal, that is, language. But language requires that at least two people share the same feelings. And this is the problem; inwardness cannot be communicated in this way. The medium of immediacy is the universal, immediate cannot live beyond it.

In this connection we can call reserve a certain *indeterminacy*, and show what we mean by opposing it to immediacy. The immediate people “who spiritually speaking have come about as far as the child in its first stage of early childhood, where it lets everything out with such totally endearing unembarrassment- only purely immediate people can’t keep anything back” (*SUD*, 76). This takes us back to our discussion of the *certainty* of immediacy. The immediate immediately knows whether it is happy, despairing, innocent or guilty; and this knowledge is certain. This is why indeterminacy is an alternative way to call reserve; reserve opens up a *space of indeterminacy*. I am aware that the word ‘indeterminacy’ is borrowed from Henry Bergson, to whom the present author is indebted greatly. So, what is gained is a *moment*, for in the moment everything is to be decided. We see that for immediacy there is no moment, for all that is to come *has already been*. This follows from the fact that it exists in the universal, the universal is precisely that which has been. It is ‘that which has been’ to put it simply, because it precedes the individual, much like language precedes any particular language user.

And, it follows that this indeterminacy is precisely inwardness; but, indeterminacy is doubt. When taken existentially, we can say that immediacy has existential certainty and this was shown. On the other hand, indeterminacy has existential doubt, but what is existential doubt? It is *despair*. Inwardness is awareness of despair, awareness of indeterminacy. This is why immediacy has, strictly speaking, no possibility. At best it has probability.

But there is a contradiction, we speak of heightening of consciousness as something *good*, yet what it brings about is precisely the opposite, at least from the point of view of the immediate; despair is definitely not good. Despair is suffering. And this is as it should be. Because through *suffering* a new *possibility* opens up, a possibility which was not there for the immediate or the spiritless. It is the possibility of *salvation*. And this is precisely the moment to turn to *faith*, which is the opposite of despair. Or, “instead of now definitely turning away from despair in the direction of faith, humbling himself before God under his weakness, he engrosses himself further in despair and despairs over his weakness” (*SUD*, 74). But before we turn to faith, we must discuss the other kind of authentic despair, *the despair of wanting in despair to be oneself*. We read:

“such a relation, which relates to itself, a self, must either have established itself or been established by something else. If the relation which relates to itself has been established by something else, then of course the relation is the third term, but then this relation, the third term, is a relation which relates in turn to that which has established the whole relation... If the human self were self-established, there would only be a question of one form: not wanting to be itself, wanting to be rid of itself. There could be no question of wanting in despair to be oneself. For this latter formula is the expression of the relation's (the self's) total dependence, the expression of the fact that the self cannot by itself arrive at or remain in equilibrium and rest, but only, in relating to itself, by relating to that which has established the whole relation” (*SUD*, 10).

2.5 Despair of wanting in despair to be oneself- defiance

This is intriguing; we read that *if* the relation was self-established, there could only be despair of not wanting to be oneself. Furthermore, the fact that one can in despair want to be oneself discloses to us that there is a 'total dependence', but a dependence on what? It is the dependence on that which has established the whole relation. So, first, *how* is this dependence manifested?

The decisive thing is this: "But if, dialectically, just one single further step is taken, then the person who despairs in this way comes to the consciousness of why he does not want to be himself" (*SUD*, 81). Let us make sense of this claim. The one who despairs over himself despairs because he realizes there is something eternal in him; he is forever responsible for himself. To be sure, the question here is not of 'not wanting to be a self', this was the standpoint of spiritless immediacy. The question is, rather, one of 'not wanting to be *himself*', of not wanting to be *this* particular self. And, as cited, let this despairer come to consciousness of why he does not want to be this particular self, because he wants to be a self that he wants to be; this sounds tautological, like blue is blue, but it is not. The former despair is of not wanting to be oneself, now the despair is of *wanting* to be oneself. But in order to be oneself, one must first get rid of the self one *is* and then get a new one. So the person realises that it is not that he does not want to be himself, but that he *wants* to be a self that he *chooses*. The despair is precisely the *impossibility* of this.

This, then, discloses to us the aforementioned 'dependence'; the self is dependent on something *else* for its being. The self is a relation relating to itself. Through the fall the relation becomes conscious of itself, but only as a *misrelating*, as a *loss* of relation, and this is despair. But once again, we read, "if the relation which relates to itself has been established by something else, then of course the relation is the third term, but then this relation, the third term, is a relation which relates in turn to that which has established the whole relation..." (*SUD*, 10).

Can we venture an interpretation, and say this much? The relation relating to itself, the spirit or consciousness, only ever relates to itself as 'lost'. We saw in the previous part, exactly this, innocence comes into existence at the moment it is lost; yet this loss 'structures' the consciousness. It structures it in the sense that it gives *meaning* to it; or in other words, it

is the loss of meaning that propels the need to have a meaning. To have a meaning, in our present context would mean to *be itself*.

And now I believe we are getting the first glimpse of why the wanting in despair to be oneself discloses a 'total dependence'. Innocence, or the original relation, the state *before* consciousness is something *one cannot give to oneself*. And pushing further, and recalling the name of the book under discussion here, it is *death* that one cannot give to oneself. With the loss of innocence, sure enough, death comes as a punishment. But is not death similar in the following respect to loss of innocence, that it is *chosen*? If we assume that there was something before consciousness, that certain *unconsciousness*, then we must also assume something *after* consciousness. Since innocence, as a lost object 'structures' one's life, then death does the same. And death involves the same paradox as the fall; one chose death freely (as a consequence of defiance) but death is not something one chooses; obviously enough one cannot choose to die or not to die. In terms of the fall, one chose to relate to oneself, to be a spirit, yet no one can choose not to be a spirit. And, after all, it is the *being spirit*, and being in despair that one cannot give to oneself, or as we read in elsewhere, "live well, then, you the unhappiest one! But what am I saying, the unhappiest, I ought to say the happiest, for this indeed is a gift of fortune that no one can give to themselves" (*E\o*, 220).

If the relation was self-established, it would mean one was conscious of oneself *before* one was conscious oneself, or that the relation related to itself before it related to itself. Now, if one was a spirit before one was a spirit, then one was *always* a spirit. And if everything is true, it might as well all be false, that is, if one was always a spirit, then one might as well never have been a spirit, it makes no difference. One must have, clearly, come into existence, and this requires coming into existence from the state of non-existence. This is why the relation is not self-established, because it cannot give itself the state of non-existence.

But now, what does it mean to say, "this relation, the third term, is a relation which relates in turn to that which has established the whole relation..." (*SUD*, 10). Relating to oneself is equivalent to 'taking a stance', to being conscious of X in a certain way. Therefore, to relate to that which established the relation is to relate to the Absolute. But as Adam was cast from the Garden of Eden where he lived with God, so too with the individual spirit which 'falls' from the relation with the Absolute. The relation to that which established the relation is just as lost as the relation to oneself. That is why there is the essential *uncertainty* about

God's existence in one's life. But, again, uncertainty is doubt and doubt is despair; and we see that there is an intimate relation between relating to oneself and to that which has established this self, that is, God. How one will relate to oneself depends on how one relates to the Absolute or the eternal, and vice versa. This must be kept in mind.

But let us briefly turn, again, to the despair of wanting in despair to be oneself or *defiance*. "But just because it is despair by means of the eternal, it is in one sense very close to the truth. And just because it is very close to the truth, it is infinitely far away... In order to want in despair to be oneself, there must be consciousness of an infinite self. However, this infinite self is really only the most abstract possibility of the self. And it is this self the despairer wants to be, severing the self from any relation to the power which has established it, or severing it from the conception that there is such a power" (*SUD*, 82).

An exemplary case of such an individual is, of course the character A from *Either\Or*, to whom we will turn very shortly. But, first of all, we notice that the 'theory of the stages' is not as straightforward as is usually assumed. Here we have an aesthetic relation to existence. But we also called the above mentioned spiritlessness aesthetic. But the latter we called the despair of not wanting to be oneself, and this one we call the despair of wanting in despair to be oneself. Yet they share a certain feature. And this is the *failure to accept responsibility*. The despair over the earthly, or the despair of not wanting to be oneself consisted in placing one's self in the hands of the Other; the Other is what I am. This constitutes a sort of 'return' to innocence, the unwillingness to accept that one is oneself forever and that his actions in the temporal world have an eternal character.

On the contrary, above quoted character A knows very well that he is himself, and that this cannot be otherwise. "However, this infinite self is really only the most abstract possibility of the self. And it is this self the despairer wants to be, severing the self from any relation to the power which has established it, or severing it from the conception that there is such a power" (*SUD*, 82). Such a reflective aesthetic existence places *itself* in the place of eternity. And the papers of A, which constitute the first part of *Either\or* are a sort of guide on how to live this way. To quote him: "I am constantly *aeterno modo*... the true eternity lies not behind the either\or but ahead of it... I have only one principle, which is not even my starting-point... For if I started from my principle, I would be unable to stop again; if I didn't stop, I

would regret it; if I stopped, I would also regret it, etc. Since I never start, however, I can always stop, for my eternal starting is my eternal stopping" (*E\o*, 54-55).

Recall now Part 1 about the fall. The state of innocence was the state before the either/or (the decision); it was the state prior to the leap of sin, or simply the decision. And it is precisely this state that such an aesthete wishes to be in. But he realises only too well that this is the impossibility, hence his frequent fits of melancholy, and passionate confessions of the sort, "My melancholy is the most faithful mistress I have known; what wonder, then, that I love her in return" (*E\o*, 44). But despite the depression, A none the less refuses to acknowledge eternity; he want to be in its place. But all that can be achieved by this, is a self that is an abstract possibility. This was indeed also the case with spiritless immediacy; by becoming identical to the Other, it only became an abstract possibility, a man in general. But in A we observe a will to *make himself*, surely he is not willing to identify with the Other. But the only way one can make oneself in this way is to make 'one step back', that is, to place oneself *before* the decision. This is why we read that the key is to stop before beginning and begin before stopping. And key here is *reflection*. A thinks himself to death. One is to think up all the possibilities, yet never get close enough to them to actually *realise* any of them. In this way, he has become many things, and yet nothing at all.

In terms of movement, such an aesthetic existence denies it. Either/or, as the principle of contradiction is the condition, the very essence of movement. The aesthete of the calibre of A *knows* he denies it, but lives *as if* he did not. So, indeed he exists, but existence is actuality, and actuality is the synthesis of possibility and necessity. Necessity is the *action*, the limiting factor, and this he lacks. Therefore he is a self, but a minimal one. A lives without living.

And we read, "just because [defiance] is very close to the truth, it is infinitely far away" (*SUD*, 82). Because an individual can either go in the direction of A, and lose his self, or he can turn to faith and win himself. And, faith is this: "in relating to itself and in *wanting to be itself*, the self is grounded transparently in the power that established it" (*SUD*, 11). We saw that as long as we speak of the human condition without any reference to God we speak of despair. Despair is the state of an existing individual; despair as imbalance is a contradiction. At once I am responsible for the way I relate to myself, yet it was never my choice to choose this condition. I am at once temporal and eternal. But there is a *promise of salvation*. Salvation in the case of an actually existing individual would be precisely the

eradication of despair. Salvation is the promise of happiness, a happiness which is not achievable without *transcendence*. So we say, as long as one does not have faith, one is in despair. So the starting point of Part 3 is an individual who *expresses* this contradiction to its fullest, who despairs to the maximum, and therefore has the most consciousness of being a spirit, that is, self-consciousness. The contradiction is: *that something eternal had a beginning in time*.

As we saw through our discussion of Aristotelian κίνησις, movement requires a passing from possibility to actuality, so here we have observed the same movement. The aesthetic individual relates to himself *as* a possibility; the aesthetic self is an abstract self and as such is a possibility. Recall that the ethical is the actual, and it is in this sense that movement occurred. What is amazing, though, is that the abstract was characterised by *certainty*, so the movement is opposite to what would be expected. What is expected is that actuality be certainty, but we saw that the ethical is the experience of despair, and despair is *uncertainty* or indeterminacy. In the next Part we will observe a similar movement, but this time in relation to “that which has established the relation”, which is eternity, or God.

3 The religious

A quick recapitulation is in place. In Part 1, we saw that consciousness is always already an ethical consciousness, and that it has a beginning in time which is self established through a free act of defiance. In Part 2 we observed an intensification of consciousness through gradual self-awareness of one's self. But it turned out that a self is caught in a deadlock, since the more it wants to be itself the more it realises the impossibility thereof. So, Part 2 ended in a self which realises that there is something in it over which it has no control, i.e. the eternal. This is why the current part begins with a *failure*.

This failure concerns the ethical. The ethical requirement is that one take *full responsibility* for one's self. In the language of *Sickness unto Death*, this means that the relation in relating to itself wants to be itself. We saw in Part 1 that there is *something* prior to consciousness, to relating, which cannot be integrated into it; there is something the relation cannot relate to, in particular its innocence, yet there is a *requirement* that it does; "the ethical [is] the sphere of requirement (and this requirement is so infinite that the individual always goes bankrupt)" (SLW, 476). Hence it is impossible to assume one's self. And this is the state of the existing individual.

But along with the aesthetic and the ethical stages there is the *religious* stage of existence, or, relating to one's self *religiously*. Part 2 dealt with existence without reference to God, there the self only had a human self as its standard of measurement. It related itself to the Other, but this Other was always a human other. The ethical does not suspend the (human) Other though, it only opens up a 'space' between itself and the Other. In other words, it does not relate to it immanently as does the aesthetic.

In introducing God as the Other we step beyond the ethical. One cannot chose to be ethical (and here is the paradox again since one always already does), but can only *deny* the ethical as in the case of the aesthetic. The aesthetic is already ethical, it just does not want to know that it is; it does not want to be a self. The idea of God can only take place truly in the one who exists ethically, why? For the aesthetic, God is the Other (in the sense used in Part 2), in the sense of the many so that God is imminent. In this sense, there is nothing *beyond* the presence. A good candidate for an illustration here is, of course, Hegel. At its most basic, (and there is no place for more than that here), God is us and we are God. Collectively we 'make up' God; indeed

again, we are Him. God is reason; He is neither below nor above it. Now God is indeed the *all*, that is, the all of being; He is the absolute being. Hence we arrive at the *identity* of thought and being, or reason and being. Since reason is immanent, then God Himself is immanent.

The Hegelian system, and the aforementioned Other of the masses are essentially the same. They both either deny the 'unintepretable' eternity or else try to place themselves in its stead. And furthermore, they both posit the *supremacy* of the many over the individual. If just enough of us believe it, it is true. So that if all of us believed in God, then indeed He would exist, but we don't so He probably does not.

So, first of all, the idea of God can only find its proper place within the ethical. For the conception of God to have minimal meaning at all, the other must distance oneself from the Other of the many. But is not God the very name for the Other, the absolute other?

The ethical *relativises* the Other as the many, and *only* here can the conception of God as the Other take a hold. The Other of the many is a human Other, it is the 'others'; God is the Other but in a sense of singularity. The former is a *collection* and therefore an abstraction and opposite of the singular. God, on the other hand is the Other as a singular other.

Here we see what presupposition we are making; we are assuming that our ethical individual has a conception not just of any deity, but of a monotheistic one. So as was said earlier, one cannot choose the ethical, but here we enter into a sphere of a *choice*. But this choice is eerily similar to the choice involved in the *fall*, why? Simply enough, *there is no proof of God's existence*, and therefore the choice of faith is *blind*, just as the leap of sin was blind. Here we again see why the idea of a God cannot take a hold in the aesthetic. For the aesthetic looks to the others and asks "should I believe? What are the chances? Etc" No, the choice to believe in God is blind, no amount of proof or disproof can do anything.

So in this part we are not proving the existence of God, indeed we do not even attempt such a thing. Here we talk about an individual who chooses to believe. We discuss what the implications are for the one who has made this choice.

It is crucial that one more aspect be discussed before we begin with the next discussion. The choice to believe is not something one does, and then it is done with forever. Remember, this is an ethical individual making the choice, ethical is the sphere primarily of *acting* not of thinking. The choice must be *acted out*, in other words, it must be lived. Belief is an act, not a knowledge, so that now that I know God exists I can go on as before. What changes in this act

must be the very *being* of the one who believes. And since *relating* is being, and relating is never finished (as far as the individual lives), so being a believer is never finished, or it is finished in death, but where I am death is not, and where death is I am not as the Epicurean motto goes. Death is not and cannot be an object of experience for me. But, let us carry on.

3.1 The ethical-religious, Religiousness A

Existence is a *task*; the task is becoming oneself, and the being of oneself is becoming. The ethical individual in becoming religious gains the idea of eternal happiness, he must relate to it in a certain way. In becoming ethical-religious, one relates to the aesthetic Other only relatively, but relatively to the absolute Other, God. Here we are getting the first glimpse of the narrative of Abraham, and what Kierkegaard calls the 'suspension of the ethical'. In terms of *happiness* (and that is what we are seeking), we formulate the task so: "if to him an eternal happiness is his highest good, this means that in his acting the finite elements are once and for all reduced to what must be surrendered in relation to the eternal happiness" (*CUP*, 391).

The task is a surrender of all finite for the sake of the eternal, and this is *resignation*. Resignation springs from the acceptance of eternity, of afterlife. Afterlife or eternal happiness is the *highest*, it is the *absolute* τέλος [telos]. The discussion of Aristotle in Part 1 becomes useful now again. The form is 'that for the sake of which' all else happens; form is the absolute telos. Yet, keeping in mind the similarity, we must also keep in mind the difference. The absolute telos for Kierkegaard is always a possibility, and not a necessity. In other words, one is not going to enter eternal happiness necessarily (eventually), eternal happiness is something that is made. But the important fact is that something in the *future* acts on something that is happening now, at this very instant. In this sense the individual cannot have eternity, yet it is what he strives for, and in this life can only ever strive for. The individual and his absolute telos are related in the way that "they cannot have each other in time" (*CUP*, 397). The result is resignation to everything worldly in order to focus all one's consciousness on the eternal. But, again, what guarantees the eternal? Nothing; it must be believed, and believing is doing.

But is not resignation simply an abandonment of life? Does one stop living and eating? No. Resignation as a task signifies: "Simultaneously to Relate Oneself Absolutely to One's Absolute τέλος and Relatively to Relative Ends" (*CUP*, 387). Here we immediately see that the

finite is not forsaken in Kierkegaard's thought. Later on we read, "[resignation] does not necessarily mean that the existing person becomes indifferent to the finite... An adult may very well join in children's play with total interest, may be the one who really makes the game lively, but he still does not play as a child. The person who understands it as his task to practice the absolute distinction relates himself to the finite in the same way" (*CUP*, 413).

Resignation requires the aforementioned "practice of the absolute distinction", the distinction between temporal happiness and eternal happiness, or even between man and God. But how does one know if he relates *absolutely* to the absolute? This would mean that resignation requires a certain *totality*, and it does. We read, "if there is something [one is] not willing to give up for its sake, then [one is] not relating [himself] to an eternal happiness" (*CUP*, 393). So, in resignation there is absolutely nothing that an individual would not be willing to give up for *their* God and eternal happiness. Of course, Abraham is an exemplary illustration of faith, and the resignation that it entails. Abraham was a loving father; he took care of his worldly possessions. But once the demand is made by God that he sacrifice Isaac, Isaac must be sacrificed. The fact that at the end Abraham does not kill him is of no importance to us, the *decision* was made.

But a word is necessary at this point on the 'suspension of the ethical' to remove unnecessary ambiguities. There are two ways in which Kierkegaard uses the term 'ethical'. First is the use that was made of most in this work, that is, ethical as the acceptance of responsibility for oneself, and ultimately the total acceptance of oneself as responsible (even though this is impossible, and hence the paradox of the ethical). The second use of the term is found in *Fear and Trembling*, from which the famous 'suspension of the ethical' comes from. Ethical in this sense refers to the ethical substance, *sitlichkeit*, or what we referred to as the (human) Other, or even Reason. So, 'suspension of the ethical' does not refer to suspension of one's responsibility for oneself; Abraham's decision is fully his. The suspension refers to the making-relative-of the Other, of the worldly or of Reason. We find throughout Kierkegaard's writing complaints to the effect that our age has made-absolute Reason and the Other, and God has become the servant of the latter, so that one says for example that not even God can change the rules of logic. Now similarly, not even God can make a murderer of his child into a holy man. This is suspension of the ethical in our present sense, and also perhaps of resignation, it is the subjugation of the 'relative' absolute (ethics, the Other) to the 'absolute' absolute, that is, God.

We now turn to *suffering* which is a corollary to resignation. If we recall the discussion of despair we will be able to grasp this correlation. Despair of wanting in despair to be oneself showed us the *inability* of being the self one wants to be. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* we read, “the action of inwardness is suffering, because the individual is unable to transform himself” (CUP, 432-3). Despair is suffering, and if despair is the condition of existence, then suffering is the condition of existence as well. The point is not that, in resignation one abandon's one's self, but precisely that one *cannot* abandon oneself.

The contradiction appears once again. Total resignation means dying totally to the finite, yet finite is all one has, so to say. In a strict sense, eternal happiness is something one does not have, or cannot have, in this life. So resignation is once again an impossibility, one is weak in the sense that he cannot totally resign to the world. This is suffering; one must suffer *oneself* as an *imperfect* being. “[T]he individual is capable of doing nothing himself but is nothing before God, because here again the relationship with God is distinguishable by the negative, and self-annihilation [not merely self-transformation] is the essential form the relationship with God” (CUP, 461).

The contradiction is unbearable, one wants to be oneself (eternally) yet the way to achieve this goal is to make oneself nothing, to sacrifice oneself. It seems one is caught like a mouse in a trap. The mouse is left to repetitively shake and stir in trying to get out, but cannot. The religious individual realises all too well that he is *nothing* compared to God, yet he cannot even be this nothing; he must suffer\resign until the end of days. We read, “He is forever imprisoned, buckled in the harness of guilt, and never gets out of the harness, unlike a beast of burden, from which at least at times the working harness is removed... not even at night is he essentially out of the harness” (CUP, 533).

3.2 Guilt as the decisive expression of existential pathos

We now turn to the *decisive* expression of existential pathos, to *guilt*. We have talked before about guilt in terms of responsibility, and we saw in Part 1 that one is wholly responsible for oneself (being responsible). Of course guilt here does not refer to any particular guilt, but to the very possibility of guilt. In terms of responsibility, it does not refer to this or that responsibility, but responsibility for *oneself*. The decisive existential pathos is guilt, because the

thought that one is caught like a mouse- forever hopelessly making the same gesture- is *one's own fault* and it inspires something in us.

Let us delve deeper into guilt as totality-category. We saw that resignation must be total, and so with suffering. What happened is that we coupled the ethical individual, one willing to be himself with the idea of God, or what goes hand in hand with the idea of God: eternal happiness. Eternal happiness takes the place of the *absolute* happiness for the individual, and all relative forms of happiness are subjected to it. "The totality of guilt comes into existence for the individual by joining his guilt, be it just one, be it utterly trivial, together with the relation to an eternal happiness" (*CUP*, 529).

First, we are of course reminded of the loss of innocence. Recall that the act of defiance takes a hold of something trivial, something non-essential. The act of defiance is based on something random, and *unnecessary*. This is why it was an act of freedom. But the moment this trivial act is committed it attains an all-important character, *because* it is joined "together with the relation to an eternal happiness". It is a random act that gains an eternal character. Now, it is crucial to keep in mind that this act *is not an object of memory*. The moment one became self-conscious is itself not an object of consciousness, yet it structures consciousness.

Kierkegaard has an expression for the structuring of consciousness by a lost object (here eternal happiness); he calls it the 'eternal recollecting of guilt'. This is not a simple 'memory'. Of course, recollection is most recognizably a Platonic term, ἀνάμνησις [anamnesis]. So let us very briefly state what Kierkegaard is alluding to in his concept. First, the Forms (as the universal) predate any particular form. The Form is the original to all subsequent forms. In terms of names, for example, many things have the same name, but none of them is The Name. Yet all particular names depend on it; in other words, there would be no meaning or λόγος (which is both, meaning and the word). In recollecting I come to know not the forms directly, for they are never an object of experience, but indirectly. All I need to do is look around me, and find in nature uniformity, a structuring principle, but this structuring principle is always-already withdrawn into transcendence.

What can we, then, say about the eternal recollection of guilt? It has the same character. To be sure, we have names for particular instances of guilt, but we have no access to the 'original' guilt. The aesthetic mode of relating to existence sees only particular instance of relation between this guilt and that guilt; so that once it is guilty, and at other time it is not. This

would be analogous to opinion in Platonic teaching, it too is sometimes right and sometimes wrong, depending on circumstances. The ethical individual sees that to be responsible once in a while for one's existence, is to be *essentially* responsible for one's existence; to be guilty in particular instances is to be essentially guilty. Yet the original guilt alludes him, and this is why he recollects it. Like Plato placed the Form in the beyond, so the ethical individual places the original guilt, the original sin in the beyond. And as the Forms structure everything in the universe, so the original guilt structures everything in one's life.

This is of course a source of suffering; that which is me, essentially me, is forever withdrawn from me. And again we run up against the paradox, what is essentially me is the most hidden from me. The original guilt acts from beyond on me, but not in the way that I can turn away from it. Recall the beast of burden and the harness of guilt; there we read, "call this eternal recollecting of guilt a harness and say of the prisoner: He will never be unharnessed" (*CUP*, 533).

Let us state it again. One come *into relation* with eternal happiness the moment this relation becomes a *misrelation*. "In the religious sphere, the positive is distinguished by the negative; the relation to an eternal happiness is distinguished by suffering" (*CUP*, 532). And concerning the relation, we read, "the existing person cannot get a firm hold of the relation because the misrelation continually places itself in between as the expression for the relation" (*CUP*, 531).

The expression of relation to eternal happiness is the eternal recollection of guilt. In Part 2 we considered the individual as a relation relating to itself; in the present Part we considered the individual as a relation relating to itself which in turn relates to that which has established it, that is, God. But something important emerges; it is the fact that this relation (as was the case with relation to oneself as despair) is a *misrelation*. So it seems appropriate to say, perhaps, that spirit is a misrelation relating to itself, and in relating to itself misrelates to that which has established it. And this is crucial. The subject or spirit functions precisely because things 'go badly'; we might liken this to a short circuit. But as in short circuit the electricity stops flowing, here so to say, it *starts* flowing. "Thus, the essential consciousness of guilt is the greatest possible immersion in existence, and it also expresses that an existing person relates himself to an eternal happiness, expresses the relation by expressing the misrelation" (*CUP*, 531).

But there is one more thing we need to look at before we proceed, how are we to read the following: "...the essential consciousness of guilt is the greatest possible immersion in existence..."? What is existence again? From the aesthetic point of view existence is enjoyment, so that one who does not enjoy does not exist, at least does not exist fully. On the other hand, existence was said to be always already ethical, that is, *concerned*. If existence is a concern, and not an enjoyment, then absolute concern for the absolute (that is, for eternal happiness) is the greatest immersion in existence.

This is the most an ethical-religious individual can do. But has not a certain repetition occurred? In *Either/Or*, A the aesthete writes, "If you hang yourself, you will regret it; if you do not hang yourself, you will regret it; if you hang yourself or you do not hang yourself, you will regret both; whether you hang yourself or you do not hang yourself, you will regret both. This, gentlemen, is the sum of all practical wisdom" (*E*\o, 54). How do we distinguish between the aesthetic and the ethical-religious now? It seems at first that this view is eerily similar to the aforementioned resignation, so that we say, "either I do this (in time) or I do that (in time) I will forever regret it".

Let us take the 'essential consciousness of guilt' as our distinguishing factor, so that the aesthete A does not have it and the ethical-religious does have it. What does this mean? To regret is to be *aware*. The point of the aesthetic was *not to become aware*, that is, not to regret. This, as was shown in the previous part is done by placing oneself in eternity, of usurping eternity, of existing *eterno modo*. But regret is, after all, inevitable. So the aesthetic would be a denial of regret's inevitability, and the ethical-religious embracing of it. What is important is the *relation* to regret. This is also why we can say that the ethical-religious is the greatest immersion in existence. If existence is awareness\consciousness, and regret is awareness, then the greatest regret is the greatest immersion in existence. On the other hand, we can say that based on this, the aesthetic is non-existence.

What both have in common, though, is that they are both contradictions, albeit different ones. The aesthetic wants to avoid awareness of guilt, it actively denies it, yet this very denial is an impossibility; the aesthetic is contradictory. The ethical-religious wants to assume itself, assume guilt fully, but this is equally impossible. The latter is due to the fact that the original sin is not and cannot be an object of awareness. The ethical-religious self is a self that eternally regrets, without a possibility of being otherwise. And this is all because the misrelation is

something *eternal that came into existence in time*. I have intentionally held back discussion of *Christianity* until now, for it will be precisely *Christianity* that will be a further *intensification* of consciousness.

3.3 The paradoxical-religious, Christianity, Religiousness B

This is the last section of this work, and as such I hope it will bring the whole work together in a certain climax. Let us then, before we begin start with a brief recapitulation once again. Part 2 was concerned with relation to oneself, Part 3 is clearly concerned with the relation between oneself and that which has established oneself; call it eternity or God.

It might seem that the central concept of movement got lost in progress of this work, but it was present throughout. Contradiction is the condition of movement; there must be a state of not-being for the state of being to come to pass. It turned out that insofar as despair as misrelation it is a contradiction, it is the very condition of the existing individual. The being of an individual is becoming.

Hence, here is the progress. In terms of relation to oneself, we saw that in aesthetic relating to existence there is no contradiction, or if there is a contradiction it always comes from the outside. That there is no consciousness of contradiction means that there is no consciousness of despair, for despair is a contradiction. In relating to oneself aesthetically, one relates to oneself *abstractly*. In becoming ethical the individual realises that his very relation to himself is that of despair, that he *is* the misrelation. Since despair is a contradiction, then becoming aware of oneself as a contradiction means to relate to oneself *concretely*, and this is the ethical.

And here we arrive at a very startling claim. Concerning now the relation of the individual to that which has established him, the eternal, this dialectic repeats. When discussing the ethical-religious, we indeed have a self-aware individual, but an individual who relates to God *abstractly*. The heightening of self-awareness then will require *relating to God concretely*. So first we shall try and understand why ethical-religious is an abstract relation to God, and then in turn, why in Christianity as paradox-religion an individual relates himself to God concretely. And we shall see certain parallels between, on the one hand, the aesthetic and ethical-religious and ethical and paradoxical-religious on the other, as was hinted at a little above.

So, let us begin, "For speculation, existence has vanished and only pure being is; for Religiousness A, only the actuality of existence is, and yet the eternal is continually hidden by it and in hiddenness is present... the positive becomes distinguishable by the negative" (*CUP*, 571).

Perhaps we can begin with this observation: the fact that God is totally absent is the positive feature. But totally absent from where? from *time* and *existence*. But how and why is this an immanence\abstraction? God is present everywhere *because* he is present nowhere at all. This is the clue towards the solution of our question. There is no *contradiction*, not an existential one in any case. We said there might be a parallel between the aesthetic (speculation) and ethical-religious, and the lack of contradiction in the act of relating is this parallel.

Once again, in relating to oneself aesthetically one relates to oneself as an Other. The Other was a *humanity in general*. Now, what is the nature of this Other? It is precisely that it is everywhere and nowhere, that it is *at once* everything and nothing. The aesthetic as the existence in the Other was for this reason abstract, for in identification with the Other, one also became both\and. One was *disinterested* in oneself. And as we saw, the more interest one took in oneself the more he became a contradiction to himself. What is essential is that the aesthetic *cancels* this contradiction. How would we translate this into ethical-religious? Indeed, in relation to himself the ethical-religious individual is infinitely interested in himself, but can we say he is *not interested in God*? By 'not-interested' we of course mean that the individual *knows* he is nothing compared to God, that he is totally-guilty before God, but since God is an abstract entity (like pure being of the speculative, which is nothing at all because it is everything), one cannot assume a concrete (interested) relation to Him. Or is God, rather, not interested in one? Since one is in time, and God is eternity and then there is a clear distinction.

The condition of speculation\thought is that it be abstract, clearly enough, there is no concrete thought. "Religiousness A, which is not speculation but nevertheless is speculative, reflects upon [the distinction between 'here' (as existence) and 'hereafter' (as eternity)] by reflecting upon existing, but even the decisive category of guilt-consciousness is still within immanence" (*CUP*, 570). Of course one cannot think eternity; this was the precise failure of the aesthetic, because it wanted to think what cannot be thought. The ethical-religious knows that it cannot think the eternal, what it can do is to think about existence and speculate that God is whatever is not existence.

We saw in Part 2 that it was precisely *uncertainty* that made the concrete relating to oneself possible. It appears now that in relating abstractly to God there is no uncertainty, one knows that he does not know God. There is no indeterminacy between existence and eternity. It would then follow that there can be no concrete relating, since God cannot enter time, this would be a paradox so total that it concerns *all* of existence. We can see how reason (as abstraction) is safely secured; in turn this implies that there is no contradiction in relation to God, no *concrete* relation to him.

Recall the discussions of *resignation* and *suffering* where the task was the practice of absolute distinction between time and eternity (but there referred to as individual and his eternal happiness): “The person who understands it as his task to practice the absolute distinction [between time and eternity] relates himself to the finite in the same way” (*CUP*, 413). The individual and his eternal happiness “cannot have each other in time” (*CUP*, 397).

Since the distinction between eternal happiness (God, eternity) and an individual (existence, time) is *absolute*, reason at least has certainty in this respect. We saw, and will see that the condition of faith is precisely uncertainty, and the greater the uncertainty the greater the possibility for faith. And we are now turning to what Kierkegaard call the *absolute paradox*, which should give us a glimpse at the scope of the upcoming uncertainty.

3.4 Paradoxical-religious as a concrete relation to God

Christianity teaches that God, the eternal, was born in time; this is well known. “A human being according to his possibility is eternal and becomes conscious of this in time: this is the contradiction within immanence. But that the by-nature eternal comes into existence in time, is born, grows up, and dies is a break with all thinking” (*CUP*, 579). And further we read, “The *paradoxical-religious* breaks with immanence and makes existing the absolute contradiction not within immanence but in opposition to immanence. There is no immanent underlying kinship between the temporal and the eternal, because the eternal itself has entered into time and wants to establish kinship there” (*CUP*, 573).

What constitutes this break with all representational relating to God is the “[expectation of] an Eternal Happiness in Time through a Relation to Something Else in Time” (*CUP*, 570). What this “something else in time” is, is of course the historical figure of Jesus Christ. So let us

look at the difficulty with *historical knowledge*; “it holds true of all historical learning and knowledge that even at its maximum it is only an approximation” (*CUP*, 574). Historical knowledge is inherently only a *representation*. Even if we knew everything about the life and actions of Jesus Christ, the smallest detail, we could never know if he indeed *was* God. This of course is the issue we have been dealing with all along, the issue of *actuality*, as opposed to representation\abstraction\knowledge. The contradiction is that I can only experience *my own* (ethical) actuality, not somebody else's, this would amount to me being them. Hence not even Christ's contemporaries, seeing him perform miracles, could be experience Christ's actuality. Hence, historical knowledge can only ever give me the ‘what’, not the ‘how’ of Jesus. The leap of sin meant becoming conscious of oneself, the leap of faith means becoming conscious of the other, namely Christ. Christianity “is a totally unique sphere, which, paradoxically from the esthetic and the metaphysical points of view, accentuates actuality [the concrete actuality of the existing self] and, paradoxically from the ethical point of view, accentuates the actuality of another person [Christ as God in time], not one's own” (*CUP*, 580).

Furthermore, to *expect* eternal happiness *in* time is another issue; expecting eternity in time is impossible. Just like God entering time, so also expecting eternity in time is a paradox; it is a paradox that concerns *all* of existence. Let us rephrase the above quote, “to expect the impossible through a relation to something impossible”. But impossible for whom? for thought, for representation. Representation falls apart at this point, simply enough, we cannot even remotely comprehend what it means for eternity to enter time. This *uncertainty* concerns all of existence, not just my particular one that I am something eternal that came into existence in time.

The difference between the two paradoxes is clear, I am something eternal that came into existence in time because I was *created* by the eternal and placed *in* time. On the other hand we have the monstrous paradox that the eternity *itself* (against its nature) came into being in time.

Here is something interesting. We base faith (belief *against* any representation\reason) on a representation as the historical approximation. This is mind blowing to say the least. Are we using reason against itself perhaps? What is even more, a representation that we sacrificed in Religiousness A through *resignation*? The ethical-religious was a sacrifice of the worldly, now in Christianity we are to base our *eternal* happiness on the worldly? “Temporality, finitude- that is what it is all about” (*FT*, 49). Christianity promises redemption in *this* life, but precisely this is the impossible. “But to be able to lose one's understanding and along with it everything finite,

for which it is the stockbroker, and then to win the very same finitude again by virtue of the absurd- this appals me..." (FT, 36). The absolute paradox concerns less a logic than existence, "The paradox is connected essentially with being a human being" (CUP, 566). For God, everything is possible. God's incarnation is the ultimate expression for the latter. God has made *himself* a contradiction; he has made *himself* human.

Let us return to the fact that faith, as described here, is a *defiance of reason*, an *offence*; "offence is the Christian protection against all speculative philosophy. In what, then, do we find the possibility of offence here? In the fact that a person should have the reality of his being, as a *particular* human being, directly before God, and accordingly, again, and by the same token, that man's sin should be of concern to God" (SUD, 101). It appears, then, that what I win back is *my* temporality. The offence does not necessarily lie in believing the absurd, but in its implication. God made himself temporal *for me*, as he did for everyone else; "for this person's sake, for the sake of this very person too, God comes to the world, lets himself be born, suffers, dies... Every person who does not have the humble courage to dare to believe this is offended" (SUD, 104).

In paradoxical-religious faith I believe in *myself* first of all. There is offence toward myself; who am I to stand *directly* before God on an equal footing? Secondly the offence concerns others; who are *you* to stand directly before God, what makes *you* so special?

Christianity offends, period. But we said that to have a concrete relation to God, one must believe that God made himself human; one must believe in a historical person. But to believe is to go beyond *offence*. For it is offence that is the relation of reason to Christianity, it offends reason totally. If to have faith is *not to be offended*, it is also a "crucifixion of understanding" (CUP, 564). But why? "Recall that the forgiveness of sin is the paradoxical satisfaction by virtue of the absurd" (CUP, 538).

Faith in Christianity is a *defiance of reason as such*. Let us return to Part 1, to the fall. Recall that innocence was not reflection, it was ignorance, or unconsciousness of having a self. Hence the act of *defiance* was done not by reflecting beforehand, it was a blind leap. The leap of faith here articulated seems to be related to the leap of sin. What the two have in common is the blindness, the radical *uncertainty*. The leap of sin was made in ignorance, and the leap of faith is done against all understanding, hence in also in absolute ignorance. Indeed we often hear so called atheists complain about Christian's ignorance, for example, "how can they ignore reality so much?"

We said that to relate to oneself *concretely* was to relate to oneself as a paradox, now to relate to God concretely we also have to relate to *Him* as a paradox. To relate to oneself concretely was to accept indeterminacy within oneself. It was also said that due precisely to indeterminacy we gain the *moment* in which everything is to be decided, the moment is the undetermined. In Ethical-religious, as in the aesthetic, the moment is missing. Hence by the leap of faith we open this very same space again in our relation to God, where our relation to Him is uncertain. Remember that we are dealing with a person who is a believer *already*. We are dealing with an individual who moves from the ethical-religious to the paradoxical-religious. For the former there was no indeterminacy in his relation to God; God is eternity and I am in time, eternity is not time. God is, so to say, safely hidden behind everything and not even He could enter time. We saw in the aesthetic *certainty* that I knew myself, so here similarly we *know* God negatively (because we cannot ever know him); God is whatever is not existence. To relate to God concretely is precisely to relate to Him as *temporal*, or reading again, Christianity “is a totally unique sphere, which... paradoxically from the ethical point of view, accentuates the actuality of another person [Christ as God in time], not one's own” (*CUP*, 580).

But what does this amount to? We read continually that the ethical is the actual, it is the singular. Now, in turn, the ethical implies indeterminacy, the moment. Now, in reading “[Christianity] accentuates the actuality of another person” do we imply that God Himself is *indeterminate*? This would mean that at the moment of indeterminacy God Himself is undecided? We are accepting God's actuality after all. This is what it would mean to say that God made himself like me; He came down from eternity to time, “and wants to establish kinship there” (*CUP*, 573).

Christianity is not an eradication of uncertainty, on the reverse, it is the *heightening* of uncertainty; Christianity is an absolute uncertainty. You thought you did not know God? Well now not even God knows Himself. We hear Christ's cry on the cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me” (Matthew 27:46). And this is what he has done for *you*, and only for you. This once again brings us back to the offence. It offends me immediately to speak of God in this way; and if God is not insane it should offend Him too. But, on the other hand, this *is* what the New Testament teaches. Here, all thinking falls apart and what this means only a single individual can decide. As you relate to yourself, so you relate to God. It is one thing to relate to oneself as something eternal that came into being in time, it is a whole other issue to relate to

God as something that came into existence in time. "A human being according to his possibility is eternal and becomes conscious of this in time: this is the contradiction within immanence. But that the by-nature eternal comes into existence in time, is born, grows up, and dies is a break with all thinking" (*CUP*, 579) Once again, what this means, only the single individual can decide; how *you* decide *in time* makes all the difference. One's decision (leap of faith) gains an absolute importance.

3.5 Conclusion

In terms of movement, the movement from innocence to guilt was a movement from non-being to being (ethical actuality); it was a movement from possibility to actuality. But the ethical again in turn became the state of non-being, since one *cannot assume* oneself, one cannot be oneself; because there is always the unaccountable-for 'kernel' within oneself, what is more in oneself than in oneself. The leap of faith is the movement from non-being into being again. Since one emerged *different* from the leap of sin, one similarly emerges *different* from the leap of faith, one 'wins' his self. One does so by accepting that God has made a decision *in time*. We saw that time was made unimportant in ethical-religious; this is how you win yourself, because time is now all-important.

The point is this, *after* Christianity, *everything* is different. This is why Christianity is an absolute paradox, it changes *everything*. Since everyone is guilty, the *only* way to become forgiven is to become a Christian. But of course, and once again, to become a Christian is nothing that is done once and for all. Since to believe is to act, then Christianity must be first and foremost *lived*.

In ending, let me make a closing remark. It is quite popular to see Kierkegaard as a relativist, since there is *no certainty* in existence of anything, and we saw a rising in the uncertainty that paralleled the rising of consciousness. But indeed Kierkegaard is not a relativist, suffice it to say that the only way to counter despair and uncertainty is Christianity, period. So it turn out that Kierkegaard is rather absolutist; there is only one proper way. But he is absolutist while still remaining a thinker of the *singular*, of the actual existing human being. Since Christ is the only truth, but a truth that relates to everyone *singularly*. He is the absolute which relates to the singular.

Bibliography

ARISTOTLE. 1995. *Selections*. Indianapolis: Hackett

KIERKEGAARD, S. 1992. *Either\or A Fragment of Life*. London: Penguin

KIERKEGAARD, S. 1983. *Kierkegaard's Writings, VI: Fear and Trembling; Repetition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

KIERKEGAARD, S. 1985. *Kierkegaard's Writings VII: Philosophical Fragments; Johannes Climacus*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

KIERKEGAARD, S. 1980. *Kierkegaard's Writings VIII: The Concept of Anxiety*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

KIERKEGAARD, S. 1992. *Kierkegaard's Writings XII: Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments Vol. I & II*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

KIERKEGAARD, S. 1989. *Sickness Unto Death*. London: Penguin

Abbreviations

<i>E\o</i>	<i>Either\or</i>
<i>FT</i>	<i>Fear and Trembling</i>
<i>R</i>	<i>Repetition</i>
<i>PF</i>	<i>Philosophical Fragments</i>
<i>CA</i>	<i>Concept of Anxiety</i>
<i>CUP</i>	<i>Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments</i>
<i>SUD</i>	<i>Sickness unto Death</i>