

FREEDOM AND TIME IN KIERKEGAARD'S  
THE CONCEPT OF ANXIETY

By

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a commentary on one of Søren Kierkegaard's most difficult works, The Concept of Anxiety. Its aim is to show that Kierkegaard does not have a modern existentialist understanding of the self. It is in his treatment of the problems of freedom and time in The Concept of Anxiety that the differences of his thought from the tradition of existentialism can be most clearly seen. The doctrine which is central to existentialism, according to which man makes himself and is therefore the creator of all meaning and value, is often attributed by some commentators to the thought of Kierkegaard. It is my claim that such a doctrine is incompatible with the religious basis of Kierkegaard's view of the self. For Kierkegaard the freedom of the self does not consist in the fact that the possibilities for choice are unlimited. The self becomes free only by acknowledging its dependence on a reality which is external to the self and which eternally defines it. Kierkegaard's view of freedom and the self is closer to that of Augustine's, according to which the self becomes free by being bound to God. Freedom is therefore not an immediate possession of the self but something which must be acquired by virtue of the supernatural action of grace, the origin of which is God.

A corollary of the existentialist view of the self is that the self is inextricably caught within time relations, and therefore perpetually divided from the presence of the eternal. Kierkegaard's argument, as

it is presented in The Concept of Anxiety, assumes, on the contrary, that for the self to be a self it must come into a real relation to the eternal in what he calls the "Moment". I will argue on the basis of this interpretation that Kierkegaard's articulation of the self's relation to time further differentiates him from the existentialist tradition. This conclusion also flows from the fact that Kierkegaard's understanding of the self is a theological one.

Though it is quite widely held that Kierkegaard was the founder of the existentialist movement, it will be my argument that such an assumption is based on a misconception. Though certain writers of the twentieth century adopted Kierkegaard as their own, they did so only by truncating the basic elements of his view of the self.

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". . . he healed our wounds, rallied our scattered forces, and encouraged us to join him in pursuing the inquiry."

Plato, Phaedo

"Successive nights, like rolling waves,  
Convey them quickly, who are bound for death."

George Herbert, Mortification

"More and more firmly am I convinced that what we call  
sadness, anguish, despair, as though to persuade ourselves  
that these are only states of the Spirit, are the Spirit  
itself."

Georges Bernanos, The Diary of a  
Country Priest

"And yet the lilies and the birds are unconditionally  
joyful; and it is here most properly you may perceive  
how true it is when the Gospel says, Thou shalt learn  
joyfulness from the lilies and the birds. A better  
teacher you could not possibly require than one who,  
though he himself carries such an infinitely deep sorrow,  
is yet unconditionally joyful and is joy itself."

Søren Kierkegaard, The Lilies of the  
Field and the Birds of the Air

## PREFACE

All references to the works of Kierkegaard will appear in the body of the dissertation using the following abbreviations:

<u>Pap</u> I-XVI	<u>Søren Kierkegaards Papirer</u>
<u>SV</u> 1-14	<u>Søren Kierkegaards Samlede Vaerker</u>
<u>CD</u>	<u>Christian Discourses</u>
<u>KW</u> 8	<u>The Concept of Anxiety</u>
<u>CI</u>	<u>The Concept of Irony</u>
<u>CUP</u>	<u>Concluding Unscientific Postscript</u>
<u>ED</u> 1-4	<u>Edifying Discourses</u>
<u>EO</u> 1-2	<u>Either/Or</u>
<u>FT</u>	<u>Fear and Trembling</u>
<u>JP</u> 1-7	<u>Journals and Papers</u>
<u>PF</u>	<u>Philosophical Fragments</u>
<u>PVWA</u>	<u>The Point of View for My Work as an Author</u>
<u>PH</u>	<u>Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing</u>
<u>RF</u>	<u>Repetition</u>
<u>KW</u> 19	<u>The Sickness unto Death</u>
<u>SLW</u>	<u>Stages on Life's Way</u>
<u>TCSL</u>	<u>Thoughts on Crucial Situations in Human Life</u>
<u>TC</u>	<u>Training in Christianity</u>
<u>WL</u>	<u>Works of Love</u>

- 1) References to Kierkegaard's works will be put in brackets beside the relevant quotation. The English translation will be cited first, followed by a semi-colon and the volume and page numbers of the Danish edition.
- 2) In some cases I have amended translations which inadequately represent the Danish original. The amendments have been enclosed in square brackets.

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## INTRODUCTION

There is no aspect of Soren Kierkegaard's thought which is more important, and, therefore, more frequently a subject of debate, than his understanding of the self. It is principally the problem of the freedom of the self concerning which there is so much diversity of opinion. To what extent is the character and being of the human self a product of the self's own powers of self-making, and to what extent is the self decisively determined by its dependent relation to God? The most common interpretation of Kierkegaard's account of the relation of the self to God, and the one with which this dissertation intends to take issue, is that there is an impassable abyss between God and man, over which man can reach God only by a contingent leap of the will. The implication of this interpretation is that the being of the self is equivalent with its freedom or with the ability of the self to make itself what it is. It is this view of the self which the existentialist tradition claims to have inherited from Kierkegaard, and the view which, according to some commentators, makes his account of the self a specifically modern one.

In order to introduce the theme and intention of this dissertation, it is expedient to consider the arguments of two leading writers on Kierkegaard in North America, who most eloquently express, although with some differences of detail, the interpretation of Kierkegaard's view of the self outlined above. John W. Elrod and Mark C. Taylor represent best what is an inadequate understanding of the freedom of

the self, and a misunderstanding of how Kierkegaard's view of love determines his account of the nature of the self. It must be made clear from the outset that very few of the best commentators liken Kierkegaard's position to the existentialist view of the self promulgated by Jean-Paul Sartre. Neither Elrod nor Taylor, nor such European commentators as Johannes Sløk, Michael Theunissen, and Jann Holl attribute such an understanding of the self to Kierkegaard. Most of these commentators are aware that Kierkegaard conceives the self to be a unity of possibility and necessity, and that, consequently, he understands freedom of choice to be limited by elements of the self which are prior to and not a product of choice. The "possibility" or indeterminacy of choice is always limited by a determinate and co-present "necessity" in the self.<sup>1</sup>

Kierkegaard also claims that, in the second place, it is God who sustains the unity of possibility and necessity in the self. Though Elrod, for instance, limits the self's sovereignty over the existential necessities which concretely limit it, he appears to give the human self almost absolute sovereignty when it comes to the relation between itself and God. After quoting Kierkegaard to the effect that the self "is absolutely dependent on that which is already given,"<sup>2</sup> he can go on to give the following account of the self's freedom to "choose" God:

All existential actions are contingent and not necessary. That is to say, spirit is under no ontological, moral, or religious necessity to make any choice, including the choice of a divine "other." The appearance of God, then, in the development of spirit is made possible because spirit is free. But this does not entail in any sense the necessity of making God part of the ontological structure of the self. Rather, it is precisely because the self is what it is, that religious

existence can become a genuine human possibility. It is in this sense that spirit may relate to divine "other", thereby making it the existential ground of the self. Kierkegaard's conception of the self does not depend upon any Christian Weltanschauung. He avoids this move by making freedom the very essence of the self. The assertion of dependence is itself an act of freedom and only in this freely established relation-with-an-"other" can the divine "other" come into existence in the life of an individual.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Elrod's analysis is highly dependent on the likeness he perceives between Kant's view of the self and that of Kierkegaard. Elrod holds that Kierkegaard adopts Kant's idea of the autonomy of the self and reconciles it with Christianity. As is stated above, it is because man is by nature free, that religious existence is possible. In fact, Elrod's claim can be compared to Kant's first sentence in his Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone:

So far as morality is based upon the conception of man as a free agent who, just because he is free, binds himself through his reason to unconditioned laws, it stands in need neither of the idea of another Being over him, for him to apprehend his duty, nor of an incentive other than the law itself for him to do his duty.<sup>4</sup>

Like Kant, Elrod holds that the self has a capacity for freedom which is separate from and prior to its relation to God. Elrod, however, is in a far less secure position than Kant to explain the determining ground of freedom, since he cannot claim, as Kant does with confidence, that it is man's rational nature which is the ground of man's freedom. While Kant very carefully defines freedom as practical reason, Elrod can only contrast Kierkegaard's notion of freedom with "rational speculation", therefore making it unclear what, if anything, determines this freedom.<sup>5</sup> Elrod holds that Kierkegaard accepts the "modern notion of the self," by which he means the "concept of the moral self running

through the philosophies of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel." The freedom of the moral self "constitutes a moral process in which a conflict arises between what the particular and real self is and what, as universal and ideal, it ought to be." As we have seen, Elrod's Kierkegaard abandons the rational content of the ought, but retains the bare form of the modern self, according to which it forever strives between an "ought" and an "is", and therefore, like Fichte, "takes infinity as an ideal which the self forever aims at but never attains."<sup>6</sup>

Of course Elrod goes on to say, as many do, that it is faith which unifies the perpetual split in the self, but, as was seen above, this faith is a leap which is "made" by an individual, and therefore the product of the self's own self-making. God and the human self are in complete isolation from one another, possess no inner connection, and come into relation by a contingent act of the will. The idea of freedom attributed by Elrod to Kierkegaard is therefore dependent on the assumption that man has no knowledge of God prior to his own act of freedom. Elrod's Kierkegaard adopts, again only in a formal sense, Kant's division of the knower from the "thing-in-itself" and uses it to describe the relation between man and God.<sup>7</sup> God can only be "known" in existential action and not through his relation to human consciousness.

The argument of this dissertation is not absolutely opposed to the claim that existential action is the focus of Kierkegaard's concern. Its claim is that Kierkegaard's understanding of action presupposes a prior knowledge of the good or God which is not a product of choice, and that there is a possibility of having a kind of knowledge

of God. Man's freedom, therefore, is not absolute, nor is the ethical striving of the self "unsurpassable", as Elrod describes it.<sup>8</sup> Man's freedom is only "actual" by virtue of God's sustaining relationship to it. The highest freedom for man consists not in the ability to choose or not to choose God, but precisely in the ability to choose God, and therefore in the choice of what it is ultimately necessary to choose.<sup>9</sup> In relation to God, the self of man, as Holl points out in the following quotation, is a necessary and therefore limited self. The highest freedom is to be able to choose that which has given the freedom:

Bei Kierkegaard ist die Freiheit eingeschränkt durch eine fremde Notwendigkeit (wenn auch in eigenen Ich), und diese Notwendigkeit soll in der freien Wahl übernommen werden. Die Freiheit ist selber eine Gegenbenheit und als solche die eigentliche Aufgabe des Menschen; denn die Höchste Freiheit der Freiheit ist, den wählen zu können, der die Freiheit gegeben hat. Und nun wird die Freiheit im höchsten Sinne dialektisch; denn wenn Gott nicht gewählt wird, dann ist die Freiheit schon verloren. So gesehen ist die Freiheit nicht einmal das Wesen des Verhältnisses, sondern dessen, dass das Verhältnis sich zu Gott verhält. Damit wird dann aber das gesamte Selbst als positive Synthese zur Notwendigkeit.<sup>10</sup>

Freedom consists, therefore, not in being able to choose good or evil, but in being able to do what it is given to the self to do (KW 8, 49; SV 4, 320).

Elrod's basic claim, then, is that "Kierkegaard accepts the modern notion that the ethical pursuit of one's self as an ideal is unsurpassable," and that "the Christian communication is inextricably linked with the nature and destiny of the autonomous and absolute self."<sup>11</sup> There is a concept of striving in Kierkegaard, but my claim is that it is of such a nature as to imply a complete rejection of

the Kantian dualism of knowing subject and the thing-in-itself, constituting instead a return to an earlier metaphysic based on a dualism of being and becoming. Though God and man are unalterably distinct, according to Kierkegaard, there obtains between them a relation which, while not "actualized" by either action or contemplation alone, is grounded and sustained by the mixture of contemplation and action which is love.

Using the ancient categories of finite and infinite, temporal and eternal to explain his idea of striving, Kierkegaard conceives love as being the link which both unites the elements of the self and which preserves their distinction. The following quotation from the Concluding Unscientific Postscript illustrates the role of love by referring to Plato, for whom,

Love is . . . taken as identical with existence, or that, by virtue of which, life is lived in its entirety, the life which is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite. According to Plato, Wealth and Poverty conceived Eros, whose nature partook of both. But what is existence? Existence is the child that is born of the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, and is therefore a constant striving. This was Socrates' meaning. It is for this reason that Love is constantly striving; or to say the same thing in other words, the thinking subject is an existing individual. (CUP, p. 85; SV 7, 73)

Kierkegaard does not conceive this striving, as does Fichte, as a constant striving which never ends. In contrast to Elrod's description of striving as never-ending, Kierkegaard differentiates the Socratic-Platonic idea of striving, from the Kantian-Fichtean one:

The Socratic principle is naturally not to be understood in a finite sense, about a continued and incessant striving toward a goal without reaching it. No, but however much the subject has the infinite within himself, through being an existing individual, he is in the process of becoming. (CUP, p. 85; SV 7, 73)

The goal of striving is therefore not simply external to the self, and therefore a perpetual object of striving, but is in a sense "within" the self. On the other hand, the object of striving is not possessed immediately by the self, as are certain kinds of objects or possessions, but is a possession that must be "acquired" continually in order to be truly possessed. The goal of striving, or the good, is both a "present" possession and yet the "non-present" goal of acquisition. And to be in such a relation to God is at the same time to be in a relation of love to him. The individual, as I intend to argue throughout the dissertation, is in a position of knowing God and yet not understanding him. One has knowledge of God, his teaching, and perhaps even a broad and powerfully felt conviction as to the truth manifest in the life of Christ, but that condition is not "actually" present which transforms the knower from an observer, troubled by occasional enthusiasms and weakness of will, into one who is identical with the truth that he "knows". The individual in sin is the individual who, strung between eternity and time, experiences at once the wealth of knowledge and the poverty of ignorance, the happy presence of love and the suffering absence of the loved object. He is one who knows and yet does not understand, or "stand under", the truth.

The crucial point which distinguishes Kierkegaard's view from the modern interpretations of Kant and Fichte turns on the role which love plays in his explanation of the relation between God and man. The role of love in Kierkegaard's thought, curiously, has received very little scholarly attention in North America, even though Kierkegaard

devoted a major work to the subject of love. One very notable exception is the work of Mark C. Taylor, whose already plentiful writings on Kierkegaard are of an astonishing clarity, and of a quality present heretofore in only some of the German publications on Kierkegaard. In an article devoted to examining the alternative conceptions of love in Hegel and Kierkegaard, he claims that "love plays an extraordinarily important role in the thought of these two seminal authors."<sup>12</sup> My difference with Taylor lies not in the importance of the role of love in Kierkegaard's thought, but in the particular interpretation he gives of Kierkegaard's view of love.

The main point on which Taylor contrasts Hegel and Kierkegaard is on the relation of love to faith. According to Taylor, Hegel sees "faith in God and love of other persons as virtually identical,"<sup>13</sup> while Kierkegaard "consistently differentiates faith and love."<sup>14</sup> Taylor claims, further, that Hegel's turn away from Kant's thought in his early development depended, firstly, on his dissatisfaction with the concept of ethical striving in Kant's thought, and, secondly, on "his discovery of the importance of the phenomenon of love."<sup>15</sup> For Hegel, Kant's view of ethical striving implied an unrelieved tension "between universal moral obligation and particular or idiosyncratic inclination," or between the ideal and the actual elements of the self. Thus, "continued self-alienation rather than reconciliation results from moral striving." Over and against Kant's opposition of desire and duty, "Hegel argues that love overcomes such self-alienation and brings self-integration by reconciling inclination and obligation. For the lover, desire and duty do not oppose one another."<sup>16</sup>

Taylor later argues that the character and function attributed to love in Hegel's early writings is identical with that attributed to spirit in his mature system.<sup>17</sup> Like the notion of spirit, love reconciles the differences between self and other and binds them together in an organic unity. Just as love unites and yet distinguishes duty and inclination, love joins self and other "in a substantial unity that simultaneously establishes their determinate distinction from one another."<sup>18</sup> In Hegel's thought love, and consequently faith, are inherently social.

While Hegel's interpretation of love yields a view of the self that is integrative, social and harmonious, Kierkegaard's interpretation of love, in Taylor's view, implies a view of self which is disintegrative, individual and dissonant, and therefore entirely consistent, though Taylor does not explicitly say this, with the Kantian division of duty and inclination. Taylor claims that, for Kierkegaard, Hegel divinizes social relations, the consequence of which would be the inevitable "death of religious belief and practice,"<sup>19</sup> or that is to say the eventual identification of the religious life with secular, social relationships. The self must realize itself, according to Taylor's Kierkegaard, independently of its social relations or in its isolated but faithful relation to a transcendent, "wholly other" God. Consequently, "transcendence of God and independence of the self are inseparable."<sup>20</sup>

Taylor depends, in his description of Kierkegaard's view of love, on Anders Nygren's distinction between erotic love and Christian love. Nygren held that erotic love is partial, object directed, and characterized by need, and that the Christian notion of agape was a

love which was "gratuitous, totally impartial, undetermined by the character of the beloved, and unessential to the self-realization of the lover."<sup>21</sup> Agape, in Taylor's view, is similar to Kierkegaard's use of Kjerlighed, which means impartial love, while the meaning of eros compares to that of Forkjerlighed and Elskov, which both imply, for Kierkegaard, forms of aesthetic, self-love. The isolated relation of the individual to the wholly other, transcendent God entirely determines the quality of human love. If the faithful relation is not there, then neither is the love in the Christian sense there: "Only if the self is complete apart from the love relation can self-love be reached." Therefore, "the God relation is the basis of a proper relation to other selves."<sup>22</sup>

I do not wish to deny that the God relation is the basis of true relation to other selves. My claim is that the relation between faith and love is just the opposite of that attributed to it by Taylor. In the passage quoted above (p. 6) where love was compared to striving, the words Elskov and Kjerlighed are used interchangeably by Kierkegaard to describe the relation of the self to the goal of its striving.<sup>23</sup> In addition, Kierkegaard compares his understanding of existence to Plato's understanding of love, which Nygren rejects as an entirely un-Christian, "erotic", view of love.<sup>24</sup> The relation of the self to God is itself a kind of needing love, and, as I would claim, the experience of faith is entirely dependent on a prior and eternal relation of love obtaining between God and man. In the Works of Love, the very work in which Taylor claims the priority of faith over love is articulated, it is stated, with the support of St. Paul, that the

work of faith is in fact dependent upon and lower than love:

'So faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love,' which is therefore, the very ground of everything, exists before everything, and remains when everything else is abolished. . . . It certainly holds true that the greatest must be able to do what the lesser are able to do, and it holds true of love that it can take upon itself the work of faith and hope and make them even more perfect. (WL, p. 213; SV 9, 216)

In the Philosophical Fragments, though it is stated that faith is the "happy passion" (PF, pp. 72-73; SV 4, 224) in which the non-understanding individual is brought into union with the "unknown" God, it is also stated that faith is a condition granted by God himself. This condition is granted by God in the Moment (Øieblikket) which is a touching of eternity and time. This is why Kierkegaard says that "faith is not an act of will," because "all human volition has its capacity within the scope of an underlying condition" (PF, p. 77; SV 4, 227). This condition is granted by God in the Moment. Faith is therefore not an "act" in the usual sense, but an act which is at the same time God's act. The Moment is not the immediate moment of subjective impulse or of grand moral acts of the will, but the Moment in which God grants the condition for faith. Kierkegaard's claim is,

. . . that the Moment is really decisive for eternity! Unless God grants the condition which makes it possible to understand this, how is it to be supposed that the learner will be able to discover it! But that the God himself gives this condition has been shown above to be a consequence of the Moment, and that the Moment is the Paradox . . . (PF, p. 72; SV 4, 224)

The Moment is paradoxical because it unites unequal elements, God and man, the eternal and the temporal in a relation of "understanding" and mutuality. The Moment is possible because God is love

and love effects it:

Moved by love, the God is therefore eternally resolved to reveal himself. But as love is the motive so love must also be the end; for it would be a contradiction for the God to have a motive and an end which did not correspond. His love is a love of the learner, and his aim is to win him. For it is only in love that the unequal can be made equal, and it is only in equality or unity that an understanding can be effected . . . (PF, pp. 30-31; SV 4, 194)

The preceding argument does not entirely meet Taylor's contention that Kierkegaard's view of the self is non-social. It does contradict, however, his claim that Kierkegaard consistently differentiates faith and love. Taylor, like Elrod, holds that authentic acts of the self, according to Kierkegaard, are contingent, and that, therefore, it is the free act of will which unites the elements of the self.<sup>25</sup> The assumption common to both of them is that the passional and the volitional aspects of the self are distinct, and the self, rather than being bound in a relation of love to God, is free to adopt or not to adopt God as the ground of the self. The free resolution is superior to those passions which, according to Taylor, bind the self to self-love and condemn one to an "erotic" rather than a free relation to God and other selves.

Just like Kant, according to Taylor, Kierkegaard holds (1) that there is no knowledge of God, partial or complete, (2) that the authentic relation of man and God occurs out of a leap of free resolution and (3) that there is an absolute distinction between will and inclination in the self. The argument that has been presented in the last few pages, on the contrary, indicated that Kierkegaard's view of love implies that the self in some way participates in, and therefore has a degree of knowledge of, the eternal end which is the goal of its

striving. It is love, and not free resolution, which actualizes the relation between man and God, and which also integrates and unifies the will and the inclinations of the self, elements which were, in the early stages of its development, disparate and therefore the cause of striving.

Taylor's account of Kierkegaard's view of freedom leads him to adopt, moreover, a particular view of the relation of the self to time. As was stated, Kierkegaard held the self to be a "synthesis" of possibility and necessity, and of eternity and time. Taylor claims that Kierkegaard is rejecting the traditional understanding of the self as a kind of static substance, of which the changing empirical aspects of the self are merely the modes or attributes. The self, rather than being a static unity of elements, is a dynamic unity, or a dynamic self-relating of the elements through decision:

The eternal or unchanging dimension of the self system is the constant capacity of the self to relate itself (its ideal self, its possibilities, its infinitude) to itself (its real self, its actuality, its finitude). The eternal component of the self does not refer to an unchanging substratum or to a static substance, but designates the constant ability of the self to act, or to resolve to strive to actualize certain possibilities in any given situation.<sup>26</sup>

The time that is experienced by the self which is active in such a way is not the time made up of static "nows", but a time which is actively passing over from the past to the future. Time "is a reality that grows out of, and is related to, the lives of selves in the stance of purposeful activity. For Kierkegaard, time is properly grasped as life-time."<sup>27</sup> The self is primarily a historical self, the eternal element of which is the ever repeated ability to stretch itself forth from the past into the future through free decision.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor's interpretation of the relation of time and the self is largely dependent on his reading of the crucial passages on time which appear in The Concept of Anxiety. If Taylor's account of the freedom of the self is inaccurate, according to which it is identical with the dynamic interrelating of possibility and actuality, then his explanation of the temporality must also be faulty. Again, the relation of love which obtains between God and man implies that the self is not merely locked up within its own self-activity, but maintains a relation to a timeless present which, far from being a product of its own will or activity, is the very basis of the life of the self.

This dissertation attempts to establish, by means of a detailed commentary on the issues of freedom and time in The Concept of Anxiety, that Kierkegaard's understanding of freedom and time is neither historicist nor dependent on the modern idea of the self. Kierkegaard manifests, as a consequence of his doctrine of love, a view of freedom and time which is more consistent with the traditional views on these matters than has been generally thought in North America. Kierkegaard does not reject the timeless "now" of the Platonic tradition, but, as the dissertation will show, uses the "metaphysical" timeless now to illuminate the "existential" now of what he calls "repetition". If time has the character attributed to it by Taylor, it will be argued, repetition, and therefore freedom as Kierkegaard understands it, would be impossible. If the self were historical in nature, its true, authentic sphere of activity would be the unrepeatable time of the now stretched between past and future. Thus the impassable abyss, which for Elrod opened up between the self and the goal of its striving,

would prevent perpetually the self's repetition of its properly eternal nature.

It is of utmost importance to determine the nature of the relation between the temporal self and the timeless eternity which, according to Kierkegaard, is its true source. Through being related to eternity the self is related to a necessity which he fears and which he is apt to deny, or, in Kierkegaard's language, be "offended" at. The phenomenon of anxiety, as it will be argued, is determined by the individual's ambiguous relation to this eternal necessity.

Taylor's account of anxiety is shaped by his particular view of Kierkegaard's idea of freedom. Rather than seeing the mood of anxiety as a characteristic of the self which is limited by eternal necessity, but unwilling to accept it, Taylor assumes it is that mood aroused by the "protean possibilities" open to the self's existential freedom:

The limitation imposed by such necessity i.e. the necessary element of the self does not . . . entangle spirit in a deterministic web. As a self-conscious being, the individual is able to discriminate the real self that is from the ideal self that ought to be. Through reflective imagination, spirit can project and apprehend multiple possibilities that form its own potentiality. While necessity describes what the self is or has become, possibility depicts what the self is but might become. Confrontation with one's own protean possibilities evokes the dread that is inseparable from authentic selfhood.<sup>29</sup>

Taylor is correct in saying that the self is not caught in a deterministic web of natural causes and effects. His error consists in interpreting Kierkegaard's concept of necessity to be a purely historical and natural determinism, and in ignoring the fact that there is a super-natural determinism in virtue of which the self is

entirely limited by the divine necessity of grace. In the face of this necessity, the true Christian submits his self-will with the same necessity that a bird yields to its own instinct. Kierkegaard puts it this way:

The Christian has no self-will, he surrenders unconditionally. But again in relation to God's grace he has no self-will, he is satisfied with God's grace. He accepts everything by God's grace . . . even the grace itself; he understands that he cannot do without God's grace even in praying for His grace. So weakened is the Christian in respect to self-will that in relation to God's grace he is weaker than is the bird in relation to instinct which holds it entirely in its power, is weaker than bird is strong in relation to instinct, which is its power. (CD, p. 67; SV, 10, 68)

In contrast to the impression given by both Taylor and Elrod, it appears that the "choice" to surrender oneself to God is not dependent on the power of individual will, but is instead dependent on grace. Even the ability to ask for grace is effected by grace itself, or, as is said in the Purity of Heart is to will One Thing: "Only one thing can help a man to will the Good in truth: the Good itself" (PH, p. 84; SV, 8, 154).

The problem of freedom for Kierkegaard arises in relation to the fact that the supernatural machinery of grace entirely limits the individual, though that same individual seems to be capable of denying it for long periods of time. Kierkegaard's problem of freedom does not involve the problem of how a free will enters into a chain of causes and effects, but is identical with the problem of how, despite the unrepeatable flowing of time, the original state of grace can be "repeated". What are described as the "stages on life's way" in Kierkegaard's authorship constitute not, as Taylor believes, a

succession of forms of life which are actualized by the "contingent leap" of the individual will,<sup>30</sup> but instead manifests an account of the fall, suffering and redemption of the self, the course of which shows the necessary relation of the self to what I have called the supernatural machinery of grace. The machinery is "supernatural" because it is characterized not by the worldly necessity of cause and effect but by the supernatural necessity of love.

As far as methodology is concerned, not much attention will be paid to the issue of pseudonymity in Kierkegaard's authorship. All the stages of life up to that of the religious are accepted as being "experimental" and therefore not fully identical with Kierkegaard's own position. The convention of some writers of referring to Kierkegaard's pseudonymous names will not be adhered to. Secondly, there are a few limited expositions of Plato, Kant and Hegel in the dissertation. These expositions are intended to illustrate fully Kierkegaard's view of these thinkers and, therefore, do not pretend to be full and accurate representations of the positions of those thinkers. The appropriateness of Kierkegaard's use and criticisms of these thinkers must be assessed by the knowledgeable reader.

The first chapter deals with important issues developed in the "Introduction" to The Concept of Anxiety. The second chapter involves a discussion of the first two chapters of that work both of which examine the problem of original sin. The task in that chapter will be to show how Kierkegaard's understanding of original sin shapes his understanding of freedom. The third chapter develops Kierkegaard's notion of freedom further in relation to what is said in the third

chapter of Anxiety. Here it is shown how freedom is understood by Kierkegaard in relation to the "Moment" in time in which time and eternity touch. The fourth chapter investigates the consciousness of sin, first in relation to the stages of existence outlined in The Concluding Unscientific Postscript, and secondly in relation to the discussion of demonism in the fourth chapter of Anxiety. It is shown through the course of the argument in this dissertation that Kierkegaard's understanding of freedom and the self cannot be interpreted as implying that man "makes" himself. Instead, Kierkegaard is shown to have an understanding of love, suffering, and man's existence in time which entirely differentiates him from the modern understanding of the self and freedom. Criticism of the secondary sources relevant to these issues is included in the notes to the dissertation.

CHAPTER ONE: FREEDOM AND THE ACTUALIZATION OF  
THE GOOD

In Anxiety<sup>1</sup> Kierkegaard devotes much of the discussion to the problem of freedom, which was for him identical with the problem of how eternal truth or the good is to be realized in time. He takes as a guide the traditional doctrine of original sin and the fall of Adam. The "Introduction" to Anxiety sets forth the orientation for dealing with the problem of freedom. The problem, which Kierkegaard felt was partially articulated by Socrates and explained by the Christian dogma of original sin, is that of the temporality of human existence. It was the inability of speculative philosophy to explain this problem which, according to Kierkegaard, showed its inadequacy. The following chapter will deal with this basic issue which is raised in the important "Introduction" to Anxiety.

I Kierkegaard's Critique of Hegel

(i) Socratic Ignorance

According to Kierkegaard, Socrates conceived sin as ignorance.<sup>2</sup> Ignorance is a result of the immortal soul "forgetting" what it once knew before its birth into the world of becoming. The way out of this state of intellectual sin lay in the pursuit of recollection. That there is a problem of transition from forgetting to remembrance is indicated by the word "pursuit". Philosophy according to Socrates

was the pursuit or "love" of wisdom. The problem for the lover of wisdom is how to actualize fully or possess wisdom. For the philosopher it is a question of how to gain knowledge of the whole when his life is only of limited extent.

Christianity claims, according to Kierkegaard, that there is in the individual an active will contrary to the good, or, that is to say, a defiant will which prevents the actualization of the good. Socrates forms a bridge to the Christian standpoint. Though Socrates does not assume that there is a disposition away from the good (i.e. a condition of original sin), he is preoccupied, in Kierkegaard's view, with the problem of the actualization of the good. In the Postscript Kierkegaard attributes this concern not only to Socrates, but to Greek philosophy as a whole.

Because Greek philosophy was not absent-minded, movement is perennially an object for its dialectical exertions. The Greek philosopher was an existing individual, and did not permit himself to forget that fact. In order that he might devote himself wholly to thought, he therefore sought refuge in suicide, or in a Pythagorean dying from the world, or in a Socratic form of philosopher's death. He was conscious of being a thinker, but he was also aware that existence as his medium prevented him from thinking continuously, since existence involved him in a process of becoming. In order to think in very truth, therefore, he took his own life. (CUP, p. 274; SV 7, 265)

Modern philosophy, according to Kierkegaard, does not deal adequately with this problem of transition. In Hegel's philosophy, the inability of particular individuals to actualize wisdom is overcome by the historical process which, in weaving their particular and partial efforts into a totality, actualizes wisdom, or in Hegelian language, absolute knowledge. The temporally limited dialogues of individual philosophers are subsumed within the historical dialogue

of active social life, where, according to Kojeve, "one argues by acts of Labour (against Nature) and Struggle (against men)." Interpreting Hegel, Kojeve continues by explicating how history resolves what individuals cannot:

If the philosopher were eternal, in the sense that he did not need time to act and think, or had an unlimited amount of time at his disposal to do it, the question of the actualization of wisdom would never arise (just as it never arises for God). Now, history transcends the finite duration of man's individual existence. . . . But if one holds with Hegel . . . that history can be completed in and by itself, and that "absolute knowledge" (wisdom or discursive truth) results from the "comprehension" or "explanation" of history as integral . . . -- if one grants all this, I say, one can equate history (completed and integrated in and by "absolute" discursive knowledge) and eternity, understanding by this word the totality of time (historical time, that is to say human time, that is to say time which can contain a "discussion" of some sort, active or verbal) beyond which no particular man could pass, nor could Man as such.

Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel's view of transition, as it appears in the "Introduction" to Anxiety, is related to the latter's attempt to explain the relation between eternity and time through the notion of integral history or absolute time. As he states through the mouth of Judge William in Either/Or, the mistake of the "philosophy of our time is that it confounded our time with absolute time" (EO II, p. 177; SV 2, 157).

Kierkegaard raises the problem of ethics in order to bring out the inability of the individual to fulfill the ethical requirement by his own power. When Hegel transfers this problem to the plane of world-history, through which the transition from ignorance to wisdom is effected by a necessary process, this inability is blurred. To the absolute knowledge of Hegel, Kierkegaard opposes the limited

knowledge of Socrates. The Socratic wisdom is, according to Kierkegaard, that man is never sufficient to an actualization of the good or wisdom. Socrates, as the epigraph to Anxiety emphasizes, is pre-occupied with distinctions, especially with the distinction between what he knows and what he does not know. Christianity built on this distinction by showing that sin lies in the will, which actually prevents the actualization of the good. In a work closely allied to Anxiety, viz. The Sickness unto Death, Kierkegaard distinguishes between the Socratic, the Christian and the Hegelian view of ethics in the following way:

But wherein is the definition of sin as ignorance defective? Its defect is something the Socratic principle itself realizes and remedies, but only to a certain degree: it lacks a dialectical determinant appropriate to the transition from having understood something to doing it. In this transition Christianity begins; by taking this path, it shows that sin is rooted in willing and arrives at the concept of defiance, and then, to fasten the end firmly, it adds the doctrine of hereditary sin . . . In pure ideality, where the actual individual person is not involved, the transition is necessary (after all, in the system everything takes place of necessity), or there is no difficulty at all connected with the transition from understanding to doing. This is the Greek mind (but not the Socratic, for Socrates is too much of an ethicist for that). (KW 19, 93; SV 11, 204)

Kierkegaard, therefore, understands Hegel as saying that the transition from knowing to doing is a necessary one. Hegel can only conceive transition in this way by leaving out the individual and his "actuality". Before we can understand what Kierkegaard means by opposing necessity and the actuality of the individual, the connection between these two concepts in Hegel's thought must be briefly described.

#### (ii) Necessity and Actuality in Hegel's Thought

For Kierkegaard, Hegel's assumption that human wisdom is being actualized in the secular culture of the modern world implies that change or development as such has a logical, coherent character. As Kojeve pointed out, the full realization of absolute knowledge or wisdom depends on the fact that time is total, integral or circular. This implies in turn that time is not a contingent, unrepeatable flowing, but that all its moments, in so far as they are necessarily or integrally related, are the manifestation of Spirit. Time is a necessary, circular repetition and history of the Spirit.

The first criticism Kierkegaard makes of Hegel in the "Introduction" is that logic, which is the domain of the necessary, and actuality, which is characterized by contingency, have been conflated in his thought. Because the actual is conceived by Hegel to be a necessary manifestation of Spirit, the contrast between necessity and the actuality of the actual is obscured. Essential to the actuality of the actual is the unrepeatable and contingent element in it:

Thus, when an author entitles the last section of the Logic "Actuality", he thereby gains the advantage of making it appear that in logic the highest has been achieved, or if one prefers, the lowest. In the meantime, the loss is obvious, for neither logic nor actuality is served by placing actuality in the Logic. Actuality is not served thereby, for contingency, which is an essential part of the actual, cannot be admitted within the realm of logic. Logic is not served thereby, for if logic has thought actuality, it has included something that it cannot assimilate, it has appropriated as the beginning what it should only predisponere presuppose. (KW 8, 9-10; SV 4, 282)

Hegel's claim that the actual and the contingent are inherently logical and integral must be understood in relation to his interpretation of the historicity of human knowing. Until the modern age truth was thought of as being separate from the temporal instances in which

it was only partially revealed. Previous times were locked into a Platonism according to which the "ideas", in relation to which temporal objects received their objectivity and "truth", persisted and endured in a world beyond those temporal conditions. The "real" world of ideas and the "actual" world of their temporal instantiations were unchangeably separate.

Instead of conceiving of reason as something timelessly characteristic of the human being, Hegel wrought a change in the understanding of reason by interpreting it as a product of history, a product acquired by the labour of the human spirit. As Charles Taylor remarked: "that rationality is something man achieves rather than starts with, means that man has a history."<sup>4</sup> The modern world no longer dwells unequivocally within the ancient dualism between idea and actuality. Through the process of history the actual has been gathered as a totality into the human spirit in the form of ideality, and therefore made ready for its full conversion into the manifest life of human freedom. The "unhappy consciousness" which feels itself divided from the truth has been readied for the happy unification of the eternal truth with its own existential freedom. The individual spirit is implicitly universal spirit and therefore, according to Hegel, "knowing is the activity of the universal self, the concern of thinking."<sup>5</sup>

Modern man no longer dwells within the actual but carries the actual within him as an unrealized seed which only needs to be recollected. All that men have learned in the history of cultural development has become the property of the universal self implicit

in the individual. That which required the labour of history for Spirit to digest is now implicitly accomplished:

• • • the content of the individual's development is already the actuality reduced to a possibility, its immediacy overcome, and the embodied shape reduced to abbreviated, simple determinations of thought. It is no longer existence in the form of being-in-itself [essence distinct from the human self] -- but is now the recollected in-itself, ready for conversion into the form of being-for-self [a manifestation of the self].<sup>6</sup>

The actualization of wisdom, or "absolute knowledge" in time is not a process subject to time, place and opportunity, but something which occurs of necessity. Although Socrates understood the world and the human self as implicitly rational, he could find no absolutely certain method of actualizing the rational nature or of making it explicit. In order to show the implicit reason behind the confused argumentation of an opponent, he had to resort to conversation rather than demonstration. Not only do conversations require the consent of the individuals taking part, but also they depend upon having the sufficient leisure and time for their completion. In the end Socrates could only be content with producing the greatest possible conviction in himself rather than in society as a whole. It was partially lack of time and opportunity to achieve this end that prevented Socrates from explaining his innocence to the members of the mob which condemned him.

Accordingly, Socrates insisted that he was a lover rather than a possessor of wisdom. As Kierkegaard constantly points out, he distinguished between what he knew and what he did not know. But when Hegel introduced the idea that rationality had a history, and that this history was integral, he could claim that the conversation

of history actualized necessarily and perfectly what temporally limited and individual conversations could realize only accidentally. Recollection is now not of a transcendent world of ideas to which certain gifted individuals from time to time come into relation, but refers to an inner, immanent world of ideas incarnated in a manifest, secular world. It is the fact that the present age contains all truth implicitly, just as the adult carries the previous stages of his life within him, that makes it possible to achieve absolute knowledge.

The completed whole of knowledge in its scientific system is what Hegel calls the "Notion". The necessity of the Notion is constituted not only by its internal "logical" coherence but also by the "pathway" with which it is reached. Both the truth and the pursuit of truth become a necessary and integral process. According to Hegel the necessity of the Notion in its unfolding to consciousness replaces "the slipshod style of conversational discussion",<sup>7</sup> which, as we have shown, is characteristic of the Socratic approach to knowledge.

The necessity of the unfolding of understanding cannot be separated from Hegel's conviction that reason is historical and that truth is implicitly realized or incarnate in the secular world. The necessity of the Notion does not consist in the coherence of abstract concepts separated from their temporal instances. The "path by which the Notion of knowledge is reached" is itself a path which comes to be necessarily and "ceases to be a casual philosophizing." The movement or the becoming of the Notion, as Hegel promises at the beginning of the Phenomenology, "will encompass the entire sphere of secular consciousness in its necessary development."<sup>8</sup> It is therefore

on the incarnated world of modern secular consciousness that the necessity of the actualization of wisdom depends.

Because truth is implicitly realized in the modern secular life, it is possible to have a scientific system of that truth. The Socratic love of knowing can be replaced by actual knowing because the modern philosopher knows that the inner or logical necessity of the Notion is identical with the external history of the Notion. Both truth and the realization of truth are part of the same necessity:

The true shape in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of such truth. To help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title 'love of knowing' and be actual knowing -- that is what I have set myself to do. The inner necessity that knowing should be Science lies in its nature, and only the systematic exposition of philosophy itself provides it. But the external necessity, so far as it is grasped in a general way, setting aside accidental matters of person and motivation, is the same as the inner, or in other words it lies in the shape in which time sets forth the sequential existence of its moments. To show that now is the time for philosophy to be raised to the status of a Science would therefore be the only true justification of any effort that has this aim, for to do so would demonstrate the necessity of the aim, would indeed at the same time be the accomplishing of it.<sup>9</sup>

The necessity for adopting the Hegelian "pathway" to knowledge as opposed to the "slipshod" Socratic way of conversation is grounded in the actual conditions of the modern age, which are decisively different than those of ancient Greece. The time for philosophy to become Science, as opposed to the mere love of wisdom, is "now", because the "now" of the present age is not just any "now", but a "now" which is a result of the past and pregnant with the future. The Hegelian "now" is not a standing now indifferent to all contents which pass through it, but is itself a manifestation of the content.

The "now" is therefore a world-historical now, which is the manifestation of the whole, or the essentially eternal Idea of Spirit.

If the "now" were merely a passive container of Spirit rather than a manifestation of it, then the "now" would be something "other" than the eternal. As we have said, the "now", according to Hegel, is not made up of a collection of separate moments which flow irreversibly in one direction, but is a process of manifestation in which time is revealed to be circular, or a repetition of an essentially eternal principle. The time for philosophy to become Science is "now" because, unlike the now of the ancient philosophers, the present "now" comprehends the totality of past embodiments of Spirit. These embodiments, though they have appeared sequentially in time, are, in a sense, simultaneous for the knower who comprehends them. The present is both an historical, temporal present and an eternal present:

While we are . . . concerned with the Idea of Spirit, and in the History of the World regard everything as only its manifestation, we have, in traversing the past -- however extensive its periods -- only to do with what is present; for philosophy, as occupying itself with the True, has to do with the eternally present. Nothing in the past is lost for it, for the idea is ever present; Spirit is immortal; with it there is no past, no future but an eternal now. This necessarily implies that the present form of Spirit comprehends within it all earlier steps. These have indeed unfolded themselves in succession independently; but what Spirit is it has always been essentially; distinctions are only the development of this essential nature. The life of the ever present Spirit is a circle of progressive embodiments, which looked at in one aspect still exist beside each other, and only as looked at from another point of view appear as past. The grades which Spirit seems to have left behind it, it still possesses in the depths of its present.<sup>10</sup>

(iii) Kierkegaard's View of Kant and Hegel

The continuity of transition from one "now" to the next is not a problem for Hegel, because each "now" intrinsically contains or is pregnant with the next "now". Kierkegaard's claim in the "Introduction" to Anxiety that logic and actuality are distinct seems to imply that time and contingency do not have the logical continuity attributed to it by Hegel. In Kierkegaard's view, Hegel's notion of the necessity of transition is devised chiefly in response to Kant's division of the knowing subject from the thing-in-itself. Since this forms the necessary background of the problem of the relation between logic and actuality posed in the "Introduction", it is expedient to summarize briefly Kierkegaard's view of the relation between Kant and Hegel. It will also provide an opportunity to correct a false comparison between Kierkegaard's view of knowledge and the Kantian position.

Kierkegaard associated Kant with the general position of "scepticism" as it was laid out by Hegel. In contrast to Hegel, Kant retained to some degree the idea of the "now" as an empty container. He did not retain, however, the naive Newtonian understanding of time, according to which it had an existence independent of the knowing subject.<sup>11</sup> Instead he conceived time, just like space, as a form of intuition which, like a web spun from a source within the mind, was projected rather than received by the mind. Following a strict division of form and content, time formed the contentless background, or accompanying condition of sensation, but was not, as in Hegel, an expression of the content of the sensation itself.<sup>12</sup>

According to Kant, because no thing is sensed or known without this accompanying web, there is no direct contact with the "thing-in-

"itself" which, according to common-sense, is the source of the sensations. There is an eternal disparity between what we experience in the containing, passing "now" and the actual thing contained.<sup>13</sup> There is possible, consequently, only an infinitely progressing approximation of our knowledge to the thing experienced. Since the human mind, however, is the hidden source of that web of appearance in which it seems to be trapped, the actual object as it appears is subject to those very laws which lie at the base of human thinking. For this reason we are able to have a secure science of nature, since knowledge is no longer a matter of passive reception and contemplation, but of active construction and investigation. Reason "constrains nature to give answer to questions of reason's own determining."<sup>14</sup> It is successful in this venture because the world as experienced already has a structure itself imposed upon it by the human mind.

Though the reality of the thing, or the thing-in-itself, is unknowable for the human subject, the actuality of the thing experienced, or the actuality of the thing as it appears, is determined according to its form by the thinking subject. The appearance is given with respect to its content, i.e. raw sensation, but produced with respect to its form by means of imaginative synthesis. Because the form is determined by the understanding, the experience so determined has necessary connection from moment to moment. But the thing we get when the moments are connected is not the thing-in-itself, but an object partially produced and partially received by the mind.

The claim that what we know is what we produce and not what is real distinct from that producing is what Kierkegaard refers to

as Kant's "scepticism". It was Hegel's attempt to resolve the dualism between the knowing subject and the thing-in-itself which Kierkegaard most heavily criticized. This attempt can be characterized most appropriately in the following way. Kant's assumption that the knowing subject produces what he knows meant that the thing itself was inevitably veiled by the web of relations that resulted from this activity, while at the same time a certain kind of objectivity and necessary knowledge was retained. Hegel's great inspiration was to conceive time neither as an indifferent container of appearance, nor as a form of intuition, but as itself an expression of the activity of Spirit.

According to Hegel, the unity and eternality of truth does not consist in the fact that it rests, as it did for Plato, motionless above time. The unity of Spirit is the unity which is achieved in time by a process of development. It is not an abstract, given or substantial unity, but a substance which is "subject" or Spirit at the same time. Hegel therefore takes Kant's insight that the object is a product of rational activity, and in a sense reverses it through the fact that the act of knowing becomes itself a manifestation of Spirit. As Stephen Crites points out, Hegel "thoroughly historized the a priori conditions of objective knowledge."<sup>15</sup> By adding the insight that human rationality has a history and realizes itself in time, Hegel can understand time as manifestation of Spirit and not as an absolute limit on knowing. Time, as we showed above, is not an unrepeatable limit, but is in itself circular and complete:

Spirit is essentially the result of its own activity: its activity is the transcending of immediate, simple, unreflected existence -- the negation of that existence, and the returning to itself. We may compare it with the

seed; for with this the plant begins, yet it is also the result of the plant's entire life.<sup>16</sup>

The knowing subject does not come to know eternal truth, according to Hegel, by means of direct, atemporal intuition, but only by means of his concrete historical existence. By virtue of the very process of time, wisdom is being actualized. Hegel, according to Kierkegaard, attempted to restore the ancient idea of the unity of thought and being by means of an idea entirely foreign to ancient thought, i.e. the idea of a self-producing ego. Kierkegaard puts it this way in the "Introduction" to Anxiety:

The notion that thought on the whole has reality was assumed by all ancient and medieval philosophy. With Kant, this assumption became doubtful. If it is now assumed that Hegelian philosophy has actually grasped Kant's scepticism thoroughly (something that might continue to remain a great question despite all that Hegel and his school have done with the help of the slogan "method and manifestation" to conceal what Schelling with the slogan "intellectual intuition and construction" openly acknowledged as a new point of departure) and now has constructed the earlier in a higher form and in such a way that thought does not possess reality by virtue of a presupposition -- does it therefore also follow that this reality, which is consciously brought forth by thought, is a reconciliation? In that case, philosophy has only been brought back to where the beginning was made in the old days, when reconciliation did in fact have enormous significance. (KW 8, 11; SV 4, 283)

The interpretation Kant makes of the relation between the knowing subject and the appearance alone, the idea of rationality as produced rationality, Hegel applies to the whole of being. The thinking subject is himself an element in the self-production of Spirit in time. The ancient idea of the unity of thought and being was essentially an atemporal, non-generated unity. The unity of thought and being for Hegel is generated by means of a process in time, though this process is at the same time circular, or the necessary realization

of an implicit principle. For Kierkegaard, however, this solution to the Kantian "scepticism" implies covertly that there is a certain validity to this scepticism.

(iv) Kierkegaard's Criticism of Kant

If Hegel were to be consistent with his own standpoint, Kantianism would have to rank as a stage in the development of his own system. It is possible in the light of the previous quotation to assume that Kierkegaard adopts at least a quasi-Kantian standpoint. After all, did he not say in the Postscript that objective knowledge could only continually approximate truth, but never actually achieve it? In his most recent work on Kierkegaard, J. Elrod has said that Kierkegaard claims "an allegiance to this Kantian scepticism about the capacity of human beings to realize the philosophical goal of knowing ultimate reality."<sup>17</sup> But why, if Kierkegaard accepts the Kantian version of the distinction between thought and being, does he attack this "scepticism" as "a misleading reflection Misvisning" in the very work, the Postscript, which in its basic features is held to support this distinction? In the following quotation, Kierkegaard in fact rejects Kant's idea that reason or thought produces or gives form to actuality, and the accompanying notion that there is a "thing-in-itself" hidden by the "appearances" thus produced. Hegel, according to Kierkegaard, has answered Kant from within the presupposition that the thinking consciousness ought to be the point of departure for the "reconciliation":

Instead of conceding the contention of Idealism in such a manner as to dismiss as a temptation the entire problem of a thing-in-itself eluding thought, which like other temptations cannot be vanquished by giving way to it; instead of putting an end to Kant's misleading reflection which brings [actuality] into connection with thought; instead of relegating [actuality] to the ethical -- Hegel scored a veritable advance; for he became fantastic and vanquished idealistic scepticism by means of pure thought, which is merely an hypothesis, and even if it does not so declare itself, a fantastic hypothesis. The triumphant victory of pure thought, is something both to laugh at and to weep over, since in the realm of pure thought it is not even possible to distinguish them. (CUP, p. 292; SV 7, 282-83)

By uniting thought and being through the notion that thought is in fact a moment in the self-productive activity of Spirit, Hegel, according to Kierkegaard, blurs the real distinction between thought and being. We are thus returned to that blurring of thought and actuality which characterizes the modern age as a whole. In criticizing Hegel, Kierkegaard did not use Kant, but instead Greek philosophy as a support. Because Greek philosophy lacked the idea of self-producing reason, the distinction between the reality (Realitet) of thought and its actuality (Virkeligheden) was maintained:

That thought has [reality] was assumed by Greek philosophy without question. By reflecting over the matter one would have to arrive at the same result; but why confuse the [reality] of thought with [actuality]? The reality of thought is possibility, and every further question as to whether it is [actual] or not should be dismissed as irrelevant. (CUP, p. 292; SV 7, 282-83)

The Greek philosopher, in Kierkegaard's view, was aware of the distinction between the reality of thought and its actuality. As seen in a passage cited above, the Greek thinker was always aware that actuality and its temporal limitations prevented him from "actualizing" the good.<sup>18</sup> Thought had its reality apart from its "actuality" in time. Like Hegel, thought was conceived as circular,

but, unlike Hegel, the circle of thought was never "achieved" in time.

(v) Kierkegaard's Criticism of Hegel

We saw that in the new "pathway" of thought which Hegel describes, the distinction of the thinker from his subject matter is overcome. Through the rational comprehension of history, as opposed to the mere gathering and systematization of historical data, the thinker comes to see the inner necessity of his thinking as identical with its historical realization in time. This is why a "phenomenology of Spirit", or a science of the experience of consciousness, is possible at all. The "now" experienced by the thinker is the same "now" which gathers up implicitly the whole of the previous stages of Spirit, and therefore which contains in germ the entirety of wisdom, or, as Hegel calls it, "absolute knowledge". As Crites puts it, the comprehension of Spirit in definite historical conditions "is at the same time the transcendence of these conditions. The temporal manifestation is in the end a dialectical moment in an essentially timeless self-relation of Spirit."<sup>19</sup> Crites goes on to cite a passage from Hegel, which illustrates Hegel's replacement of the ancient distinction between truth and its manifestation by the notion that truth expresses itself in its temporal manifestation:

But the absolute truth itself passes with its appearance into temporal configuration and into its external conditions, associations, and circumstances. It is of itself thereby already surrounded by a manifold of localized, historical, and other positive material. Because the truth is, it must appear and be manifest; this manifestation belongs to its eternal nature itself, and is inseparable from it . . .<sup>20</sup>

From Hegel's italicization of "is", it is apparent that the very being of truth, in his view, is identical with its actualization in historical time. Kierkegaard seems to misunderstand Hegel when he claims that he resolves Kant's "scepticism" into the medium of "pure thought". But Kierkegaard is aware that Hegel's pure thought is not the thought of the ancients, for whom thought was timelessly realized outside of time. The "pure thought" of Hegel is identical with the pathway of the "Method" which, in turn, is identical with its own generation in time. The necessity of the pathway depends upon the self-realizing or circular character of time.

In the following quotation, Kierkegaard characterizes Kant's scepticism as "self-reflexion", referring, thereby, to Kant's notion that we can only know by means of what we inject into experience. Hegel claims that time is not a form of intuition, but an externalization of Spirit, and therefore circular. What Kierkegaard objects to, then, is the idea that the "now" or the present moment is a summation of the past and pregnant with the future:

When thought becomes self-reflexive and seeks to think itself, there arises a familiar form of scepticism. How may this scepticism be overcome, rooted as it is in thought's refusal to pursue its proper task of thinking other things? . . . Schelling put a stop to the self-reflexive process, understanding his "intellectual intuition" not as a result reached by going on with the process of self-reflection but as a new point of departure. Hegel regarded this as a fault. He speaks contemptuously of Schelling's intellectual intuition -- and then came the Method. The sceptical process of self-reflexion continues until it finally abrogates itself, thought struggles through to a victory and achieves reality again, the identity of thought and being is realized in pure thought. But what does it mean to say that self-reflexion continues until it abrogates itself? It need not long continue to make it apparent that there is something wrong with it; but as long as it does continue, it is precisely the same dubious process of self-reflexion. What does it

mean to say of it that it continues so long - until?  
 (CUP, p. 299; SV 7, 289-90)

That time is circular depends upon the fact that each moment necessarily undergoes transition to the next moment. This necessary circularity is manifested when it is shown that the sceptical standpoint, and any standpoint lesser than the absolute standpoint, of necessity converts itself into the absolute standpoint. At the same time, the intrinsic rationality of time and its manifestations are revealed.

For Kierkegaard, the error of both Hegel and Kant consisted in their attempt to ground conceptual thinking in its formal connection with the actual. The relations among objects according to Kant were not given relations but produced relations. The thinking subject of Descartes had an intuited, self-evident unity, from which one could derive the certainty of all propositions. While the thinking subject of Descartes was an atemporal subject, the subject of Kant, in so far as its knowing was concerned, was essentially related to time. The certainty of identity deriving from a passive intuition of identity is replaced by a certainty deriving from the consciousness that in knowing the manifold of experience is reduced to unity by an act of the subject:

For the mind could never think its identity in the manifoldness of its representations, and indeed think this unity a priori, if it did not have before its eyes the identity of its act, whereby it subordinates all synthesis of apprehension (which is empirical) to a transcendental unity, thereby rendering possible their interconnection according to a priori rules.<sup>21</sup>

In Hegel's thought, as we have shown, the self-productive character of Kant's thinking subject is transferred to the whole of being. In Kant's thought, the concepts, which are joined to their

temporal instances by means of the synthesizing activity of the thinking subject, remain timelessly suspended above time. The things we experience are "merely" phenomenal representations. According to Hegel, the temporal instances of the concepts at the same time are the concepts themselves. The phenomenal web spun by the human self is not merely "negative" of the truly real "things-in-themselves", but is itself a manifestation of reality. The temporal movements governed by atemporal and unmoving categories really manifest those categories. The moving "phenomenal" world is not simply "other" to or "negative" of the transcendental unity of the self, but is a real moment of the Self's return to itself. History is the process in which the negative or phenomenal aspect of the world is changed into a manifestation of Spirit. The movement exhibited in the phenomenal world is the necessary and immanent movement of the Spirit "producing" itself in time. Time therefore contains its own negation and its own overcoming:

History, is a conscious, self-mediating process -- Spirit emptied out into Time, but this externalization, this kenosis, is equally an externalization of itself; the negative is the negative of itself.<sup>22</sup>

Both the logical concept and the identity of the self are not timelessly real, according to Hegel, apart from their embodiment in the actual acts and movements which constitute the phenomenal world. The "I" is not an abstract "I" = "I" which is beyond experience, but an I which realizes itself in experience.

Kierkegaard, on the other hand, puts forward the essentially timeless nature of logic as a criticism of Hegel's doctrine of Spirit. He makes a seemingly sharp division between logical movements which

are timelessly circular, and existential movements which come to be. Such an account of logic would seem to imply that all logical knowledge is "analytic" and not "synthetic". Kierkegaard goes as far as to say in the "Introduction" to Anxiety that the "eternal expression for the logical is what the Eleatics through a misunderstanding transferred to existence: nothing comes into being, everything is" (KW 8, 13n; SV 4, 285n). The "reality" of logical ideas is therefore distinguished from their "actuality".

As Kierkegaard claims in the following passage from Anxiety, actual movements "transcend" the sphere of logic:

. . . In logic no movement must come about, for logic is, and whatever is logical only is. This impotence of the logical consists in the transition of logic into becoming, where existence and actuality come forth. So when logic becomes deeply absorbed in the concretion of the categories, that which was from the beginning is ever the same. (8, 12-13; 4, 284-85)

As we have seen, the negativity of the veil cast by human knowing was seen by Hegel as part of the process of Spirit's own manifestation of itself. Kierkegaard, for whom the process of time is not inherently circular or spiral, claims that the negativity of existential movements is not the same as the negativity of logical movements. Logical negation is merely a vanishing moment in the timeless self-identity of logic, while the existential movement takes time to occur and come to be. Nothing in logic "comes to be" in this manner. In Hegel's thought, according to Kierkegaard, the negative becomes, not a vanishing transition to a self-identical truth, but "the producer of the opposition" between truth and untruth. Untruth becomes a necessary moment of the manifestation of truth:

Every movement, if for one moment one wants to use this expression, is an immanent movement, which in a profound sense is no movement at all. One can easily convince oneself of this by considering that the concept of movement has no place in logic. The negative, then, is immanent in the movement, is something vanishing, is that which is annulled. . . . Nevertheless, precisely in order to make something come about in logic, the negative becomes something more; it becomes that which brings forth the opposition, not a negation but a contraposition. Thus the negative is not the stillness of the immanent movement; it is "the necessary other", indeed, something that may be very necessary for logic in order to bring about movement, but it is something that the negative is not. (8, 13; 4, 285)

It is therefore the idea of self-productive reason which is the object of Kierkegaard's attack. Not only did he attack the absolute knowledge of Hegel but also the more limited account of knowledge in Kant from which, in Kierkegaard's view, Hegel took his point of departure. That Kierkegaard does not accept the epistemological dualism of knower and thing-in-itself is clear from his statement that Kantian "scepticism" must be broken with. He adheres rather to the ontological dualism common to the ancient thinkers according to which the "existence" of an object is incommensurable to its true being, or essence. For him the relation between the logical idea of an object and its temporal "actualization" is unthinkable. Essences can be thought and are not unknowable, but their actualization in time is a mystery:<sup>23</sup>

The questionableness of Hegel's "Method" becomes apparent already in Hegel's relation to Kant. A scepticism which attacks thought itself cannot be vanquished by thinking it through, since the very instrument by which this would have to be done is in revolt. There is only one thing to do with such a scepticism, and that is to break with it. To answer Kant within the shadow-play of pure thought is precisely not to answer him. The only thing-in-itself which cannot be thought is existence, and this does not come within the province of thought to think. (CUP, pp. 292-93; SV 7, 283)

The fact that existence cannot be thought does not imply that there is no relation between thought and being. The phenomenon in which thought and being unite is motion or transition. If there were no essence, there would be no motion, for as Kierkegaard points out, "the unmoved is . . . a constituent of the motion as its measure and end" (CUP, p. 277; SV 7, 267-68). On the other hand, if there were no actuality, reality would be an unmoving world of static ideas. According to Kierkegaard, then, "movement is the inexplicable presupposition and common factor of thinking and being, and is their continued reciprocity" (CUP, p. 100; SV 7, 89). Thinking corresponds to unmoving essence or possibility, while being in the sense of existence is always coming to be and passing away. At the moment of transition, however, a mysterious, "inexplicable" union occurs.

## II Sin and the Actualization of the Good

### (i) Mood and Appropriation

Though motion and transition to some extent transcend thinking and logic, thought is still related to change in some mysterious way. Change in time cannot be wholly irrational, otherwise it would be impossible to apprehend it as change. The specific change with which Kierkegaard is concerned is, as we have said, the transition from the understanding of the good to the doing of it. Knowing the good for Kierkegaard does not constitute a problem, because there is always some good that one knows and which needs to be "actualized". The philosopher who most consistently concerned himself with this specific

problem of motion was Socrates.

For Socrates wisdom was both a possession and an object of pursuit, or better, need. If the good were not in some sense known, or "possessed", it could not occur to an individual to pursue it, nor would he recognize it when it was achieved. And yet if the good were truly possessed, it would not need to be pursued. How is it that the good can be known and unknown at the same time? How can the knowing ignorance of the "love of wisdom" be transformed into the knowing knowledge of actual wisdom? One way to answer these questions is to explain the origin of the ignorance, in order that by means of eliminating that origin the knowing knowledge of the good can be restored, or become actual. Socrates maintained that the origin of ignorance lay in a certain kind of forgetting, which, given adequate time and opportunity, could be itself "negated" by philosophic recollection.<sup>24</sup> Christianity, according to Kierkegaard, claims that the origin of the lack of correspondence between thought and deed lies in sin. The remainder of the "Introduction" to Anxiety is devoted to showing how the concept of sin is to be dealt with in the book as a whole.

Kierkegaard first tries to show that he is not attempting to explain sin, as if it were the object of a science. Though sin is not objective in this sense, it is still a thing about which one can make correct and incorrect statements. That which "falsifies" statements concerning the good is the mood accompanying the statements. Though sin is not objective, it has an appropriate place that is indicated by the mood corresponding to it:

Sin has its specific place, or more correctly it has no place, and this is its specific nature. When sin is

treated in a place other than its own, it is altered by being subjected to a non-essential refraction of reflection. The concept is altered, and thereby the mood that properly corresponds to the correct concept is also disturbed, and instead of the endurance of the true mood there is the fleeting phantom of false moods. Thus when sin is brought into esthetics, the mood becomes either light-minded or melancholy, for the category in which sin lies is that of contradiction, and this is either comic or tragic. The mood is therefore altered because the mood that corresponds to sin is earnestness. (KW 8, 14-15; SV 4, 286-287)

How Kierkegaard understands "mood" will remain obscure if it is taken as something merely subjective. The Danish word Stemning not only refers to temperament, but also tune, tone or note. The verb form stemme may be used with prepositions to mean correspond, or agree with. The word for correspondence (Overenstemmelse) is also drawn from the same root.

A mood is the correct one when it corresponds to a given situation. The mood of solemnity is appropriate to both funeral and coronation. On the other hand, there is inappropriateness when, for instance, genocide is proposed in a tone either of hilarity or indifference. Mood always presupposes an order of things to which it corresponds correctly or incorrectly. Sin cannot be contemplated as an aspect of a metaphysical system. This is not to say, however, that sin does not belong to a definite order of things. Sin concerns the individual who is earnest. If sin is made the object of metaphysics, the mood becomes one of "disinterestedness".

Sin regarded as a state is a non-being or a nothing. This is simply to say that it is not a state at all. If it is treated by a science it is turned into a state and therefore a kind of being. Sin is not an object like a tree, a feeling or a breeze. If sin were

to be an object of psychology, its actuality would be reduced to a necessary series of possible states. As a result, the mood of earnestness would reverse itself into a mood of curiosity:

If sin is dealt with in psychology, the mood becomes that of persistent observation, like the fearlessness of a secret agent, but not that of the victorious flight of earnestness out of sin. The concept becomes a different concept; for sin becomes a state. However, sin is not a state. Its idea is that its concept is continually annulled. As a state (de potentia according to possibility), it is not, but de actu or in actu [according to actuality or in actuality] it is, again and again. The mood of psychology would be antipathetic curiosity, whereas the proper mood is earnestness expressed in courageous resistance. (15; 287)

It is clear that Kierkegaard's estimation of mood does not amount to a glorification of it. Neither the intensity nor the spontaneity of the mood proves its correctness. Correctness of mood is measured by the correspondence of the mood to its object. Mood orients thought and attention to the problem at hand. Just as the mood corresponding to philosophy and science is wonder, "corresponding to the concept of sin is earnestness" (16; 288). Again, the state of being in earnest is not merely a mood, but a mood which puts one in a position of thinking something correctly and wholly.

Since much of the writing on Kierkegaard places emphasis on a misunderstood notion of the leap of faith, it is often assumed that for Kierkegaard thought is irrelevant to action. In light of Kierkegaard's description of the mood of seriousness, the limitations of such an assumption can be grasped fully. The close connection between mood and correct thought is illuminated in the following quotation from a short meditation in which the particular relation between earnestness and the thought of death is considered. Here

it is revealed, in contrast to the conventional view, how great an importance thought had for Kierkegaard:

The earnestness of life is serious, and yet there is no seriousness except in the ennoblement of the outward fact by the consciousness, wherein lies the possibility of deception; the earnestness of death is without deception, for it is not death that is earnest, but the thought of death. (TCSL, p. 80; SV 5, 229)

Earnestness is not a vague tension signified by powerful feelings.

It involves careful attention to what one is doing when one is thinking: "To think oneself dead is earnestness, to witness the death of another, is a mood" (TCSL, p. 80; SV 5, 229).

In the "Introduction", Kierkegaard names appropriation (Tilegnelsen) as the key factor in earnestness. Appropriation means making that which I think about truly my own (egen). To be earnest is to appropriate (tilegne) what is proper (egentlig) to me as my property (ejendom). To think sin earnestly is not to think it as the object of metaphysics (which is "indifferent" to it), nor as the object of psychology (which is merely "curious" about it). Sin is the theme with which either the sermon or the Socratic conversation deals. Sin has to do not with speeches, nor with discussions about a third party. Sin finds its home in the conversation in which one is included as a responsible member.

Sin does not properly belong in any science, but is the subject of the sermon, in which the single individual speaks as the single individual to the single individual. In our day, scientific self-importance has tricked pastors into becoming something like professorial clerks who also serve science and find it beneath their dignity to preach. Is it any wonder then that preaching has come to be regarded as a very lowly art? But to preach is really the most difficult of all arts and is essentially the art that Socrates praised, the art of being able to converse. . . . What Socrates criticized in the Sophists, when he made the distinction

that they indeed knew how to make speeches but not how to converse, was that they could talk at length about every subject but lacked the element of appropriation. Appropriation is precisely the secret of conversation. (KW 8, 16; SV 4, 288)

One becomes a learner not by anonymous observation, but by participation in a conversation. When one seriously thinks about death one thinks simultaneously about one's own death. But how is a temporally limited conversation able to bring about the true appropriation or actualization of an unchanging good? If Kierkegaard rejects Hegel's idea that the process of history of itself completes the tasks left unfinished by particular conversations, by what means does he believe the poverty of individual conversations can be made appropriate to the good which is their object? Of this Kierkegaard gives some indication in the remainder of the "Introduction".

### (ii) The Science Appropriate to Sin

Having rejected both metaphysics and psychology as inadequate to the task of explaining sin, Kierkegaard turns to the science of ethics, the science in which "sin might be expected to find a place" (KW 8, 16; SV 4, 288). Although ethics implies both the mood of seriousness and the activity of appropriation, this science overlooks the possibility that the individuals from whom it demands good action will not be possessed of the conditions requisite for the performance of the action. Within the science of ethics the principle that "ought" implies "can", according to Kierkegaard, is strictly in force. But when this principle is applied to an existing individual, it becomes

apparent that he has wishes, limitations and perhaps a defect of will that prevent him from realizing virtue. Ethics, if it is pure, does not permit one to think that certain material conditions must be present in order to will the good. Ethics ought not, according to Kierkegaard, to make allowance for the necessities of time and opportunity in the statement of duties.

Nevertheless, the individual does live within the limitations of time and opportunity. It is precisely the "collision" between the eternal and unchanging requirement of ethics, and the temporal and changing individual that brings out the specifically religious concept of sin. According to Kierkegaard, the ethics of the ancients (i.e. those ancient thinkers other than Socrates) assumed the realizability of ethics. Particular sins, according to the ancients, could be overcome by further knowledge, effort and experience. Accordingly, there was no essential irreconcilability between the eternal requirement of virtue and the particular limitations of individual life:

As all ancient knowledge and speculation was based on the presupposition that thought has reality [Realitet], so all ancient ethics was based on the presupposition that virtue can be realized. Sin's skepticism is altogether foreign to paganism. Sin is for the ethical consciousness what error is for the knowledge of it -- the particular exception that proves nothing. (19; 292)

Sin does not belong under the science of ethics, but comes forward after ethics has condemned the individual: "Sin, then, belongs to ethics only insofar as upon this concept it is shipwrecked with the aid of repentance" (17; 289-90). It is through striving to fulfill the requirements of the ethical that one begins to comprehend the true depths of the problem of spiritual evil. The only science adequate

to the full character and cause of this evil is dogmatics. Kierkegaard states:

In the struggle to actualize the task of ethics, sin shows itself not as something that belongs only accidentally to the accidental individual, but as something that withdraws deeper and deeper as a deeper and deeper presupposition, as a presupposition that goes beyond the individual. Then all is lost for ethics, and ethics has helped to bring about the loss of all. A category that lies entirely beyond its reach has appeared. Hereditary sin makes everything still more desperate, that is, it removes the difficulty, yet not with the help of ethics but with the help of dogmatics. (19; 291-92)

When the individual realizes his inability to fulfill the task of ethics, he comes to know that he has "fallen" from a state of grace, the effect of which has been to deprive him of the ability to live in accordance with his true nature. In the writing Purity of Heart is the Will to One Thing, the state of sin is described as a kind of double-mindedness. In his poverty of soul, which in part is a product of habit, the individual is unable to will the good with his whole will. At the same time, he has a distinct longing for the good. The man in despair or sin cannot

. . . help turning around once more in his longing for the Good. How terribly embittered he had become against this very longing, a longing that reveals that, just as a man in all his defiance has not power enough wholly to loose himself from the Good, so he has not even the power wholly to will it. (PH, p. 64; SV 8, 141)<sup>25</sup>

Kierkegaard's concept of freedom is not equivalent to the notion of free will. True freedom involves the realization of the good, but as was just pointed out, the will is not capable of effecting this transition. The transition involves some form of revelation or "leap" by which the condemned man becomes a new creature who is adequate to the good. It is through this "transcendent fact" that

eternity and time or the good and the sinful individual come into direct relation. This is why Kierkegaard quotes another pseudonymous author favourably as saying that "eternity is the true repetition" (KW 8, 18n; SV 4, 291n).

Kierkegaard, therefore, makes a strict division in the "Introduction" between a secular or immanent ethic according to which the individual is adequate to good, and a dogmatic ethic which takes into consideration the "actuality" of sin. Kierkegaard claims that the recollection of the good according to Greek philosophy depended upon becoming aware in time that one was already eternal. The full achievement of this awareness depended upon refraining from all action which further tied one to the affairs of the world and obscured the eternal. As Kierkegaard thought, this meant a complete withdrawal from time, a withdrawal which took the peculiar form of the philosopher's death.

Christianity, in Kierkegaard's view, maintains that the division of the soul from the good is not a result of passive forgetting, but the result of an original act, i.e. original sin. It was by this original act that the division came about, and it is by another original act, repetition, that the first act is "negated". Unlike recollection which can only be "actualized" outside of time, repetition is the actualization of the good in time. As we have shown, however, this original act is not in the power of the temporal individual, because it is an eternal act: "eternity is the true repetition". Repetition, as will be shown later, is not only an action in time but an accomplished, eternal fact at the same time.

When the actuality of sin is acknowledged, the science of ethics, which ignores sin, is replaced by the science of dogmatics, which, though not explaining sin, presupposes it as actual;

With dogmatics begins the science that in contrast to the science called ideal stricte (in the strict sense), namely, ethics, proceeds from actuality. It begins with the actual in order to raise it into ideality. It does not deny the presence of sin; on the contrary, it presupposes it and explains it by presupposing hereditary sin. . . . Therefore dogmatics must not explain hereditary sin but rather explain it by presupposing it, like that vortex about which Greek speculation concerning nature had so much to say, a moving something that no science can grasp. (19-20; 292)

Those sciences which contain no essential reference to time and actuality, the truths of which are circular and eternal, Kierkegaard ranks under the "first philosophy". The second philosophy (secunda philosophia) includes those concepts which refer to becoming and actuality. The latter science is one "whose essence is transcendence or repetition", while the former science is one "whose essence is immanence and is expressed in Greek thought by 'recollection' . . ." (21; 293).

Dogmatics, unlike the ethics of the first philosophy, begins with the assumption of sin and "explains it by presupposing hereditary sin." Kierkegaard, however, wrote not a dogmatic treatise but instead a psychological treatise. The subtitle to Anxiety claims that the book only points in the direction of the dogmatic problem of sin. Unlike the priest or saint, Kierkegaard is not in a position to directly announce the presence of sin in the reader. He is concerned only with the "possibility" of sin. The fact that the authorship is attributed to a pseudonym emphasizes this fact. The man of authority speaks with reference to actual sin, which, because it is actual, is still moving

and actualizing itself. The psychologist, since he deals with essences or "possibilities", must deal with "something in repose":

The subject of which psychology treats must be something in repose that remains in a restless repose, not something restless that always either produces itself or is repressed. But this abiding something out of which sin constantly arises, not by necessity (for a becoming by necessity is a state, as, for example, the whole history of the plant is a state) but by freedom -- this abiding something, this predisposing presupposition, sin's real possibility, is a subject of interest for psychology. That which can be the concern of psychology and with which it can occupy itself is not that sin comes into existence (bliver til), but how it can come into existence. Psychology can bring its concern to the point where it seems as if sin were there, but the next thing, that sin is there, is qualitatively different from the first. (21-22; 294)

By assuming the role of a psychologist, Kierkegaard is taking up a certain distance with respect to the reader. He is not explaining either the necessity or the actuality of sin, but only its "possibility". He is saying that the "actuality" of freedom is not a matter of knowledge, and not something we understand when we have come up with a certain theory as to why freedom necessarily manifests itself. The fact that Socrates distinguished between what he knew and did not know did not mean, in Kierkegaard's view, that he lacked one or two theories in virtue of which the existence of certain objects could be explained. Socrates' distinction constituted a humble admission that he lacked the complete character and disposition in virtue of which he could fully embody the truth lying hidden within him. It was precisely this humility which made him fit to be a learner, and, more than anyone he spoke to, truly wise. Kierkegaard adopts the distance of the psychologist to avoid, on the one hand, treating human understanding as a mere matter of intellect, and on the other, treating it as a mere

matter of persuasion or "proclamation".

Kierkegaard does go on, however, to say something about freedom and time. The strategy of adopting pseudonyms and of using at times a slightly poetic, unscientific tone, was simply to remind the reader that knowing many things about time and freedom does not constitute being free and living in time with true understanding. When Kierkegaard wrote in The Concept of Anxiety about these issues, he bore in mind strongly that the true understanding of these matters lay not in the cultivation of intellect alone, but also in the cultivation of character. It was the recognition of the difference between these two modes of cultivation which Kierkegaard most highly prized in Socrates.

### (iii) Conclusion

The following commentary on Anxiety is mainly negative in character. The themes of time and freedom as they are expressed in this work, separate Kierkegaard, in my view, from much of what is considered to be existentialist in character. His understanding of these matters seems to me to be much closer to traditional theological and philosophical conceptions than is generally held. By saying this I do not mean to ascribe a certain system of thought to Kierkegaard. The true import of his writing is obscured when it is confused with contemporary and modern conceptions of freedom and time, and particularly when it is done without reference to the theological basis of these conceptions.

Kierkegaard does not answer the problems of freedom and time, because he respects, like any good scientist, the limits of what science can do. The true explanation of these issues lies not in the treatise, nor in a set of propositions. The understanding of what sin and evil are, is dependent not only on the intellect, but on the very state of soul, the character, of the one who thinks about it. For Kierkegaard, the true understanding of sin is only found in that unity of intellect and character which constitutes the life of religion. The psychologist pursues his inquiry to the end only to wait for that moment in which his science is replaced by the true science in which the explanation is offered:

As psychology now becomes deeply absorbed in the possibility of sin, it is unwittingly in the service of another science that only waits for it to finish so that it can begin and assist psychology to the explanation. This science is not ethics. For ethics has nothing to do with this possibility. This science is dogmatics, and here in turn the issue of hereditary sin appears. (23; 295)

The following commentary is to the end of clarifying the problem of sin, and does not make the explanation any easier. No commentary by its own power is able to engender that true mood of earnestness, which, when the spark of truth ignites the soul, effects an understanding.

## CHAPTER TWO: FREEDOM AND ORIGINAL SIN

### I Freedom and Nothingness

Freedom is often equated with the ability to choose, unfettered by convention, habit or constraint, this or that thing which appears to be a good. The evil in which man finds himself, it may be argued, is a sin to the extent to which it is the product of the man's own act. The act of which an individual is guilty is that act for which he is in some sense "responsible". But what is the content of the phrase "in some sense"? To what extent is evil a fate to which one is subject, and to what extent a free act to which one knowingly consents?

This last question leads us inevitably to investigate the nature of the human self which gives rise to those acts judged to be evil. What conditions or characteristics are present in the depths of the human soul which explain the "possibility" of that soul giving rise to actions which by any standards are abominable? This problem becomes particularly acute in theological discussions, which, because they assume that the human self was created good by a God who is himself perfect, are concerned with the problem of how the capacity for evil originated in the created self. Evil is conceived in some theological explanations to be a kind of non-being or nothingness which by means of the mysterious co-operation, or perhaps permission, of God is allowed to gain a power over the credulous, though originally good,

human self.

In the last named explanation, according to which the evil of sin is a privation of a nature originally created good, it is assumed that the nothingness of sin is not part of the essence of the human self. The nothingness which clings to the soul and which, from time to time, manifests itself in evil acts, has "come to be" in the human self. It has an origin, and for this reason is named "original sin". It is possible to view nothingness, however, not as a mere negation of man's true essence, but as part of his essence. Man's relation to nothingness need not be, as in the theological conception, the product and result of free choice, but instead the underlying condition of all choice. It is, according to such a line of thinking, that irreducible sphere from which all human action appears, and that into which the results of all action, due to the inevitable limitations and reversals imposed by time, finally disappear.

It is this assumption, that nothingness forms the core of human reality, and that, therefore, man's being is a product of what he makes himself, that characterizes what is by some known as the existentialist view of the self. It is this view to which Kierkegaard's "philosophy" has been unceremoniously assimilated. Kierkegaard is held, like Sartre, to have adopted the position that "existence precedes essence," and to have embraced the idea that human action proceeds without relation to a given or eternal essence according to which the individual's actions can be judged good or evil.<sup>1</sup> In light of this account of the human self, true freedom means "authenticity", the ability to endure the presence of nothingness, and, though this

"nothing" is the beginning and end of all action, to live and to act in spite of it. This is quite obviously not the freedom from sin and nothingness which is true freedom according to the Christian position outlined above.

That man is in the beginning nothing, as opposed to being the realization of a given essence (like tools and animals), is the cardinal point of Sartre's existentialism. He explains his principle that existence precedes essence in the following way:

What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world -- and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing -- as he wills to be after that leap towards existence. Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism. And this is what people call its "subjectivity" . . .

To Sartre's mind, of course, the reality of nothingness is reality which precedes any value placed upon it. Unlike many in the Christian tradition, he is unwilling to call this nothingness evil or a product of sin. Nothingness, in a strange way which distinguishes it from natural or artificial objects, simply "is". To speak about sin, limitation and death is to speak simply about the natural condition in which man finds himself. Unlike those early radicals who denied or were indifferent to the existence of God, and yet still believed there was an order of value inherent in nature which made the pursuit of progress and humanity a fruitful one, Sartre quite boldly admits that the non-existence of God means the non-existence

of eternal value. With the disappearance of God there "disappears with Him all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. There can no longer be any good a priori, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it."<sup>3</sup> The presence of nothingness in the soul of man is not, therefore, the product of a "fall", but instead the uncreated core of that soul.

For Plato and Socrates, as in the Christian tradition, the nothingness implied in particular negations like ignorance, baseness and vulgarity had an origin. As pointed out in the last chapter, the ignorance which is the negation of wisdom had its origin in "forgetting".<sup>4</sup> Unlike some Christian interpretations, this forgetting was not the disobedience to a foreknown law, and therefore a punishable "guilty" act, but the inevitable result of embodiment in the sphere of becoming. Neither was it a unique act which occurred in time and determined subsequent events in its train. For this reason, the concept of freedom as an original act which determined the state of the soul never really cropped up as a problem in ancient philosophy.

According to Kierkegaard, Socrates held that the self never "fell" out of relation to the truth which lay obscured by the forgetfulness of the individual. The presupposition of the Socratic manner of questioning was that the truth was an ineradicable possession of the soul, a possession which only needed to be recollected in order to be "actually" possessed. Neither the vagaries of temporal existence nor individual "guilt" affected the real eternality of this possession, but only its "actualization" in time. Though the individual could only truly possess this treasure when he became dead to the world,

the truth could never be "lost" by an act in time. The act in time was therefore not "decisive" with respect to the possession of the truth. According to Kierkegaard, the presupposition of all Socratic questioning was that time and the free decision in time were really "nothing":

. . . for the underlying principle of all questioning is that the one who is asked must have the Truth in himself, and be able to acquire it by himself. The temporal point of departure is nothing; for as soon as I discover I have known the Truth from eternity without being aware of it, the same instant this moment of occasion is hidden in the Eternal, and so incorporated with it that I cannot even find it so to speak, even If I sought it; because in my eternal consciousness there is neither here nor there, but only an ubique et nusquam. (PF, p. 16; SV 4, 183)<sup>5</sup>

What is implied here is that the existing self, whatever its embodiment, is the actualization of a pre-existent idea which is not subject to change. Sartre's assumption is that it is necessary to conceive the self not as defined by a pre-existent idea, but as something which is never fully determined. While for Plato the essence of man is past, or that is to say immortal, for Sartre the self of man is always determined out of the future. Man is "something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that it is doing so."<sup>6</sup> The "essence" of man is always in the process of being made.

Kierkegaard accepts neither of these positions without qualification. He follows the Christian tradition according to which man has a given (and therefore in some sense past) created nature of which he has been deprived by his own act. For this reason he has been deprived of the condition which enables him to live in correspondence with the truth. The nothingness which clouds his soul has an origin in an act, an act the result of which can only be eliminated

by having the condition restored to the individual "in" time. The "past" created nature is given again in time. In this sense the moment in time gets a "decisive" significance:

In so far as the learner already exists he is already created, and hence God must have endowed him with the condition for understanding the Truth. For otherwise his earlier existence must have been merely brutish, and the Teacher who gave him the Truth and with it the condition was the original creator of human nature. But in so far as the moment is to have decisive significance (and unless we assume this we remain at the Socratic standpoint) the learner is destitute of this condition, and must therefore have been deprived of it. This deprivation cannot be due to an act of the God (which would be a contradiction), nor to an accident (for it would be a contradiction to assume the lower could overcome the higher); it must therefore be due to himself. (PF, p. 18; SV 4, 184-85)

The "learner" does not begin with "nothing", but begins with the truth, and subsequently deprives himself of it. In order to explain the motion out of the condition of understanding truth, it is sometimes assumed that the self is in possession of an arbitrary faculty in addition to his created "nature". This would be to assume, however, that man has some part of himself that was not originally created good, but which is morally indifferent in the sense that it is a "cause" which can give rise to either good or evil. In addition, man's freedom would consist, not in his obedience to the created nature originally given him, but in the indeterminate "possibility" of doing this or that. The meaning of freedom would at one moment imply a particular state of being, and at another a kind of open-ended possibility which cannot be associated with any particular state of being.

If Kierkegaard were an existentialist as Sartre defines it, there would be no difference between his possible "true" being, and what he manages to be in action. When Sartre does away with the notion

of man having an essence, and replaces it with the idea of nothingness, he eliminates any possibility of distinguishing between the state of freedom, and the open-ended act of freedom. With remarkable consistency he says "there is no difference between free being -- being as self-committal, as existence choosing its essence -- and absolute being."<sup>7</sup> While Kierkegaard makes a distinction between what man is and what he accomplishes in action, these two spheres of being and action become identical in the thought of Sartre. This is why Sartre states that "there is no reality except in action."<sup>8</sup>

Now while Sartre claims that "man simply is", he is well aware of the fact that the "is" of the statement does not refer to the permanent being of the rationalist or the Christian tradition. Having said that man's reality consists in action, Sartre does not contradict himself when he claims that "man is all the time outside of himself."<sup>9</sup> When a man acts he is not "actualizing" an essence, or a created nature, which precedes his action, and which eternally "is", but he "is" what comes to be out of the future. The self "transcends" itself not by being brought into correspondence with an eternal and ever-present truth but by being always projected out beyond its immediate being into the future.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike Sartre, Kierkegaard does not equate the state of being called freedom and the act of freedom. The Christian idea of freedom, according to Kierkegaard's interpretation of it, implies that there is a given, necessary element of the self in reference to which the act of freedom gains its true definition. To be free, for Kierkegaard, means to be what one "is" by one's own act. But what one "is" is not

identical simply with how the self unfolds in temporal action. To lose by one's own act the condition for understanding truth would seem to be a "free" act. But this act is one which issues in a state of bondage, i.e. a state of unfreedom. In choosing against the good the individual loses his freedom:

In so far as the learner is in Error, but in consequence of his own act (and in no other way can he possibly be in this state, as we have shown above), he might seem to be free, for to be what one is by one's own act is freedom. And yet he is in reality unfree and bound and exiled; for to be free from the Truth is to be exiled from the Truth, and to be exiled from the Truth, and to be exiled by one's own self is to be bound. (PF, p. 19; SV 4, 185)

The free choice that chooses anything else but the truth itself is really a non-choice, since it is a "choice" which results in the loss of choice. The "choice" which is at the same time the fall into sin is not one possibility among others which lies within human nature. This point can be made clear by distinguishing between the "possibility of freedom" and other possibilities. When a calf is born, it can be said that a possible calf has become actual. When an individual, who is possessed of an inborn talent for gymnastics, really becomes a gymnast, it can be said again that a certain pre-existent possibility has become actual. Similar statements can be made about excellences of the soul, like courage, temperance or love, when they are displayed before the eye in the shape of a virtuous human being. Before these beings, talents and excellences become "actual", a certain kind of non-being can be predicated of them. This non-being, however, is really a form of being, because it is a kind of being which by definition can "be" actual at a certain time in the future. The kind of being which non-existent cows, talents and excellences have

is possibility. The possibility that sin represents, however, is the possibility of non-being, the possibility of there being something else than what God creates. The problem for the Christian, as it is for Kierkegaard in Anxiety, is how sin, despite the fact that it can never truly be, rises up out of nothing and gains a power over the human soul.

If sin were a possibility lying at the basis of human nature, then sin would in no way be attributable to his own act, any more than a talent for swimming is a matter of choice for the talented swimmer. Sin is, nevertheless, a possibility for the human individual. If it is true that the individual fell into sin by his own act, he should be able to repeat that act and restore himself to his earlier condition. If the individual bound himself, he should be able to loose himself. But since by his first act he lost the condition for understanding the truth, his subsequent acts are inevitably tainted by this first act, unless, by some miracle, the individual is restored to his original state of understanding the truth. No particular act can restore that state, and therefore be truly "decisive", because every act of will is dependent on an enabling condition. It is just this enabling condition which was lost when the individual deprived himself of the condition for understanding the truth. The moment in time is decisive, not because man can will his freedom, but because he cannot will it:

. . . if by willing to be free he could by himself become free, the fact that he had been bound would become a state of the past, tracelessly vanishing in the moment of liberation; the moment would not be charged with decisive significance. (PF, p. 20; SV 4, 185)

It is through relation to the Redeemer and the Atonement that the individual receives the lost condition, and it is in this relation that the "repetition" of his self in its freedom is made possible. Only in relation to the Atonement, which is the annihilation of the nothingness of sin, does the moment of decision become decisive at all.

Human freedom, according to Kierkegaard, does not consist in standing before two alternatives, each of which have equal weight, and "choosing" between them blindly. To so conceive it would be to equate freedom with the nothingness or infinite possibility of choice. Sin does not arise as a necessary product of human nature, because there is no necessary ground for it in the self. Nor is it an "absurd" or arbitrary choice which has no relation to an order of things external to the self. Sin, according to Kierkegaard, is both a product of the self and yet that which is entirely alien to the self.

Sin cannot be explained rationally because there is no antecedent condition knowable which can determine the necessity of its appearance. In order that an effect be known or explained, the antecedent condition which "contains" the effect must be manifested. Nevertheless, it is the assumption of Christianity that sin, and therefore nothingness, have some sort of limited existence. While the non-being of possible cows is a relative non-being, the nothingness of sin never "is" in any sense, except in relation to the God which permits it to "be". Sin is an actuality which is in fact an "impossible" actuality. The nothingness of sin is not a part of the created human nature, because, unlike human nature, nothingness can never be truly actual.<sup>11</sup> The "possibility" of sin therefore cannot be made part of

the actual nature of the self:

That human nature is such that it makes sin possible is, psychologically speaking, true enough, but wanting to make the possibility of sin its actuality is revolting to ethics, and to dogmatics it sounds like blasphemy, because freedom is never possible; as soon as it is, it is actual, in the same sense as it was said in an older philosophy that if God's existence is possible, it is necessary. (KW 8, 22; SV 4, 294)

The difficulty with the concept of freedom as it is used in Christianity, is that it represents the possibility in the individual both for sin and obedience to the good. When freedom is treated as a kind of indifferent cause which, like a pool cue setting a ball in motion, begins an absolutely new train of events in time, the explanation of its dual possibility for good and evil is, according to Kierkegaard, made impossible. All events in time arise, as far as reason can surmise, out of pre-existent "possible" causes. The idea that something could arise out of nothing is im-possible. The freedom which covers both the impossible possibility of sin and the possible possibility of the good is in fact "infinite", and does not arise out of anything:

We have said and we again repeat, that sin presupposes itself, and sin cannot be explained by anything antecedent to it, anymore than can freedom. To maintain that freedom begins as a liberum arbitrium (which is found nowhere, cf. Leibniz) that can choose good as well as evil inevitably makes every explanation impossible. To speak of good and evil as the objects of freedom finitizes both freedom and the concepts of good and evil. Freedom is infinite and arises out of nothing. Therefore, to want to say that man sins by necessity makes the circle of the leap into a straight line. (112; 380-81)

If sin were considered to be part of the essence of human nature, then sin would be a kind of fate in relation to which man's own act is irrelevant. If freedom were taken to be a faculty distinct from either good or evil and which can indifferently choose either

one of these alternatives, then the possibility for sin would become the individual's actuality. Freedom is only real, according to Kierkegaard, within the distinction between good and evil, or else it is made into a meaningless, indifferent and entirely fantastic cause: "If freedom is given a moment to choose between good and evil, a moment when freedom itself is in neither one nor the other, then in that very moment freedom is not freedom, but a meaningless reflection" (111n; 380n).

Freedom, therefore, begins within the good and falls into the evil. But if this transition occurs neither by necessity nor by an indifferent choice, how is it that sin arises at all? If the individual is originally "in" the good, how is it that he can stand outside his own goodness in order that he can "choose" against this good and accept what is evil? In the first chapter Kierkegaard examines the account of the fall in Genesis in order to find that psychological "middle term" which explains the transition from good to evil. In this examination Kierkegaard does not attempt a metaphysical explanation of freedom, but, as he stated in the "Introduction", only a psychological explanation, which, instead of explaining the necessity of the fall itself, merely describes the state that accompanies it. This accompanying state is anxiety.

## II Anxiety and Original Sin

The Christian tradition explained the sin of individuals not by referring to the acts of those individuals alone, but by relating

their sin to the original sin incurred in the race by the act of the first father of the race. Sin is not wholly new in each individual but is hereditary. This claim raises several problems, all of which are touched upon in the first chapter of Anxiety. Firstly, what is the relation of the sins of the descendants of Adam to the first sin of Adam himself? Is Adam's sin inherited like a talent or eye colour? If sin is inherited, how can the individual descendant be in any sense responsible for his own sin? What motivates Adam to sin, and what makes him responsible for sin if it is only after the fall that he is aware of what evil is?

#### (i) Individual and Race

The problem that is raised in the first section of the first chapter concerns how the individual Adam and his choice are related to the race as a whole. Kierkegaard begins by critically examining the various traditional explanations of this relation. The first criticism is that some explanations place Adam "fantastically outside" the race and history, which satisfies "pious feeling and fantasy" but not thought. According to such accounts Adam brought original sin into being and the race simply inherited it. If original sin is a mere inheritance, then the "first sin" of the individual descendant does not cause the existence of sin in himself: "Does the concept of hereditary sin<sup>12</sup> differ from the concept of the first sin in such a way that the particular individual participates in inherited sin only through his relation to Adam and not through his primitive relation

to sin? In that case Adam is placed fantastically outside history" (26; 298). According to the "fantastic" view, therefore, Adam has a special relation to original sin because only for him did original sin come into being through a choice. The rest of the race passively inherits original sin.

Kierkegaard is looking for a conceptually adequate description of sin, a description that does not render the fall a mere historical or past fact. Surprisingly for those who picture Kierkegaard as a romantic or an irrationalist, he rejects definitions that originate in "pious feeling" and which merely give vent to their authors' "indignation over hereditary sin" (26; 298). To think sin properly is to think it as something present in the individual, and not just received through inheritance from Adam. The latter explanation of sin is implied, in Kierkegaard's view, in the Greek Orthodox definition of sin, which he takes to be too "historical" in character:

The Greek Church speaks of hereditary sin as the sin of the hamartēma protopatorikon sin of the first father . It does not even have a concept, for the term is only an historical designation, which does not, like the concept, designate what is present, but only what is historically concluded. (26; 299)

The problem concerns the relation between the "present" condition in which the individual finds himself, and which is a result of his own act, and the first act of Adam, which he somehow inherits.

If Adam were treated as anything other than an individual man, it would be impossible to explain how he could have "acted" to bring about sin in the race. On the other hand, if he were taken as an individual isolated from the race, then there would be no way he could be considered a representative or "first father" of the whole

race. The general quality of original sin cannot be explained without at the same time explaining the individual Adam's actual sin through which sinfulness comes into being. The connection between Adam's sin and the sin of the descendants is explained by the fact that the individual is individual through being related to the race, and is a member of the race through being an individual:

No matter how the problem is raised, as soon as Adam is placed fantastically on the outside, everything is confused. To explain Adam's sin is therefore to explain hereditary sin. And no explanation that explains Adam but not hereditary sin, or explains hereditary sin but not Adam, is of any help. The most profound reason for this is what is essential to human existence: that man is individuum and as such simultaneously himself and the whole race, and in such a way that the whole race participates in the individual and the individual in the whole race. (28; 300)

Kierkegaard's understanding of history is grounded in the idea that man's sin arises as the result of an historical, unique decision which is at the same time an eternal decision. In other words, the decision is both temporal and eternal at the same time. As Kierkegaard states in the Christian Discourses, sin is not a mere temporal act, nor a temporally limited event like suffering: "sin is not (like suffering) the instant, but an eternal fall from the eternal" (CD, p. 108; SV 10, 108). The reversal of the "fall into sin", which is realized in the Atonement, also requires an eternal and unique decision that is once and for all. The execution of this decision is complicated by the consequences of the first unique and eternal choice, i.e. original sin. The self has "lost" the condition which enables him to will the good.

If Adam is not considered to be part of the race or if he is merely an individual, then the relation of his unique choice to the

race as a whole becomes problematic. On the other hand, if Adam is merely a symbol for the race, then his choice could not have been the concrete, unique act of an individual. The human race is not a species in which each individual specimen is a mere copy of the other specimens, but a race in which each individual is significant: " [Adam] is not essentially different from the race, for in that case there is no race at all; he is not the race, for in that case there would be no race. He is himself and the race" (KW 8, 29; SV 4, 301). No individual act, therefore, can be undertaken without affecting the whole of the race, just as the individual cannot act without being affected by the actions of the whole race. The individual is not conceived in isolation from the race. On the other hand, the individual man is not related to the human race as a plant is to the plant species. The individual, according to Kierkegaard, is in a concrete relation to the race, and is both himself and the race at the same time.

In the second section of the first chapter Kierkegaard focusses more closely on the relation between the quality of sinfulness inaugurated by Adam and the actual sins of individuals. He finds the co-incidence of these two aspects of sin in the concept of the "first" sin. Kierkegaard claims that the first sin is not merely one sin, nor is it a collection of sins. The first sin brings original sin into being. This coming into being is not a process but a leap which involves the relation between the transcendent (eternal) quality of sin and the immanent (temporal) first instance of it: "The new quality appears with the first, with the leap, with the suddenness of the enigmatic" (30; 303). In temporal terms, the decision is "sudden" because it

is an act out of time that nevertheless occurs in time. It must be a unique decision, i.e. a historical and an eternal decision at the same time.

Kierkegaard affirms that the Genesis account is the "only dialectically consistent view", because it represents that "sin came into the world by a sin" (32; 304). The circularity of this statement is not without purpose. The statement seems to imply that the thing qualified (the actual sin) comes into being before the quality itself. But if the thing qualified "causes" the coming into being of the quality, this means that the quality has been presupposed. This problem can be stated more simply by asking, if Adam's first sin already presupposes original sin, how is it that a particular sin introduced sin into the world?

Sin according to Kierkegaard is a leap which, in temporal terms, is "sudden". The fact that sin comes into the world by a sin at the same time implies that the leap of sin is not merely accidental. That is to say it is not the finite and spontaneous leap of an indifferent will. If sin did not come into the world by a sin,

. . . then sin would have come into the world as something accidental, which one would do well not to explain. The difficulty for the understanding is precisely the triumph of the explanation and its profound consequence, namely, that sin presupposes itself, that sin 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. To the understanding, this is an offense; ergo it is a myth. As a compensation, the understanding invents its own myth, which denies the leap and explains the circle as a straight line, and now everything proceeds quite naturally. (32; 304)

Kierkegaard wishes to emphasize the problem of the relation of the quality of sin to the sinner which is qualified. The quality of sin acquires a history in the race, since it is not merely individual. The "progress" of sin in the race is only a "quantitative" progress which does not reproduce by means of a kind of mystical biological process the actual quality of sin as it appears in each individual man. Sin is not inherited like eye colour and certain diseases. Thus every man and generation is not essentially different than previous and subsequent men and generations:

What often misleads and brings people to all kinds of fantastic imaginings is the problem of the relation of generations, as though the subsequent man were essentially different from the first by virtue of descent. Descent, however, is only the expression for the continuity in the history of the race, which always moves in quantitative determinations and therefore is incapable of bringing forth an individual. (34; 306)

Kierkegaard is also careful to distinguish his views from that of Pelagianism "which permits every individual to play his little history in his own private theater unconcerned about the race" (34; 306). To repeat: the individual is at once himself and the race.

Kierkegaard continues his argument concerning the essential likeness of individuals in different ages with respect to the concept of innocence. If every man does not lose innocence in precisely the same way as Adam, then subsequent men are related to the fall as "concerned and interested spectators of guiltiness, but not participants in guiltiness" ( 36; 308). The mood of curiosity and abstract interest hides the true, unchanging significance of the event, that every man is primordially related by his own act to original sin. "In his aesthetic curiosity" the spectator "ignores the fact that he

himself brought guiltiness into the world and that he himself lost innocence by guilt" (36; 308). The spectator who would conceive guilt and sin as irrelevant to himself shows that he has "an incorrect mood, and consequently an incorrect concept" (36; 308). Sin arises in each individual not by necessity, as if it were a biological inheritance, but freely through the individual's own concrete action. Sin is not present in innocence as an inherited potentiality, nor as an essential characteristic of human nature which necessarily realizes itself. The sinfulness that results from the fall gives rise to a disposition that is passed from generation, but this disposition does not explain the actual transition from innocence to guilt in the individual.

Kierkegaard goes on to review other attempts to explain the actual event of the fall and criticizes them. Kierkegaard begins by repeating how he has explained the relation of Adam's sin to the sin of the race. Because Adam has introduced sin into the race, it appears as if the actuality of past sin, i.e. original sin, predisposes the individual to fall into sin. But Kierkegaard has already explained that this "more" which predisposes the individual is not adequate to effect the actual transition into sin.

### (ii) Anxiety and Spirit

The transition into sin, or how innocence is lost, still needs to be explained. The science that deals with the explanation, according to Kierkegaard, is the science of psychology. This science,

however, "can only explain up to the explanation" (39; 310). For Kierkegaard this type of psychological explanation stands in contrast with the theology which is speculative in character. Specifically, the discussion revolves around a claim made by some psychological interpreters as to the cause of Adam's sin. This claim was that the prohibition forbidding Adam to eat of the fruit predisposed him to the actual eating of the fruit. For instance, the explanation of Usteri reaches the conclusion that

. . . it was the prohibition itself not to eat of the tree of knowledge that gave birth to the sin of Adam. This does not at all ignore the ethical, but it admits that somehow the prohibition only predisposes that which breaks forth in Adam's qualitative leap. (39; 311)

Kierkegaard's criticism of this explanation is that it oversteps the bounds of psychology. He suggests the inadequacy of accounts which imply that sin is a transition which manifests itself necessarily, like the inner seed externalizing itself in a mature tree. By saying that the prohibition awakens concupiscence, or the desire to sin, one is presupposing sin to be the natural capacity or "possibility" of the soul which is prior to the act of sin itself. Sin would no longer be an act, but the progressive realization of an inner principle:

If the prohibition is regarded as conditioning the fall, it is also regarded as conditioning concupiscentia (inordinate desire). At this point psychology has already gone beyond its competence. Concupiscentia is a determinant of guilt and sin antecedent to guilt and sin, and yet still is not guilt and sin, that is, introduced by it. The qualitative leap is enervated; the fall becomes something successive. (40; 312)

Instead of explaining the actual fall, psychology must explain the leap in such a way as to retain the qualitative character of the leap. The explanation must "remain in its elastic ambiguity" (41; 312) in

order to allow the phenomenon of sin to become manifest in its true nature. To define sin in an elastic and at the same time in a precise way, Kierkegaard brings forward the concept of anxiety.

Anxiety, or dread, accompanies that stage of existence which Kierkegaard calls innocence. It is a stage in which the difference between self and other is not yet "posited". The innocent individual is "psychically qualified in immediate unity with his natural condition." But since another condition, viz. sin, arises out of this first condition, the innocent individual must stand in relation to something other than this immediate natural being. He must possess the possibility of becoming something other than this original state. This other state, viz. sinfulness, is "not contention and strife" (41; 313) immanent in the innocent individual. It is not a possible "something" which is a part of his true, created nature. The condition of sinfulness is therefore related to the innocent individual as a "nothing" which is experienced as dread or anxiety. Dread is not only the anticipation of the state of sinfulness but the dread of the change through which one becomes something different than what one is. It is the anticipation of the state in which one falls into contradiction with oneself and cannot will to be what one is. The innocent individual anticipates the fall into sin, which is, as Kierkegaard defines it elsewhere, "in despair not to will to be oneself, or in despair to will to be oneself" (KW 19, 77: SV 11, 189).

Freedom is not a mere state but something out of which the opposite of freedom may arise. Freedom involves not only the free acceptance of what is given, i.e. obedience, but also the possibility

of the denial of what is given, or disobedience. Since disobedience has only a negative relation to the given, its possibility is limitless or infinite. This limitless possibility is at the same time "nothing". When anxiety is actual, freedom or obedience is not yet actual, since the opposite of freedom is still a possibility for the individual. Anxiety relates the innocent man to his totality, to his capacity for acceptance of the given, on the one hand, and to his capacity for denial of the given on the other. Anxiety, therefore, is not identical with mere emotions like fear or worry which relate to some particular finite thing. It is an anxiety that concerns one's whole being: "Anxiety is altogether different from fear and similar concepts that refer to something definite, whereas anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility" (KW 8, 42; SV 4, 313).

The "actuality" of freedom in anxiety, as Kierkegaard expressly says, is not possibility, but the "possibility of possibility". Absolute freedom in the sense of infinite possibility can never be "actual". What is possible for man is what is given him in his created nature. The nothingness of sin is actual in the individual, but is not, like the other aspects of man's nature, the actualization of a given potentiality. It is a nothingness which gains a power over the soul, but which can only be if the consent of the soul is given to that nothingness. The psychological state which precedes this consent is anxiety, the object of which is therefore "nothing".

Though the individual in the state of innocence is ignorant of evil, he is not, in Kierkegaard's view, truly good, or good in actuality. "The spirit in man," which, as we shall see, makes man's

relation to the good actual, "is dreaming" (41; 313) when man is in the state of innocence. The possibility of possibility, which is present for the individual in the "nothing" of anxiety, not only holds out the possibility for sin, but also the possibility for the actualization of the good. In so far as the nothing of possibility may annihilate the ignorance of the good and replace it with actual good, it is itself the possibility for the good. But in so far as this nothingness may annihilate the possession of the good, it is the possibility of evil.

Nothingness, therefore, does not lie at the base of the human soul which, like a drive or impulse from within, realizes itself of necessity. Nor is this nothingness a thing to which the soul is indifferent, and which is chosen out of an absurd, undetermined freedom. Man's relation to nothingness is defined by anxiety, a relation which is one neither of indifference, nor of total slavery.

The ambiguous character of anxiety corresponds precisely to the nature of the paradoxical freedom that it is meant to explain: "Anxiety is a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy" (42; 313). It is a simultaneous attraction and repulsion, a relation both to a possible good and to a possible evil. This mysterious connection within dread arises out of our very use of language: "Linguistic usage confirms this perfectly. One speaks of a pleasing anxiety, a pleasing anxiousness, and of a strange anxiety, bashful anxiety, etc." (42: 313).

Anxiety is a power which is alien or other and for which one is in a sense not responsible. On the other hand, it is a "nothing" to which one may or may not succumb, a succumbing for which one is responsible. The relation to sin is therefore not utter freedom but

is ambiguous, and therefore anxious:

Just as the relation of anxiety to its object, to something that is nothing (linguistic usage also says pregnantly: to be anxious about nothing), is altogether ambiguous, so also the transition that is to be made from innocence to guilt will be so dialectical that it can be seen that the explanation is what it must be, psychological. The qualitative leap stands outside of all ambiguity. But he who becomes guilty through anxiety is indeed innocent, for it was not he himself but anxiety, a foreign power, that laid hold of him, a power that he did not love but about which he was anxious. And yet he is guilty, for he sank in anxiety, which he nevertheless loved even as he feared it. There is nothing in the world more ambiguous; therefore this is the only psychological explanation. But, to repeat once more, it could never occur to the explanation that it should explain the qualitative leap. (43; 314)

Anxiety is introduced as the psychological middle term which defines the ambiguity of the transition from innocence to guilt. The fact that man is anxious means that he is "more" than the mere natural unity of soul and body. There is a third thing which contains both the ability to sustain the relation between soul and body and the ability to destroy it. The relation between soul and body in plant and vegetable life is a stable, natural unity. Each individual plant or animal, according to Kierkegaard, is a "repetition" of the unchanging species of which it is an example. It possesses no possibility of becoming other than what it truly is. The human animal, however, does have the possibility of disturbing the relation between soul and body. He may become other than what he is. There must be a third thing, or organ, in virtue of which he has this possibility.

That third thing or organ in virtue of which the free relation of soul and body may become either actual or non-actual is spirit. Spirit is present in the stage of innocence, but, because it is not "actual", is present as dreaming. Man's relation to spirit before it

is actual is manifested therefore in anxiety. It is the "nothing" which threatens either to annihilate the happy union of soul and body or by another kind of annihilation to lead it to a higher and more permanent union. Man is a synthesis of soul and body sustained by spirit:

Man is a synthesis of the psychical and physical; however, a synthesis is unthinkable if the two are not united in a third. This third is spirit. In innocence, man is not merely animal, for if he were at any moment of his life merely animal, he would never become man. So spirit is present, but as immediate, as dreaming. Inasmuch as it is now present, it is in a sense a hostile power, for it constantly disturbs the relation between soul and body, a relation that indeed has persistence and yet does not have endurance, inasmuch as it first receives the latter by the spirit. On the other hand, spirit is a friendly power, since it is precisely that which constitutes the relation. What then is man's relation to this mysterious power? How does spirit relate itself to itself and to its conditionality? It relates itself as anxiety. (43-44; 315)

Soul and body are not related as oil is to water. They are related as spirit, which both brings about their disunion (the fall), i.e. "disturbs the relation between soul and body," and yet still holds them in relation, i.e. "is precisely that which constitutes the relation."

### (iii) Anxiety and the Transition into Sin

Having defined anxiety within the relations of body, soul and spirit, Kierkegaard returns to the discussion of Adam's sin and how anxiety helps to define it. Adam as the innocent man is related to spirit, or freedom, through his dread of it. Innocence is actual and spirit is not. Kierkegaard concludes that Adam's understanding of

the command, "only from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you must not eat", must have been only partial. Adam is ignorant of the distinction between good and evil, since the knowledge of this distinction is only possible after the eating of the fruit of the tree concerned in the commandment. The claim that the prohibition itself awakens the desire for sin again assumes that evil is a kind of natural potentiality, and that it is already present in some sense within Adam. According to this interpretation, he already knows good and evil before he is given the knowledge of these categories. In Kierkegaard's view, however, Adam is related to the prohibition through the knowing non-knowledge of anxiety:

The prohibition induces in him anxiety, for the prohibition awakens in him freedom's possibility. What passed by innocence as the nothing of anxiety has now entered into Adam, and here again it is a nothing -- the anxious possibility of being able. He has no conception of what he is able to do; otherwise -- and this is what usually happens -- that which comes later, the difference between good and evil, would have to be presupposed. Only the possibility of being able is present as a higher form of ignorance, as a higher expression of anxiety, because in a higher sense it both is and is not, because in a higher sense he both loves it and flees from it. (44-45; 315-16)

Adam has no conception of what he is going to do. There is only the possibility of possibility, a mere abstraction: "The infinite possibility of being able that was awakened by the prohibition now draws closer, because this possibility points to a possibility as its sequence" (45; 316). The dread is not of any specific object or end, but is a dread of possibility, or what amounts to the same thing, of "no-thing". Desire always relates to a definite object or end, which is why Kierkegaard specifies that the command awakens anxiety, not desire.

That the command comes from a source external to Adam does not constitute a problem for Kierkegaard. Adam in the state of innocence is able to talk and yet not to understand fully what he is saying. The command is not external to him in the way that the baying of the moose is external to the hunter. We are told that "one need merely assume that Adam talked to himself" (45-46; 316). That is to say, we need not assume that Adam spoke to God as to another human being. If this were the case, Adam would again be rendered a fantastic being outside of the race who had some special and fantastic relation to God. The distinction between good and evil is therefore "expressed in language but nevertheless is only for freedom" (45-46; 316).

The objection, that Adam could not have understood the command at all because it came from outside him, "is eliminated if we bear in mind that the speaker is language, and also that it is Adam himself who speaks" (47; 318). As for the serpent who tempts Eve, Kierkegaard bluntly admits that he can find no explanation for the fact that the temptation to sin comes from without. In response to this external representation, he cites the New Testament passage where it is affirmed that "God tempts no man and is not tempted by anyone, but each person is tempted by himself" (48; 318). Following the temptation is the anxiety and upon the heels of dread comes the fall. But this is just what psychology cannot explain. It can only state that original sin presupposes dread.

Before the fall, Adam and Eve are not real individuals but "are merely a numerical repetition" (46; 317). Eve is a "derived creature" whose presence according to the myth comes about through

Adam. This fact, and that she is the first to be seduced, is used by Kierkegaard as the basis of his claim in the next chapter that women are more in dread, though not for that reason less spiritual, than men. This will be shown to have its ground in the fact that women have a deeper relation to the fate element of dread, because of their special role in reproduction. Though he claims that sexual differentiation was a result of the fall, Kierkegaard is not saying that sexual differentiation was absent before the fall. Only through the fall, however, does the differentiation become actual, i.e. related to the choice of the individual. Human beings do not have the kind of sexual differentiation characteristic of animals. Since animals are merely soul and body without spirit, their sexual behaviour is governed by rhythms and cycles. Because man is spirit as well as soul and body, his relation is not an immediate, but a concrete relation to sexuality. The animal is at one with his sexuality and its cycles, whereas the human being is in a relationship to his sexuality.

The fall, therefore, has two consequences, one of which is sin, and the other of which is sexuality. It is because man is at the same time spirit that he can enter into contradiction with himself and his sexuality. He becomes at the same instant man and animal, both sinful and sexual. Man is not a twofold creature like two oranges bound together with rope, nor is he simply single like one orange. He is two-in-one, or better, since the relating element (spirit) becomes one of the elements of the total man, is three-in-one. He is a synthesis of body, soul and spirit:

In innocence, Adam as spirit was a dreaming spirit. Thus the synthesis is not actual, for the combining factor

is precisely the spirit, and as yet this is not posited as spirit. In animals the sexual difference can be developed instinctively, but this cannot be the case with a human being precisely because he is a synthesis. In the moment the spirit posits itself, it posits the synthesis, but in order to posit the synthesis it must first pervade it differentiatingly, and the ultimate point of the sensuous is precisely the sexual. Man can attain this ultimate point only in the moment the spirit becomes actual. Before that time he is not animal, but neither is he really man. The moment he becomes man, he becomes so by being animal as well. (48-49; 319)

Sinfulness comes into being with sexuality. These aspects are not identical, but stand in relation to one another. Sin is not an imperfection latent in the sensuous, but is a transcendent quality that comes into being by an act which is itself transcendent. To explain what is meant by a transcendent act is clearly difficult, but it may be given some definition by contrasting it with some features of Hegel's thought.

Hegel explained sin as that natural condition of evil out of which man arises through progress. Freedom is immanent in this process because it is at the same time its driving force and the result of the process. The imperfection of man in his natural state contains the perfection of his future state as a germ which is destined of necessity to become actual. Freedom is not only an idea but a power, an ideal that is capable of realization:

In actual existence Progress from natural freedom to freedom of the Spirit appears as an advancing from the imperfect to the more perfect; but the former must not be understood abstractly as only the imperfect, but as something that involves the very opposite of itself -- the so-called perfect -- as a germ or impulse. So -- reflectively, at least -- possibility points to something destined to become actual, the Aristotelian dunamis is also potentia, power and might. Thus the Imperfect, as involving its opposite, is a contradiction, which certainly exists, but which is continually annulled and solved; the

instinctive movement -- the inherent impulse in the life of the soul -- to break through the rind of mere nature, sensuousness and that which is alien to it, and to attain to the light of consciousness, i.e. to itself.<sup>13</sup>

Now it is clear that this germ or impulse is not equivalent to that of a plant which merely realizes a given essence. Man's development involves the overcoming of the given and the realization of an essence that is not yet actual. Man's animal existence is an imperfection which is overcome through the gradual and inevitable realization of man's perfection, or by his development into a free and self-conscious being. This realization is possible only because man is in possession of a real capacity for change. Change, suffering and death are no longer external to man's essence, but are part of the very process of his own development. Man therefore has

. . . . an altogether different destiny from that of merely natural objects -- in which we find always one and the same stable character, to which all change reverts, -- namely a real capacity for change, and that for the better -- an impulse of perfectibility. This principle . . . reduces change itself under a law.<sup>14</sup>

It is this altogether historical understanding of man's essence that Kierkegaard is bringing into question. It may be said that Hegel's attempt to explain the relation of freedom and necessity amounts to explaining time as history, or the circular development of freedom in time. When Kierkegaard states that the instant Adam "becomes man, he becomes so by being animal as well" (48-49; 319), he is not saying, as does Hegel, that man must overcome his natural being. The qualities of manhood and animality are not, for Kierkegaard, developmental moments of a circular process, but are simultaneously occurring categories. The relation between man's bodiliness (his animality) and his soul

(his manhood) is sustained by spirit.

Kierkegaard like Hegel understands man's essence to involve a contradiction.<sup>15</sup> This contradiction, however, is not the motor of a universal historical development, but is merely set as an individual task. The historical, temporal action of the individual is not adequate to "resolving" the contradiction between his eternal essence and his temporal limitedness. The individual, who in Hegel's thought has a real capacity for change through his relation to a developing human community, is actually denied a real capacity for change by Kierkegaard:

. . . freedom's possibility is not the ability to choose the good or the evil. Such thoughtlessness is no more in the interest of Scriptures than in the interest of thought. The possibility is to be able. In a logical system, it is convenient to say that possibility passes over into actuality. However, in actuality it is not so convenient, and an intermediate term is required. The intermediate term is anxiety, but it no more explains the qualitative leap than it can justify it ethically. (49; 320)

By denying the necessity of the transition from possibility to actuality, Kierkegaard is actually denying the notion of the historical mediation of this transition, and the attempt to explain the relation between freedom and nature as a developmental process. Anxiety is introduced as an intermediate term which indicates neither freedom nor necessity. The transition is not an arbitrary choice, or a mere voluntaristic leap, nor is it a "capacity or potentiality striving to realize itself." Anxiety characterizes the state of the soul prior to the fall, which both opens man's soul to sin and yet leaves him enough power to deny it. Anxiety is therefore an "entangled freedom":

Anxiety is neither a category of necessity nor a

category of freedom; it is entangled freedom, where freedom is not free in itself but entangled, not by necessity, but in itself. If sin has come into the world by necessity (which is a contradiction), there can be no anxiety. Nor can there be any anxiety if sin came into the world by an act of an abstract liberum arbitrium (which no more existed in the world in the beginning than in a late period, because it is a nuisance for thought). To want to give a logical explanation of the coming of sin into the world is a stupidity that can occur only to people who are comically worried about finding an explanation. (49; 320)

It is precisely with respect to the notion of anxiety that one can distinguish Kierkegaard from existentialist voluntarism and from Hegel's particular understanding of history and freedom. The notion of anxiety, however, doesn't seem to explain anything. Freedom and nature have come into relation in man as sinfulness, a transition that is merely asserted and not explained. Sin is described as "that transcendence, that discrimen rerum in which sin enters into the single individual as the single individual" (50; 321). How immortal spirit chooses to be sinful and to fall from the good is not explained. The object of coherent discourse is to express truth, but in its conclusion Kierkegaard's discourse appears to fall off into mere silence, for "how sin came into the world, each man understands solely by himself" (51; 320).

The sphere of this silence where thought runs up against thought can further be delimited by concentrating on the concept of anxiety. The subsequent existence of anxiety in the race is explored in the second chapter.

### III Anxiety and the Sin of the Subsequent Individual

#### (i) Objective Anxiety

In the first chapter of The Concept of Anxiety Kierkegaard has introduced the concept of dread as that psychological state presupposed by the qualitative leap of Adam, through which sin entered the world. He has given a description of anxiety as it characterizes the soul of the innocent individual before sin has entered the world. In the second chapter he will investigate how dread exists in the world and the soul of the innocent individual after sin has entered the world. In the third and fourth chapters he will show what forms dread takes in the soul after original sin, having entered the world, has become actual in a guilty individual.<sup>16</sup>

When sin entered the world, sexuality came into (actual) being: "In that same moment the history of the race begins" (52; 323). The individual who is immortal spirit is at the same time one who comes into being by means of generation. He is both himself and the race from which he is derived. Though the subsequent individual is in dread, he is not yet conscious of sin as the distinction of good and evil. Freedom is not yet "actual" in him:

The subsequent individual, like Adam, is a synthesis that is sustained by spirit, but the synthesis is derived, and accordingly, the history of the race is posited in it. Herein lies the more or less of anxiety in the subsequent individual. Nevertheless, his anxiety is not anxiety about sin, for as yet the distinction between good and evil is not, because this distinction first comes about with the actuality of freedom. This distinction, if present, is only a foreboding presentiment that through the history of the race may signify a more or a less. (52-53; 323-24)

The subsequent individual, who is related to the race through generation, comes into relation to the sin committed by others. The Greek of Plato's time inherited the guilt of his country's destruction of Troy. But until a Greek individual himself commits a sin like to

it he is not a relation of full knowledge to that sin. He is in a relation of knowing and yet not understanding, i.e. he is in dread. Thus while Adam had no concrete instance of sin before him when he ate of the fruit, the later individual has the sins of others as a matter for reflection: "anxiety in a later individual is more reflective as a consequence of his participation in the history of the race" (53; 324).

The problem that arises in relation to the concept of original sin is how sin is passed on. The inheritance of sin seems to be impossible, since this would exclude the individual's own guilt. Original sin would be his fate rather than something which came about through his own complicity. In a journal entry, Kierkegaard expresses the problem in the following way:

That "original sin" is "guilt" is the real paradox. How paradoxical is best seen as follows. The paradox is formed by a composite of qualitatively heterogeneous categories. To "inherit" is a category of nature. "Guilt" is an ethical category of spirit. How can it ever occur to anyone to put these two together, the understanding says -- to say that something is inherited which by its very concept cannot be inherited. (JP 2, 1530; Pap X<sup>2</sup> A 481)

Dread has been shown to be a mixture of attraction and repulsion, or better, a combination of love and fear. In the state of innocence sin is not yet actual, but neither is salvation. The possibility of sin is at the same time the possibility of true freedom and therefore awakens love. Neither of these possibilities are concrete for the innocent individual and so are related to his consciousness as the "nothing" of dread. Dwelling perpetually in this possibility is by no means considered a perfection by Kierkegaard, since he affirms: "When salvation is posited, anxiety, together with possibility, is

left behind." As long as salvation is a matter of expectation, "sin continues to be in control . . ." (53; 324).

The awareness of the sins of others in the race is accompanied by anxiety. The individual has still not actually participated in the qualitative leap of sin, but is only dimly aware of it as a possibility. Anxiety therefore separates into two aspects, one which indicates the dread immediately preceding the actual sin of the individual and the other which accompanies the awareness of the sins of others in the race. This latter is the sin which has entered "into the world." The increase of sin which results, however, only is a "quantitative" progress within the race. It is a mere totalling up of the sins of the race. To maintain the tension between this inherited quantity and the quality which arises out of the freedom of the individual, it is necessary to "hold fast to the distinction specified earlier between the quantitative accumulation and the qualitative leap" (54; 325).

The genesis of sin is placed in false relation to the freedom of the individual, if it is depicted merely as a necessary process. The reality of past sin does not actually bring about my own fall into sin. Evil is not a natural state that is passed on. Sin is in the world as a possibility, but not as a potentiality which is passed on biologically:

If by Adam's sin the sinfulness of the race is posited in the same sense as his erect walking etc., the concept of the individual is canceled. This was developed previously, where objection also was made against the imaginatively constructing inquisitiveness that wants to treat sin as curiosity. . . . (57; 328)

. . . the concept of race is too abstract to allow the positing of so concrete a category as sin, which is posited precisely in that the single individual himself, as the

single individual, posits it. Thus sinfulness in the race becomes only a quantitative approximation. Still this has its beginning with Adam. (57; 328)

The state of innocence which is subsequent to the sin of Adam is qualified by two separate forms of dread. Subjective dread refers to the innocent individual who is related to sin by the fact that he is descended from Adam. The dread in the innocent individual is greater than Adam's in a purely quantitative sense, "because of the quantitative determination of the generation." Objective dread refers to "the reflection of the sinfulness of the whole generation in the whole world" (56-57; 327). Nature and the race fall under sin as a result of the sin of Adam, but neither nature nor the race create sin, nor are they in themselves sinful.

Objective dread is therefore the reflection of sin in the natural sphere. With respect to this form of dread, Kierkegaard refers to "the anxious longing of creation" that Paul speaks of in Romans 8:19. The implication of this state of longing is that nature lies in a state of imperfection. The shuddering of nature at the fall into sin suggests, according to Kierkegaard, a degree of complicity in the fall. In the fall man's natural being, or his sensuousness, "is constantly degraded to mean sinfulness." Nature, though it did not produce sin, is yet tainted and perverted by it. This formulation Kierkegaard takes to be a refutation of the "rationalistic view that sensuousness as such is sinfulness" (58-59; 329).

(ii) Subjective Anxiety

It has been stated that the concept of anxiety is put forward in order to "explain" the problem of freedom. Freedom, as the "cause" of the transition from innocence to evil, and from evil to a regained innocence, is inexplicable. If freedom itself is inexplicable, the relation between freedom and necessity must also be inexplicable. The way, however, in which freedom is not explicable precisely indicates its usefulness as a concept. The problem of freedom usually reduces to two irreconcilable positions, one of which asserts that the determination of the choice depends on the object of the choice, and the other of which claims the choice is self-determining. The self-determining character of the choice may derive from either the rational (Kant) or the irrational (Sartre) form of the choice.<sup>17</sup>

The concept of anxiety, however, is neither determined by a definite object simply external to itself, nor is it determined by the freedom of the subject. Anxiety is something both self-caused and something alien which subjects the self to its own necessity. To illustrate this ambiguity in anxiety, Kierkegaard compares anxiety to dizziness: "He whose eye happens to look down into the yawning abyss becomes dizzy. But what is the reason for this? It is just as much in his own eye as in the abyss, for suppose he had not looked down" (61; 331). The cause of man's fall is just as much his own eye as is the abyss on which he stands. His dizziness over the abyss occurs by and through his looking. Anxiety is both the product of an act and an external master which enslaves the self.

The "dizziness" of anxiety is attributable to the "infinitizing effect" of reflection on the given aspects of the self. This dizziness

is the closest approximation that the psychologist can give of the actual fall into evil, which both includes the idea that the individual is innocently enslaved to the nothingness of anxiety, and yet responsible in so far as he is reflectively related to it.<sup>18</sup>

The individual "is" a given combination of soul and body, but this unity is not immediate. He is in a relation to that unity through spirit or freedom. The "synthesis" of spirit, soul and body must be chosen and known in this choosing. But with anxiety there enters a split into the will in consequence of which the individual loses the strength to "posit" the synthesis. His will is not adequate to his real, eternal and given being. Freedom succumbs to the abstract infinity of sin:

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 lies the leap, which no science has explained and which no science can explain. He who becomes guilty in anxiety becomes as ambiguously guilty as it is possible to become. (61; 332)

The individual is not guilty purely and simply, since from a psychological point of view, "the fall into sin always takes place in weakness", i.e. through a defect of will. On the other hand the anxiety is self-related, an egoism which arrogates all reality, or infinite possibility to itself. The relation to evil in dread is therefore ambiguous: "In anxiety there is the selfish infinity of possibility, which does not tempt like a choice, but ensnaringly disquiets (aengster) with its sweet anxiousness (Beaengstelse)" (61; 332).

In the individual who is later than Adam, the nothing (the unlimited, infinite possibility) of dread becomes "more and more a something" (61; 332). The nothing of dread starts to be defined into a complex of pre-sentiments which still, of course, does not of itself carry the individual over into sin. The "qualitative" leap is made by the individual himself. In the rest of the second chapter, Kierkegaard attempts to further describe this "something" which is related to the innocent individual as a particular set of pre-sentiments. The anxiety, because it begins to gain a determinate place in consciousness, is reflective anxiety. Kierkegaard affirms the original innocence of nature, and that it constantly becomes guilty through the continued active participation of the individual in sin: "That sensuousness at one time became sinfulness is the history of the generation, but that sensuousness becomes sinfulness is the qualitative leap of the individual" (63; 333). If evil is seen to be the result of a natural drive, no-one could be considered "guilty" of this drive. The concept of anxiety retains the ambiguity whereby the individual is both innocent and guilty:

If evil desire, concupiscence, etc. are regarded as innate in the individual, there is not the ambiguity in which the individual becomes both guilty and innocent. In the impotence of anxiety, the individual succumbs, and precisely for that reason is both guilty and innocent. (73; 342)

### (iii) Anxiety and the Body-Soul-Spirit Relation

Through man's relation to generation, and through the fact that he is a derived individual, man is related to natural, unfree necessity. By the fact that he is at the same time spirit, he is in

dread of this given reality. His freedom appears to be in conflict with necessity and with his animality. Man is related to nature by the fact that he is possessed of a bodily organism. Not only this, but he is possessed of a sexually differentiated bodily organism.

Kierkegaard goes on to show that woman is "more sensuous" than man because of her bodily organism, and therefore that her dread is greater. She like man is possessed of spirit.<sup>19</sup> But because her bodily actuality is more sensuous, a more profound conflict is present in her being. Because she is more sensuous, the opposition of it to the spirit is more keenly felt. The cold rule of necessity manifested in the pain of childbirth stands in tension with the inward spirit which fancies itself possessed of an inviolable space free from external compulsion. The greater sensuousness of the woman makes her more powerfully open to external compulsion, and places her in a profound relation to fate. Kierkegaard's intent is not to assert that woman is more natural than spiritual. It is because spirit is placed in a more profound relation to "external" necessity in the woman that makes her more capable of dread. In her the conflict between the fate and guilt elements of anxiety clash more strongly.

The first point which Kierkegaard raises in order to suggest the greater sensuousness of the woman is that bodily beauty is a more important aspect of her being than that of the man. He claims that in the representation of manly beauty, "the face and its expression are more essential than in the beauty of the woman" (65; 335). Venus, in Kierkegaard's view, is equally beautiful sleeping or waking, just as is the child. Spirit is more absent in an immediate sense in

women and children. The spirit does not easily find bodily expression in the female, whereas in the male the face is a natural medium. In Greek art, therefore, Apollo and Jupiter are never represented as sleeping, but always in a pose. In modern art since the Renaissance, the face of the male gains inordinate significance. The female face hints at spirit, as for instance in the "Mona Lisa" with its enigmatic smile, while the male face, when rendered by a proportion of light and shade, expresses an inward pain.

Finally, the fact that woman gives birth brings her to the extreme end of the sensuous. She is related to change and becoming whether she wills it or not, just as she is always subject to the menstrual cycle. But at the same time woman is free, i.e. is spirit. That she is in dread is because of the fact that she is free in relation to the particular character of her bodily organism. For this reason he says, "anxiety is always to be conceived in the direction of freedom" (66; 336). The dread experienced by the woman is greater only in the quantitative sense; the qualitative character of her soul, the fact that it is determined by spirit, is identical with that of the man.

By Adam's sin the sexual became the sinful, and therefore, "the sexual as such is not the sinful" (68; 337). It is only sinful in relation to the will which has perverted it. Through sin sexual differentiation becomes actual, and in addition, a possible object of shame. Ignorance of the sexual belongs to the animal "which therefore is a slave of blind instinct and acts blindly." In the later innocent individual, the innocent knowledge of sexual difference is expressed in the feeling of modesty. Modesty again arises out of man

in so far as he is a synthesis of free spirit and necessity. Spirit cannot "recognize" or see itself in sexual differentiation:

With innocence [of the later, derived individual], a knowledge begins that has ignorance as its first qualification. This is the concept of modesty (Scham). In modesty there is an anxiety, because spirit is found at the extreme point of the difference of the synthesis in such a way that spirit is not merely qualified as body, but as body with a generic difference. Nevertheless, modesty is a knowledge of the generic difference, but not as a relation to a generic difference, which is to say, the sexual urge is not present. The real significance of modesty is that spirit, so to speak, cannot acknowledge itself at the extreme point of the synthesis. Therefore the anxiety found in modesty is prodigiously ambiguous. There is no sense of sensuous lust, and yet there is a sense of shame. Shame of what? Of nothing. (68; 338)

Because spirit is something more than the mere combination of soul and body, it feels itself alien to that combination when it is expressed immediately in the erotic act and in reproduction. But since spirit is yet the basis of the relation of soul to body, spirit represents the possibility of reconciling this alienation in a higher unity. Spirit is both distinct from, and the basis of the relation between, soul and body.

Kierkegaard asserts that Greek comedy explained the relation between soul and body by neutralizing the sexual difference in the indifference of the comic spirit. By representing the serious strife of lovers in the playful light of the comic, the Greek comedians neutralized the difference of the spirit from the sexual: "Hence the highest pagan expression for this is that the erotic is the comical" (69; 338). One neither has the mere self-assertion of the erotic impulse, confident in itself, nor is the self in a merely negative relation to the erotic, as if it were an impulse which had to be mastered. Thus in the comic

reconciliation of opposites, both the erotic and the moral negative relation to the erotic are reduced to indifference. In the Greek comedy, it is

. . . the power of intelligence and its preponderance that in the indifference of the spirit neutralize both the erotic and the moral relation to the erotic. This power has a very deep source. The anxiety in modesty arose from the spirit's feeling that it was a foreigner; now spirit has conquered completely and perceives the sexual as the foreign and as the comic. (69; 338)

In Christianity, according to Kierkegaard, the sexual is not merely neutralized but suspended, which would seem to indicate a higher reconciliation. It is possible that he means that in the Christian notion of marriage as a sacrament, the sexual is reconciled with the spirit. The spiritual and the sexual are not in constant strife, as they are at the level of mere ethics. In the sphere of the religious, it is love which harmonizes the contraries. The difference between spirit and the sexual is not ironically "neutralized", but preserved and transfigured:

Here, as everywhere, I must decline every misunderstood conclusion, as if, for instance, the true task should now be to abstract from the sexual, i.e. in an outward sense to annihilate it. When the sexual is once posited as the extreme point of the synthesis, all abstraction is of no avail. The task, of course, is to bring it under the qualification of the spirit (here lie all the moral problems of the erotic). The realization of this is the victory of love in a person in whom the spirit is so victorious that the sexual is forgotten, and recollected only in forgetfulness. When this has come about, sensuousness is transfigured in spirit and anxiety is driven out. (80; 349)

In this chapter, we are concerned with the individual who is not yet in sin. The modesty or shame evident in the innocent individual is the pre-sentiment of the corrupted relation into which the spiritual and the sexual fall. This anxiety is the "more" which is inherited by

the individual through his "derivative" relation to the race. Even in innocent love, anxiety is present. The presence of dread means the absence of spirit, since spirit cannot be actual unless innocence disappears. But spirit is present in so far as it is that which supports the synthesis of soul and body in innocence: "The spirit is indeed present, because it is spirit that establishes the synthesis, but it cannot express itself in the erotic. It feels itself a stranger" (71; 341).

Anxiety is the psychological concept that explains the simultaneous presence and absence of spirit in the innocent individual. In childbirth the absent presence of spirit is at its height, where "woman is again at the furthest point of one extreme of the synthesis." It is for this reason that woman experiences anxiety during childbirth. With respect to these fundamental experiences of erotic love and childbirth, the later individual "is more sensuous than the original, and this 'more' is the 'more' of the generation for every subsequent individual in relation to Adam" (72; 341).

Along with greater sensuousness, therefore, arises greater anxiety. This "more" is brought about by a quantitative increase rather than by a qualitative change. The qualitative transition of the soul into actual sin remains unexplained. The individual does not begin in a simple relation to the unconditioned, but is conditioned by a "historical nexus". But, the "more" of the conditioned individual still maintains a relation to the unconditioned, for "Christianity teaches him to lift himself above this 'more', and judges him who does not do so as being unwilling" (73; 342).

## (iv) The Individual and the Sin of the Others

Up until this point, Kierkegaard has examined the relation of anxiety to the fact of generation and sexual differentiation. In section "B" of the second chapter, he briefly shows how the anxiety arises in relation to the sins the individual witness in other individuals. Through his relation to other individuals who have fallen, he gains a "general knowledge" that it is possible for the sensuous to become the sinful. This individual still does not understand what he knows, for he himself has not become related to sinfulness as a sinner. He does not understand sin until he actually "stands under" it. When placed in a historical relation to sin,

. . . spirit is posited not only in relation to the opposite of sensuousness, but also to that of sinfulness. It follows as a matter of course that the innocent individual does not as yet understand this knowledge, for it can only be understood qualitatively. However, this knowledge is again a new possibility, so that freedom in its possibility, as it relates itself to the sensuous, comes into still greater anxiety. (73-74; 343)

The ambiguity of the relation to this knowledge is such that "the sight of the sinful may save one individual and bring another to fall" (74; 343). The possibilities entertained in reflection are quantitatively infinite. In becoming evil, an individual denies his limits. His ability to obey is overwhelmed by the thought of infinite possibility, a thought to which he succumbs. With respect to reflection on sin "there are no limits . . . the quantitative is precisely the infinite limit" (74; 343).

While Kierkegaard wants to avoid claiming that the individual sins necessarily, he also wants to deny that the choice of evil is

arbitrary. An intermediate term which subsumes the particular case under the general law is required:

An intermediate term must be provided that has the ambiguity that rescues thought (without which the salvation of the child becomes an illusion), namely, that the child, whatever its circumstance was, can become both guilty and innocent. If one does not have the intermediate terms promptly and clearly at hand, the concepts of hereditary sin, of sin, and of the individual are lost, and with these the child also. (76; 345)

Kierkegaard concludes the second chapter by denying the middle term which he claims has been offered by modern philosophy. This middle term is selfishness. To explain the transition by means of selfishness is in fact to presuppose what has to be explained. Kierkegaard claims that it is precisely the self, the ego, which is brought into being by the qualitative leap of sin. Until the leap has occurred, the sexual would not be present as a drive or propensity. Selfishness presupposes the existence of a self. The self is "precisely the contradiction of positing the universal as the particular." The difficulty with science is that it is unable to "say what the self is without again stating it quite generally" (78; 347).

#### (v) Conclusion

In Kierkegaard's view, the rationalization of the Christian doctrine, according to which sin is interpreted as selfishness, implies that sin is not absolute nothingness, but a certain kind of potentiality which of necessity makes its appearance in human life. It is connected with a low view of human nature made popular by Hobbes, and partially accepted by Hegel, according to which man is by nature selfish or evil.

For Hobbes, it was this assumption which made it possible to found a secure political order,<sup>20</sup> while for Hegel it defined the original condition in which man was once mired, and through the overcoming of which he came to know his true freedom.<sup>21</sup> For such thinkers, according to Kierkegaard, evil comes about not by a transcendent act which is both inherited and participated in by each individual, but instead by a "quantitative" repetition of a pre-determined potentiality which is passed on much in the same way as is erect posture.

Kierkegaard's claim that sensuousness is not sinfulness implies a criticism of those rationalizations of the Christian doctrine of sin according to which sin is a kind of natural potentiality. His understanding of the fall implies a sharp disagreement with the modern view of human nature. He makes this rather rhetorical criticism of the Hobbesian tradition in natural philosophy:

As soon as one wants to speak scientifically about this selfishness, everything is dissolved into tautology, or one becomes clever and everything becomes confused. Who can forget that natural philosophy found selfishness in all creation, found it in the movement of the stars that nevertheless are bound in obedience to the laws of the universe, found that the centrifugal force in nature is selfishness. If a concept is brought that far, it might just as well lie down and, if possible, sleep off its drunkenness and become sober again. (78; 346)

To speak about selfishness as natural to man, is, according to Kierkegaard, to speak generally about it as if it were an essential characteristic of man which repeats itself "quantitatively". Kierkegaard describes the self as that which is "precisely the contradiction of positing the universal as the particular" (78; 346). This statement is essentially the same as the first proposition with which he began the first chapter, that the individual is both himself and the race,

both the "quantitative" repetition of the essence "human being" and the "qualitative" particular individual who is primordially related to the transcendent act of original sin. The selfishness of the self cannot be explained by reference to "universal categories" which explain sin as a natural, inherited potentiality, but can only be understood by the individual himself:

Although in the newer science sin has often been explained as selfishness, it is incomprehensible that it has not been recognized that precisely here lies the difficulty of finding a place for its explanation in any science. 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. (77; 346)

The repetition of selfishness in the individual comes about not by necessity, but by the qualitative leap in which, overpowered by nothingness, the individual succumbs to sin. In the stage of innocence there is no true self because it has not yet been "posited". The self becomes actual only when the individual has come into being, having chosen either the actuality of obedience and freedom, or the non-actuality of sin. We are led to the second main assertion of the first two chapters of Anxiety, that sin comes into the world by a sin, and not by a "quantitative" progression:

. . . the real "self" is posited by the qualitative leap. In the prior state there can be no question about it. Therefore, when sin is explained by selfishness, one becomes entangled in indistinctness, because, on the contrary, it is by sin and in sin that selfishness comes into being. (79; 348)

The three main claims that are made in the first two chapters, (a) that sin came into the world by a sin, (b) that the individual is both himself and the race, and (c) that sensuousness is not sinfulness,

are all variations of the same theme, namely, that sin and evil are not the natural condition of the human being but a condition in which he participates by virtue of an act. This act is not the irrational pulse of an indifferent will, but an ambiguous mixture of action and passion. The self both opens its eye to the infinity of possibility, and yet is enslaved to the infinity thus created. It is therefore not a mere act of will, but a sin, in virtue of which the individual is both guilty and innocent.

In the stage of innocence, the self of the individual is only a possibility. Spirit is not actual in the innocent self, but still manifests its presence in the self in the form of awakening anxiety. The fall into guilt and sin occurs when this anxiety does not lead to a fuller determination of the self, but instead brings about the loss of the self in the nothingness of infinite possibility. The "nothing" is therefore not the ultimate reality of the self, but that unreality to which the self succumbs when, turning away from the spirit which would endow it with determinacy and actuality, the self imagines that everything is possible for it. In The Sickness unto Death the fall of the self is described in the following way:

Thus possibility seems greater and greater to the self; more and more becomes possible because nothing becomes actual. Eventually everything seems possible, but this is exactly the point at which the abyss swallows up the self. It takes time for each little possibility to become actuality. Eventually, however, the time that should be used for actuality grows shorter and shorter; everything becomes more and more momentary. . . . The instant something appears to be possible, a new possibility appears, and finally these phantasmagoria follow one another in such rapid succession that it seems as if everything were possible, and this is exactly the point at which the individual himself becomes a mirage. (KW 19, 36; SV 11, 149)

The self attains determinacy and actuality, not when it sees its true origin and end as nothingness, but when it subordinates that nothingness to the spirit. Unlike Sartre, Kierkegaard does not exhort the individual to make himself without regard to an eternal end, but precisely to attune his powers of making to that which is eternally necessary in his self. Becoming lost in possibility is at the same time the loss of the ability to "obey" what is necessary in the self:

When a self becomes lost in possibility in this way, it is not merely because of a lack of energy; at least it is not to be interpreted in the usual way. What is missing is the power to obey, to submit to the necessity in one's life, to what may be called one's limitations. (KW 19, 36; SV 11, 149)

And to become attuned to what is necessary in the self is at the same time to become attuned to God. The human being is therefore at the utmost point of sin when he whispers to himself that "everything is possible". By such a statement he places himself at the furthest possible distance from God.

The nothingness of sin not only alienates man from God, but divides the self from itself, since it is only in virtue of man's relation to God that he is in possession of a self at all. Just as the human self is a synthesis of soul and body, it is also a synthesis of infinitude and finitude, of possibility and necessity, all of which syntheses are only actual when the self relates itself to God: "The self is a conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude that relates itself to itself, whose task is to become itself, which can be done only through the relationship to God" (KW 19, 29-30; SV 11, 143).

The effect of being lost in the possible, as seen from the previous quotations, is the inability of the self to find true presence

in time: ". . . the time that should be used for actuality grows shorter and shorter; everything becomes more and more momentary" (KW 19, 36; SV 11, 149). The self lost in possibility cannot become actual, and therefore lacks a true present in virtue of which it can live and act. That in virtue of which the self becomes an actuality and in virtue of which it achieves stability, determinacy and limitation, is that in virtue of which it gains true presence in time. We will proceed, therefore, in the next chapter of this dissertation to examine the connection between the synthetic structure of the self and the instant of time as it is described in the third chapter of Anxiety.

## CHAPTER THREE: FREEDOM AND TIME

### I Freedom and the Spirit

The purpose of the following chapter is to prepare the reader for the discussion of time, fate and guilt in chapter three of The Concept of Anxiety. Its main point is that freedom is not defined purely in terms of time and "possibility", but that it must be related to what Kierkegaard understands by the "eternal", by "necessity", and by the "Moment" in which time and eternity touch. Time is an important element of human existence, but it does not, in Kierkegaard's mind, constitute man's essence. The fact that man is a "synthesis" of eternity and time is reflected in Kierkegaard's description of the human self as a trinity of soul, body and spirit, which trinity was described in part in the last chapter.<sup>1</sup> We will proceed in this first section to describe the relation of this structure of the self to the problem of freedom and repetition in Kierkegaard's thought. First, Kierkegaard's understanding of freedom must be distinguished from certain features common to modern existentialism.

#### (i) Freedom and Freedom of Choice

Three claims characteristic of modern existentialism, as we have seen in our consideration of Sartre in the last chapter,<sup>2</sup> are (a) that the human will is creative, (b) that time, in so far as it

is related to human reality, is historical and unrepeatable in character, and finally (c) that human identity is not an unchanging substance but is a product of human action itself, the unifying basis of which is an ever creative ability to negate what one immediately is. According to this view, human existence is not grounded on an unchanging essence. Instead the life of the individual is the expression of an ever-moving tendency which never culminates in a definite end, but perpetually expends itself in striving toward an end which is entirely unknown.

It has been noted that Kierkegaard denies the creativity of the will in the sense of arbitrary freedom. Nevertheless, he constantly affirms the importance of choice and decision. On the basis of such affirmations, it is tempting to draw the conclusion that man's real nature is defined purely by the temporal "possibilities" open to the human will. One also might propose that Kierkegaard denies the liberum arbitrium in Anxiety only to emphasize the historical concreteness of human nature, that all human action takes place within the context of historical givens.<sup>3</sup> Therefore one could argue that he denies human creativity in the absolute sense of creation out of nothing, only in order to assert finally that there is no unchanging essence in terms of which human willing is eternally defined. These historical givens can be endlessly redefined and reshaped according to the decisions we make from moment to moment. Our nature does not pre-exist our choices, but is mediated by choices essentially historical and unrepeatable in character. In the light of such claims, and with the evidence of the following partial quotation, Kierkegaard seems to fall under all three of the characteristics I have named as being essential to

existentialism:

That abstract freedom of choice (liberum arbitrium) is a phantasy, as if a human being at every moment of his life stood continually in this abstract possibility, so that consequently he never moves from the spot, as if freedom were not also an historical condition -- this has been pointed out by Augustine and many moderns.

It seems to me the matter can be illuminated quite simply in the following way. Take a weight, even the most accurate gold weight -- when it has been used only a week it already has a history. The owner knows this history, for example, that it leans off-balance one way or the other, etc. This history continues with use.

So it is with the will. It has a history, a continually progressive history. . . . (JP 2, 1268; Pap X<sup>4</sup> A 175)

The argument against my thesis would be conclusive were it not for the fact that Kierkegaard goes on to point out the dialectical character of the act of will. Kierkegaard makes the distinction, common to St. Paul and Augustine,<sup>4</sup> between the will and the power to will. The individual who chooses wrongly introduces a taint into his originally innocent nature. By reason of habit, this taint slowly enervates the ability of the individual to choose what he really wills. In so far as the individual "makes" something new in his choice which departs from what was originally given him, his acts are "historical". A man's "progressive history" is in fact his progressive loss of the ability to choose. We may now add the passage which follows immediately upon the passage quoted above:

A person can go so far that he finally loses even the capacity of being able to choose. With this, however, the history is not concluded, for, as Augustine rightly says, this condition is the punishment of sin -- and is again sin. The concept "sin" captures in every way. It is not something external so that the punishment is something else; no, the punishment, although punishment, is again sin. (JP 2, 1268; Pap X<sup>4</sup> A 175)

At each moment one ought to be able to correspond to what is eternally

real within oneself. The fact that one does not so correspond has its roots both in a choice (freedom) and in a fate (necessity or habit).

The historical self which acts in time does not correspond to the self which is "given" it by God, just as the balance which leans to one side does not correspond to the pure idea of balance which is carried within the mind. This lack of correspondence is not a matter of necessity for the human being, as it is for the balance, but is somehow a product of sin. The historical freedom which we are able to actualize in time does not correspond to the true freedom which comes only through the relation of the self to God. Since this true freedom is our essence, it is not subject to our choosing. But the very fact that we have chosen against this true freedom and lost it means that we have choice with respect to it. This fact, that we must choose with respect to what is not a matter of choice, is pointed out by Kierkegaard in the following journal entry:

. . . Christianity can say to a man: You shall choose the one thing needful, but in such a way that there must be no question of any choice -- that is if you fool around a long time, then you are not really choosing the one thing needful; like the kingdom of God, it must be chosen first. Consequently there is something in relation to which there must not be, and by definition there can not be, a choice, and yet there is a choice. Consequently, the very fact that there is no choice expresses the tremendous passion or intensity with which one chooses. Can there be a more accurate expression for the fact that freedom of choice as such means the sure loss of freedom? The content of freedom is decisive for freedom to such an extent that the very truth of freedom of choice is: there must be no choice, even though there is a choice. (JP 2, 1261; Pap X<sup>2</sup> A 428)

A choice which is real and which therefore concerns the whole of an individual's being is for Kierkegaard an eternal choice. The "leap" which breaks a line of reflection in order to bring about a

beginning is an eternal resolution, or it is no resolution at all: "A beginning is always a resolution, but a resolution is really eternal (for otherwise it is only nonsense and something which under later scrutiny will appear as skepticism)" (JP 1, 912; Pap V A 72). But since it is the I that makes the resolution, the resolution is temporal and through me occupies time and space. Or as Judge William puts it in Kierkegaard's Stages on Life's Way, true resolution "is just as temporal as it is eternal" (SLW, p. 116; SV 6, 108).

The choice therefore is a choice in so far as it is related to the unchanging, i.e. to eternal necessity. Yet the choice is a choice also through the fact that it may or may not come into being at a definite time and place. A choice must be "possible". The true choice, then, is obedience to what necessarily is, or to that order of reality of which the self is a part. The passion of choice consists in the fact that what one really is, is in fact beyond one's choice. It does not consist, as Sartre claims, in facing the abyss of freedom where nothing is necessary and everything is possible. The dread of possibility is the dread of choosing and being other than what one eternally is. Though choice is "possible", the true possibility of choice consists in choosing what it is eternally necessary to choose. Kierkegaard expressed agreement with Augustine's dictum that it is a great good to be able not to sin, but that not to be able to sin is the greatest:

What Augustine says of true freedom (distinguished from freedom of choice) is very true and very much a part of experience -- namely, that a person has the most lively sense of freedom when with completely decisive determination he impresses upon his action the inner necessity which excludes the thought of another possibility. Then freedom

of choice or the "agony" of choice comes to an end.  
 (JP 2, 1269; Pap X<sup>4</sup> A 177)<sup>5</sup>

In Kierkegaard's thought, therefore, there is a clear distinction which, moreover, he feels to be consistent with the thought of Augustine. The will is not definitive of what is good but subordinate to the order of good. What is possible for the self, i.e. what is a possible object of the will, must be defined in relation to what is necessary in the self, and therefore constitutive of its being.

Will belongs in the sphere of temporality as the organ that may bring about what has not yet been through a process in time. Will always operates in terms of before and after. And yet for a resolution to be real it must be eternal, not willed but accepted by the individual in a single moment of time. How then can a will which always implies a division of before and after execute a choice which is eternal? The purpose of the will, and of freedom of choice, is in fact to do away with itself in perfect surrender to the good:

The most tremendous thing conceded to man is -- choice, freedom. If you want to rescue and keep it, there is only one way -- in the very same second unconditionally in full [submission] give it back to God and yourself along with it. If the sight of what is conceded to you tempts you, if you surrender to the temptation and look with selfish craving at freedom of choice, then you lose your freedom. . . . Then you become ill, freedom becomes your fixed idea, and finally you become like the rich man morbidly imagining that he has become impoverished and will die of want. You sigh that you have lost the freedom of choice -- and the mistake is merely that you do not sorrow deeply enough so that you get it back again. (JP 2, 1261; Pap X<sup>2</sup> A 428)

The moment of temptation when one gazes in craving at freedom of choice corresponds to that moment of dread in which Adam succumbed to possibility and entered into a state of estrangement from God. The self which departs from its true nature is compared to a man who

while in fact rich imagines himself to be a pauper. This attitude of the self to itself is established by a history of many choices which are nevertheless bound together in an identity. If the person is a mere series of states with no unchanging substance which relates the many states to one another, what is his identity?

### (ii) Freedom and the Identity of the Self

In the second volume of Either/Or, Judge William (the pseudonym) offers a difficult interpretation of the identity of the self. In letter form he writes a response to the writings contained in the first volume of Either/Or. The writings of this first volume represent the aesthetic consciousness for which the distinction between good and evil is not yet actual. The identity of the aesthetic consciousness, according to Judge William, is a kind of algebraic sign of which the events of life are the variables. The Judge contrasts to this form of life the individual who recognizes an eternal good or validity in terms of which the variables can be judged real or unreal. That is to say, the conception of a real identity is introduced which serves as the basis of the validity of the principle of contradiction. Some choices, actions, thoughts are either good or evil accordingly as they correspond or do not correspond to this reality.

The one who corresponds to the real "chooses himself" absolutely, defines himself as a whole which excludes this or that action as evil. Yet he who chooses absolutely or eternally is the "same" individual who earlier in time thought thoughts and performed actions which did

not correspond to his true self. This true self comes into being at the moment when one chooses himself absolutely. Through a change the unchanging enters into existence:

The reason . . . why it seems to an individual as if he might constantly be changed and yet remain the same (as if his inmost nature were an algebraic sign which could signify anything whatever) is to be found in the fact that he is not correctly situated, has not chosen himself, has no conception of such a thing; and yet even in his lack of understanding there is implied a recognition of the eternal validity of the personality. He, on the other hand, who is correctly situated has a different experience. He chooses himself, not in a finite sense (for then this "self" would be something finite along with other things finite), but in an absolute sense; and yet, in fact, he chooses himself and not another. This self which he then chooses is infinitely concrete, for it is in fact himself, and yet it is absolutely distinct from his former self, for he has chosen it absolutely. This self did not exist previously, for it came into existence by means of the choice, and yet it did exist, for it was in fact "himself". (EO 2, p. 219; SV 2, 193)

In making the "absolute choice" the individual repents of those actions which do not correspond to the self in its eternal validity. To return to our example of the balance, the finite balance which leans to one side departs from the idea of perfect balance by a definite measure. By subtracting a certain number of units of measure from one side of the perfect balance we can account for the discrepancy between the existing balance and the perfect balance. The discrepancy can even be corrected by adding the requisite number of units of weight to one side. In the same way there is a discrepancy between the eternal self and the existing self. This discrepancy has been created by all the finite choices made by the individual in the course of a life-time. These choices amount to subtractions from or limitations of the eternal self to which they are related. Through

the addition of an absolute choice in which one repents of the imperfection of one's past choices, the individual cancels these subtractions and restores his true, eternal self.

Now while these subtractions were in place, the true self of the individual did not "exist". This true self only comes into being when the individual makes the absolute choice. On the other hand, the absolute choice does not bring into being an entirely new individual, because the individual making the choice is the "same" individual who in the past made all the subtractions from his eternal self. By the absolute choice a new self is not created, but repeated. The individual does not create the self, but rather "chooses" the self:

In this case choice performs at one and the same time the two dialectical movements: that which is chosen does not exist and comes into existence with the choice; that which is chosen exists, otherwise there would not be a choice. For in case what I chose did not exist but absolutely came into existence with the choice, I would not be choosing, I would be creating; but I do not create myself, I choose myself. Therefore, while nature is created out of nothing, while I myself as an immediate personality am created out of nothing, as a free spirit I am born of the principle of contradiction or born by the fact that I choose myself.  
(EO 2, pp. 219-20; SV 2, 193)

Freedom has nothing to do with the ability to do this or that finite thing. The self is not simply produced by a succession of choices, but is that in relation to which all choice is measured. Man's choosing is entirely subordinate to the eternal necessity to which it is constantly and at every moment related. The self is a reality which is received by the individual and which he either accepts or rejects. It is not something which the individual creates, but something which he acquires from that which is real. This is why, in the following quotation, Kierkegaard states that the true self

lies in a certain sense outside the existing self:

The individual's self is, as it were outside of him, and it has to be acquired, and repentance is his love for the self, because he chooses it absolutely out of the hand of the eternal God. (EO 2, p. 221; SV 2, 194)

With this thought we arrive at essentially the same paradox discussed earlier, where Kierkegaard explained that Christian freedom involved the choice of what was fundamentally not a matter of choice. We were told that it is the fact that there is no choice that accounts for the great passion with which one makes the "absolute choice". The claim that one "chooses" out of the hand of an eternal God involves a great contradiction. The temporal, historical self which has no power to will its own good must choose itself "out of the hand" of a God who is the only one who can allow one to so will. The individual must experience the same frustration as the little girl who must see-saw with a two hundred and fifty pound adult. The little girl has no meaningful weight over against the adult.

### (iii) The Spiritual Identity and Dependence of the Self

There is, therefore, an element of the self which is unchanging, and, because it derives from an eternal God, is itself eternal and not a matter of choice. The other element of the self is the temporal, changing side, which is to some extent the product of an historical process of development. For the absolute choice to be possible, the temporal side, along with its limitations, must come into relation to the eternal side and be bound in an identity with it. There must be an organ which binds the unchoosable element of the self with the

choosable, changeable self, and yet which retains the distinction of the elements. This third thing is spirit, which is the organ of true freedom: ". . . the very truth of freedom of choice is: there must be no choice, even though there is a choice. This is 'spirit'" (JP 2, 126; Pap X<sup>2</sup> A 428).

Kierkegaard discusses the tri-partite division of body, soul and spirit in relation to the concept of dependent freedom in a particularly dense section of The Sickness unto Death. Spirit is identified as the third thing which binds the changing and the unchanging elements of man together. The two poles of eternity and time in man are equated with the pairs freedom and necessity, infinite and finite, and soul and body. When one takes one pair without the concept of spirit, one has a mere dichotomy or contradiction. In so far as there is a contradiction there is no unified self. That is to say, there is no identity in terms of which consciousness can "relate itself to itself":

A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but [that the relation relates] itself to itself. (KW 19, 13; SV 11, 127)

The self is the fact of, or a product of the relation, but not identical with the relation. He continues:

A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. Considered in this way, a human being is still not a self. In the relation between two, the relation is the third as a negative unity, and the two relate to the relation and in the relation to the relation; thus under the qualification of the psychical the relation between the psychical and the physical is a relation. If, however, the

relation relates itself to itself, this relation is the positive third, and this is the self. (KW 19, 13; SV 11, 127)

When man is conceived of as a mere unity of soul and body governed by soul alone, he is not seen to have any capability of being other than he is. Like the plant or the animal, he is a mere repetition of the species of which he is a member. The individual self has no causal power of its own, and in this sense cannot effect or determine the relation between soul and body. In this conception of man the self is merely a "negative unity", because the relation between the psychical and the physical is "under the qualification of the psychical," i.e. it is a determination of it. That is to say, the relation is not determined by the self.

When man is conceived, however, as both himself and the race, the self is not determined by soul alone, and the qualifications inherent within it, but instead "relates itself to itself." The capacity of the self to relate itself to itself is, as we have seen, a product of the relation and not identical with it. The structure of the self is not created by the self-relating of the self to itself, but is a structure which is given, and in terms of which the free self-relating of the self is possible.

Kierkegaard clarifies his statements by saying that the self is both self-relating and yet constituted by an "other". In fact it is identical with itself in so far as it is at the same time grounded in the "other" which posits the whole relation. Spirit is a wider term than the self in so far as it expresses both the self-relating, self-moving aspect of the self and the presence in this self of the "other" which constitutes it.

As is pointed out by M.C. Taylor, it is important to note Kierkegaard's differences with Hegel on this issue.<sup>6</sup> According to Taylor, Kierkegaard uses the very term "synthesis" to describe the self which Hegel rejects as implying an abstract combination of elements that are in themselves separate. What makes the term unacceptable to Hegel, however, according to Taylor makes it attractive for Kierkegaard.<sup>7</sup> The self as a "synthesis" implies a paradoxical union of elements which are in themselves separate, i.e. of the unchanging and the changing, the unchoosable and the choosable. Spirit is not only that element in virtue of which the synthesis of the unchanging and the changing is made actual, it is also that element in virtue of which the self is related to what founded it and is "other" than it.

For Hegel, on the other hand, the ground of the self's actuality is not abstractly external to the self, but is embedded in the self as a kind of potentiality. The ground of the self is not as radically "other" to the self as it is in Kierkegaard's conception, but present in the self as a germ which manifests itself over time in a course of development.<sup>8</sup> What is at stake between Kierkegaard and Hegel is the principle that actualizes the relation between the essence and the existence of the self. How is the existing individual made adequate to the truth?

The answer of Hegel is that the individual has the means for actualizing his essence within himself in the form of purposive activity. The self is both a process of working out an end as well as the result of that process. The actual on the one hand and the "Notion", or absolute truth on the other, are identified through the fact that the

principle of actuality is immanent in the self. As Hegel states in the lesser Logic, the mind "is essentially active in the same sense as the Schoolmen said that God is 'absolute actusosity'."<sup>9</sup> Actuality is the very self-movement or self-relating of the self to itself.

Hegel states in the Phenomenology:

. . . the actual is the same as its Notion only because the immediate as purpose, contains the self or pure actuality within itself. The realized purpose, or the existent actuality, is movement and unfolded becoming; but it is just this unrest that is the self; and the self is like that immediacy and simplicity of the beginning because it is the result, that which has returned to itself, the latter being similarly just the self. And the self is the sameness and simplicity that relates itself to itself.<sup>10</sup>

Kierkegaard's imitation of Hegel's very terminology is to the end of affording the close reader a clear view of the glaring contrast between Hegel's account of the self and his own. For Kierkegaard the principle of actuality does not lie embedded in the human soul as a kind of germ or potentiality which necessarily realizes itself. According to Kierkegaard, the self as a synthesis is only actual in so far as it is related to another outside the synthesis which grounds it. Kierkegaard sets out the alternatives and his own solution in the following way:

Such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must either have established itself or have been established by another. If the relation that relates itself to itself has been established by another, then the relation is indeed the third, but this relation, the third, is yet again a relation and relates itself to that which established the entire relation. The human self is such a derived, established relation, a relation that relates itself to itself and in relating itself to itself relates itself to another.  
 (KW 19, 13-14; SV 11, 127-28)

The self is simple, or self-relating, according to Kierkegaard, only in so far as it is grounded in "another". Any choice that is

made by the self occurs in the context of this primary and real relation. Because I am a self, I am identical with myself and have the ability to act. But in so far as my identity is constituted by a reality external to me (God), I must always choose in relation to this reality. How can I ever choose to be other than what I am? The only way, according to Kierkegaard, is to fall out of relation to the real. To fall into sin, therefore, is at the same time to lose one's real identity.<sup>11</sup>

The division between body, soul and spirit reflects, then, Kierkegaard's view that the self is not to be conceived purely in terms of its own purposive activity. The self in his view is a relation of substantial elements (soul and body) which are in themselves separate, but whose simultaneous identity is grounded in a third term (spirit) which in turn relates the self to another.<sup>12</sup>

According to Kierkegaard, it is only when the self is conceived as relating itself to itself through another that the phenomenon of despair is adequately illuminated. In The Sickness unto Death, he names two basic forms of despair, the second of which is impossible except on the basis of the structure of the self he has described. The first form of despair is the despair of not willing to be oneself, or of not taking responsibility for oneself. The second form of despair is the despair of thinking that by one's own actions or willing one can give oneself identity and abolish despair. Kierkegaard calls this form of despair "despairingly willing to be oneself." The idea that the self is a relation which, in relating to itself, relates itself to another, means that the relation of the individual to truth

is an entirely dependent relation. If the human self had constituted itself, i.e. were independent rather than dependent, then the second form of despair (despairingly willing to be oneself) would not be possible:

This is why there can be two forms of despair in the strict sense. If a human self had itself established itself, then there could be only one form: not to will to be oneself, to will to do away with oneself, but there could not be the form: in despair to will to be oneself. This second formulation is specifically the expression for the complete dependence of the relation (of the self), the expression for the inability of the self to arrive at or to be in equilibrium and rest by itself, but only, in relating itself to itself, by relating itself to that which has established the entire relation.  
(KW 19, 14; SV 11, 128)

Far from affirming radical, arbitrary freedom, Kierkegaard in fact affirms the opposite. True freedom, in his view, consists in according oneself to what one really is. He turns to the phenomena of despair and dread in order to show how they manifest the individual's relation to this reality. These phenomena are certainly "inward", but they are neither irrational nor purely emotional. In Kierkegaard's account of things, man experiences dread and despair in just the way he does because he is entirely defined by what is eternally real.

Because the individual attempts to deny his relation to the eternal, psychological "symptoms" of this denial manifest themselves, visible only to the trained eye of the psychologist. Kierkegaard does not recommend dread or despair as exciting or dramatic "experiences". The only reason for studying these phenomena is so that they may be shown to indicate the relation of the self to the eternal. The cure of dread and despair does not originate in an act by the individual. The individual becomes free of despair when he becomes completely

transparent to the illumination<sup>13</sup> of what has established the self.

In fact, were he to attempt to save himself by himself, he only would increase the despair:

If the individual with all his power seeks to break the despair by himself and by himself alone -- he is still in despair and with all his presumed effort only works himself all the deeper into deeper despair. The misrelation of despair is not a simple misrelation but a misrelation in a relation that relates itself to itself and has been established by another, so that the misrelation in that relation which is for itself also reflects itself infinitely in the relation to the power that established it. The formula that describes the state of the self when despair is completely rooted out is this: in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it. (KW 19, 14; SV 11, 128)<sup>14</sup>

Willing, therefore, is not a kind of muscular effort which imposes a new state of affairs on a chain of physical events. In so far as willing is real it accords itself with what is eternal and independent of the will. Since the will is not that which actually effects this accordance, it must be related to the real in an entirely dependent manner. It achieves consciousness of its true being only by giving itself away entirely.

Kierkegaard distinguishes between willing and the power to will. In the state of sin the self has lost the ability to wholly will the good. Being able to will the good means being able to concentrate one's entire being so that it accords with the good and transparently reflects it. True inwardness is dependent upon becoming conscious of how deeply the self is rooted in something other than the self.<sup>15</sup> The fact that the individual is a real unity (spirit) of contradictions (eternity and time) constitutes the "existential" problem in Kierkegaard's thought. How can that which is temporal be assimilated to what is non-

temporal? Or how can a temporal act be an eternal resolution, a finite choice be an absolute choice? This problem is not only a problem of will, but one of consciousness as well:

But really to exist, so as to interpenetrate one's existence with consciousness, at one and the same time eternal and as if far removed from existence, and yet also present in existence and [in becoming]: that is truly difficult. (CUP, p. 273; SV 7, 264)

The problem of existence is the problem of how the good is to be realized in time, which is also the problem of how freedom is realized in the individual. The problem is how the unchanging can be repeated in time, even though becoming can be defined as the absence of the unchanging. The possibility of this repetition is a task for the individual, and not simply a necessary process in time. Kierkegaard contrasts the repetitions of the spirit to the purely necessary repetitions in nature:

In the realm of nature, repetition is present in its immovable necessity. In the realm of the spirit, the task is not to wrest a change from repetition or to find oneself moderately comfortable during the repetition, as if spirit stood only in an external relation to the repetition of spirit (according to which good and evil would alternate like summer and winter), but to transform repetition into something inward, into freedom's own task, into its highest interest, so that while everything else changes, it can actually realize repetition. (KW 8, 18n; SV 4, 290-91n)

As has been shown, this freedom is not an arbitrary or purely temporal freedom. Freedom "is" the "actualized" relation between temporal and the eternal elements of the self. This is why Kierkegaard goes on to say that "eternity is the true repetition" (KW 8, 18n; SV 4, 290-91n). Freedom "is" the unity of the given and the willed.

Dread is the psychological state which precedes the moment in time when the eternal is denied and sin appears. The structure

of the self as body, soul and spirit explains the possibility of this choice. It must be a choice which is eternal and yet temporal at the same time, something which is both a fate (original sin) in relation to which one is a slave, and an act (guilt) in relation to which one is a free individual. Real choice always relates to something fundamentally unchoosable.

The fall into sin and the subsequent attempt to realize repetition brings before the mind of the individual the enigma of motion. Each time he wishes to realize an unchanging good, he is confronted with his own particular reality which is always changing. The vanishing of time seems to deflect infinitely the attempt to achieve presence in a single moment of time. If it is the essence of the present moment to pass away, in what sense can the individual ever be truly present or whole in any moment of time? It is this question to which Kierkegaard turns in chapter three of Anxiety.

## II The Concept of Time

### (i) Repetition in Time

In language which recalls Plato's description of the soul in the Phaedrus, Kierkegaard states that: "Eternity is the winged horse, infinitely fast, and time is the worn-out jade; the existing individual is the driver" (CUP, p. 276; SV 7, 267). The fact that the individual is composed of eternity and time gives rise to passion. True passion consists in concentrating on the unity of these two elements which co-exist in the depths of the human soul. But this unity is not yet

conscious in the sinful man, nor is it realized in time, since the irreversible flow of time prevents it.

The individual is interested in becoming entirely present to himself, even though the process of time repeatedly sets him in opposition to himself. He must "while everything else changes . . . actually realize repetition" (KW 8, 18n; SV 4, 291). The achievement of true repetition is the achievement of true presence, which is why Kierkegaard can say in a journal entry that the "point of the essentially Christian is that it is presence" (JP 1, 76; Pap IX A 114).<sup>16</sup> The task of repetition is not merely a task for the will alone, but a task for one's whole being.

Kierkegaard makes his notion of repetition clear by referring to the Platonic opposition of being and becoming. This reference is made by way of a criticism of Hegel, according to whom being and becoming are dialectical and, since they mutually imply one another, are both contained in the notion of process. According to Kierkegaard, Plato perceived the difficulty in combining being and becoming in this manner. Hegel's mediation of being and becoming by means of the notion of process is belied by the individual's actual experience of the disparateness of these elements. In the attempt to achieve presence, or in attempting to realize the repetition of an eternal good, the individual experiences within himself the disparateness of being and becoming, which is at the same time the experience of the irreversible flow of time which appears to cause this disparateness. Hegel's reconciliation of being and becoming, in Kierkegaard's view, did not correspond to this fundamental experience of suffering. He turns, therefore, to

Plato because this philosopher preserves in theory the very dualism that is experienced in practice by the individual.

Kierkegaard claims that his own notion of repetition, while it unifies being and becoming in a way foreign to Plato, preserves the real distinction between these elements, a distinction which is recognized in Plato and overlooked in Hegel. He insists that his own solution explains the relation between the Eleatic notion of unchanging being, and Heraclitus' idea of ever changing being:

Repetition is the new category which has to be brought to light. If one knows something of modern philosophy and is not entirely ignorant of the Greek, one will easily see that precisely this category explains the relation between the Eleatic school and Heraclitus, and that properly it is repetition which by mistake has been called mediation.  
 (RP, p. 33; SV 3, 189)

Repetition involves the very same movement implied in the "absolute choice" discussed above. Real choice involves choosing what one already "is", otherwise the choice is not real. According to many of the Greek thinkers, everything which is novel or "moving" in time constitutes a degradation or partial image of the eternal. True being can never become, because it always has been. In this sense true being is "past" and pre-exists the temporal instances which are copies of it. In the words of Bergson, this understanding of being

. . . establishes between eternity and time the same relation as between a piece of gold and small change -- change so small that payment goes on forever without the debt being paid off. The debt could be paid at once with the piece of gold. It is this which Plato expresses in his magnificent language when he says that God, unable to make the world eternal, gave it Time, "a moving image of eternity."<sup>17</sup>

Bergson's elegant metaphor of gold and small change expresses precisely what Kierkegaard is trying to say about the Greek conception of time.

According to the Greeks, nothing can "come to be" in time which instantiates eternal being perfectly. The idea of a repetition implies just such an instantiation. The free choice which inaugurates true freedom and presence is the "coming to be" of an eternal decision.

In Kierkegaard's view the idea of knowledge as recollection accompanies necessarily the Greek view of the relation of being and becoming. Because we are eternal, we already know the truth from our very birth. Ignorance is a kind of forgetfulness which allows us to confuse what becomes with what truly is. By means of due separation of what is from what appears to be we may re-collect and re-member what is separated by becoming and change.<sup>18</sup>

The philosopher, however, as we saw in Chapter one, is always prevented from realizing this remembrance by the fact that he exists in time. To become truly wise he has to exit from the life which ties him to becoming, or what is the same thing, he must make his living a practice of dying:

The Greek philosopher was an existing individual, and did not permit himself to forget that fact. In order that he might devote himself wholly to thought, he therefore sought refuge in suicide, or in a Pythagorean dying from the world, or in a Socratic form of philosopher's death. He was conscious of being a thinker, but he was also aware that existence as his medium prevented him from thinking continuously, since existence involved him in a process of becoming. In order to think in very truth, therefore, he took his own life. (CUP, p. 274; SV 7, 265)

It was precisely the consciousness of this very tension in the depths of reality which made "every Greek thinker . . . a passionate thinker" (CUP, p. 276; SV 7, 267).

Recollection, according to Kierkegaard, corresponds to a view of reality which asserts that non-being does not exist. The only thing

which really is, is (unchanging) being itself. Becoming, which is a kind of non-being, is not at all. Repetition, on the other hand, implies that true being may come to be in the instant of free choice. In recollection something eternal (the soul) comes into an eternal (or past) relation to eternity; in repetition something eternal (the existing individual) comes into a temporal (present) relation to the eternal:

For as the eternal came into the world at a moment of time, the existing individual does not in the course of time come into relation with the eternal and think about it . . . but in time it comes into relation with the eternal in time; so that the relation is within time, and this relationship conflicts equally with all thinking, whether one reflects upon the individual or upon the Deity. (CUP, p. 506; SV 7, 497)

This is why Kierkegaard says that for Socrates "every point of departure in time is eo ipso accidental, an occasion, a vanishing moment" (PF, p. 13; SV 4, 181). For Socrates every moment of becoming has an irreducible admixture of non-being, and therefore prevents the true presence of the eternal. Nothing he does or thinks in time will alter his eternal relation to eternity. The moment of time in Socratic thought is not "decisive" in this sense. During no moment of the lifetime of the philosopher can his full eternal reality be realized. His eternal happiness is not decided in time but is instead a past and therefore ever-present reality. He becomes aware in time that he already is eternally related to eternity. In this sense, the true condition of the thinker, though veiled by forgetfulness, is always commensurable or adequate to the knowledge of reality. His forgetful ignorance is like a veil thrown over this true core. The veil is time and the true core is eternity.

According to Kierkegaard, Christianity has taught that man has lost through sin the condition which makes it possible for him to accord with reality. He has "fallen" out of relation to the real. The task is to "repeat" or recover the lost relation. Through an act in time, a new relation to the eternal must be realized. But, as was said, an occasion in time is inadequate to or incommensurable with the eternal. Sinful man cannot exit from time through an act of will. Nevertheless, the idea of repetition implies that the historical moment is commensurable with eternity, and that "what is" can be repeated in time. Through time one can become related to the eternal:

The dialectic of repetition is easy; for what is repeated has been, otherwise it could not be repeated, but precisely the fact that it has been gives it the character of novelty. When the Greeks said that all knowledge is recollection they affirmed that all that is has been; when one says that life is a repetition one affirms that existence that has been now becomes. When one does not possess the categories of recollection or of repetition the whole of life is resolved into a void and empty noise. Recollection is the pagan life-view; repetition is the modern life-view; repetition is the interest of metaphysics, and at the same time the interest upon which metaphysics founders; repetition is the solution contained in every ethical view, repetition is a conditio sine qua non of every dogmatic problem. (RP, p. 34; SV 3, 189)

The Greek view of being implies, in Kierkegaard's mind, that becoming in its vanishing only points toward unchanging true being. For Kierkegaard, true being is still beyond time but is at the same time "in" time. Time and eternity, though incommensurable, become related in a single moment of time: "The Moment makes its appearance when an eternal resolve comes into relation with an incommensurable occasion" (PF, p. 30; SV 4, 194). The eternity of the Greek philosopher is already realized beyond time in eternity, while in repetition eternity

is realized in time.

In so far as the resolve of the individual is eternal, it is an act out of time. In so far as the eternal is resolved upon, it is an act in time. The "Moment" or the "Instant", as Kierkegaard understands it, is the unity of these two elements. The individual's "resolve, which stands in no equal reciprocal relation to the occasion, must be from eternity, though when realized in time it constitutes precisely the Moment" (PF, p. 30; SV 4, 193-94).

In so far as the act is an eternal act, it is a recollection. That is to say it wholly recovers the eternal self. To the extent that the act, while having a beginning in time, is at the same time eternal, it is a repetition. Repetition implies the possession of the condition making one adequate to the real, and the simultaneous dispossession or absence of this condition. The eternal is both present and absent at the same time. Because the individual is a created synthesis of eternity and time, he is in possession of the condition which makes him adequate to the eternal. He simply remembers in consciousness that he is eternal. But in so far as he has forfeited the condition by an act, he has lost the condition. The fallen individual therefore receives a new nature in a specific moment of time. Interpretations fail, however, when it is overlooked that this novelty is at the same time a recollection. Repetition is a recollection in a forward direction.<sup>19</sup> It is a recollection that is not completed out of time but in time:

In so far as the learner exists he is already created, and hence God must have endowed him with the condition for understanding the Truth. For otherwise his earlier existence must have been merely brutish, and the Teacher who gave

him the Truth and with it the condition was the original creator of human nature. But in so far as the moment is to have decisive significance (and unless we assume this we remain at the Socratic standpoint) the learner is destitute of this condition, and must therefore have been deprived of it. (PF, p. 18; SV 4, 184-85)

The relation of the individual to eternity is both an accomplished or past relation, and a relation which must come to be anew at this and every future moment. In this present moment we must choose what is in principle unchoosable. It is not through the fact that the present is undetermined and open-ended that the present choice is charged with passion. The choice is not free because it is the unrepeatable and creative product of human freedom. The choice to be a real choice must be a repetition of the eternal in time. The relation of the individual to the eternal is both a passion, in the sense that the eternal is eternally absent from time, and an action, in the sense that it is only realized through time itself, or through an action which takes time.<sup>20</sup>

To be fully present in time, in Kierkegaard's view, is to be fully concentrated in the moment. Past and future must be gathered together and repeated in the moment. As we have shown, the achieving of this presence is not possible by a mere act of the will. A third thing is required which unites the eternal part of the self with the temporal part. The individual becomes conscious that he already is eternal, and at the same time sustains this fact by his action. By what is he moved? It must be the eternal itself which turns him toward his real self and true presence:

When by the help of eternity a man lives absorbed in today he turns his back to the next day. The more he is eternally absorbed in today, the more decisively does he

turn his back to the next day, so that he does not see it at all. (CD, p. 76; SV 10, 77)

To be entirely present to oneself is to be out of time while at the same time in time. It is this contradiction that Kierkegaard is wrestling with when he claims that the task of the individual consists in "the simultaneous maintenance of an absolute relationship to the absolute telos and a relative relationship to relative ends" (CUP, p. 386; SV 7, 374). The eternal does not rest in an immobile stillness entirely divorced from events in time. The eternal both rests in immobility and is at the same time present in what is mobile. In so far as one is consciously concentrated in the moment on eternity, one is present to oneself. In so far as this concentration comes to be in a moment of time, the eternal consciousness is arrived at through time. The individual "in time . . . comes into relation with the eternal in time" (CUP, p. 506; SV 7, 497). T.S. Eliot expresses the contradiction this way:

Time past and time future  
 Allow but a little consciousness.  
 To be conscious is not to be in time  
 But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,  
 The moment in the draughty church at smokefall  
 Be remembered; involved with past and future.  
 Only through time time is conquered.<sup>21</sup>

### (ii) The Problem of Transition in Time

Kierkegaard begins Chapter three of Anxiety by criticizing once more the use of the notion of transition in speculative philosophy. We saw in Chapter one of this dissertation how Hegel tried to explain why transition is a circular, and therefore necessary, process.<sup>22</sup> The

nature of Spirit is to pass over into its opposite and at the same time return to itself. The source of its motion is not outside of itself in a "beyond" which is above time. Spirit is the very presence of the timeless in time through the form of the historical process. This process, as we have seen, is a negative, self-mediating process through which Spirit comes to consciousness of itself. Ideas do not rest in stillness beyond time, but are present in the very temporal forms which they invisibly define.<sup>23</sup> When in the third chapter Kierkegaard again attacks the speculative concepts of transition, negation and mediation he is essentially criticizing the idea that Spirit realizes itself in history by means of a necessary process.

In the following quotation, Kierkegaard links these three concepts with the notion of beginning philosophy without presuppositions, a beginning which he claims is recommended by Hegel. His main point is that these concepts involve a reference to time which is not adequately accounted for by Hegel. The presuppositionless beginning in fact presupposes "terms and phrases borrowed from transition in time."<sup>24</sup>

In recent philosophy there is a category that is continually used in logical no less than in historical-philosophical inquiries. It is the category of transition. However, no further explanation is given. The term is freely used without any ado, and while Hegel and the Hegelian school startled the world with the great insight of the presuppositionless beginning of philosophy, or the thought that before philosophy there must be nothing but the most complete absence of presuppositions, there is no embarrassment at all over the use in Hegelian thought of the terms "transition", "negation", "mediation", i.e. the principles of motion, in such a way that they do not find their place in the systematic progression. If this is not a presupposition, I do not know what a presupposition is. For to use something that is nowhere explained is indeed to presuppose it. . . . Negation, transition, mediation are three disguised, suspicious, and secret agents (agentia main springs) that bring about all movements. Hegel

would hardly call them presumptuous, because it is with his gracious permission that they carry on their ploy so unembarrassedly that even logic uses terms and phrases borrowed from transition in time: "thereupon", "when", "as being it is this", "as becoming it is this," etc. (KW 8, 81; SV 4, 350-51)

For Kierkegaard a presuppositionless beginning implies a thinker who occupies the standpoint of absolute or universal doubt. Indeed in referring to Descartes in his lectures on philosophy, Hegel said that we must make an "absolute beginning" wherein we "renounce all prepossessions" and "all hypotheses which are accepted in their immediacy." This "true beginning" is identified with the doubting subject which is now to be "the fixed and settled basis" of knowledge.<sup>25</sup> Kierkegaard's argument is that immediacy cannot be transcended in this manner. Experience always has an element of givenness or naturalness which cannot be fully comprehended within a conceptual system. The very language we use with regard to motion and change, e.g. "when", "thereupon", has a givenness at which we can only wonder. Just as an individual can never become absolutely independent in his freedom, so his use of language "presupposes" a web of meaning which is simply given. Philosophy has in language a medium which is not freely chosen or constructed.

The mystery of consciousness, according to Kierkegaard, is that it is a unity, or better a synthesis, of the natural or given on the one hand, and the cognitive freedom of the individual on the other. Absolute doubt would have to take place out of time and without relation to an existing situation, whereas real doubt is involved in time and in a web of meaning which pre-exists that doubting. The claim to unbiased philosophy ignores the fact of the relation of thought to

language, and language to reality. As Kierkegaard states in his journal:

If it were the case that philosophers are presuppositionless, an account would still have to be made of language and its entire importance and relation to speculation, for here speculation does indeed have a medium which it has not provided itself, and what the eternal secret of consciousness is for speculation as a union of a qualification of nature and qualification of freedom, so also language is partly an original given and partly something freely developing. And just as the individual, no matter how freely he develops, can never reach the point of becoming absolutely independent, since true freedom consists, on the contrary, in appropriateing the given and consequently in becoming absolutely dependent through freedom, so it is also with language, although we do find at times the ill-conceived tendency of not wanting to accept language as the freely appropriated given but rather to produce it for oneself, whether it appears in the highest regions where it usually ends in silence or in the personal isolation of jargonish nonsense. (JP 3, 3281; Pap III A 11)

When we refer to events in time we use language. When Hegel refers to transition, according to Kierkegaard, he is presupposing its meaning. Indeed he must so presuppose it because transition cannot be explained fully in terms of a coherent system of concepts. If one attempts to explain transition in time logically, contradictions are always generated. In order to explain these contradictions, Kierkegaard refers to Plato, who at the same time is criticized for possessing only an abstract view of time and the temporal moment.

Kierkegaard repeats his claim that logic cannot explain change and transition. His criticism of Hegel is not that he discounted or ignored the fact of becoming, but that he falsified the real experience of time by reconciling the changing and the unchanging in an unlawful and abstract manner. His error lay in his claim that time and becoming can be viewed from a point of view outside of all time and becoming.

What Kierkegaard has in mind in the following quotation is the absolute standpoint that Hegel claims has been afforded him by virtue of his very position in history. By virtue of this position, he is able to know and understand what previous thinkers only believed. Becoming and being, according to Hegel, are unified through the necessary process of history, a process in which true being becomes the product of becoming. For Kierkegaard the reality of becoming is severely attenuated in this account:

In spite of all that Hegel says about process, he does not understand history from the point of view of becoming, but with the help of the illusion attaching to pastness understands it from the point of view of a finality that excludes all becoming. (CUP, p. 272n; SV 7, 263n)

In posing a dualism between "finality" and becoming, Kierkegaard would seem to be embracing an Eleatic interpretation of the relation between these elements. It will become clear through his treatment of Plato's Parmenides and its account of transition that this is not quite the case. He does adopt such a view, however, in so far as it brings out the contradictions which are produced when one seeks to conceive time and transition.

Kierkegaard therefore introduces Plato as one who has "fully recognized the difficulty of placing transition into the realm of the purely metaphysical, and for that reason the category of the moment cost him so much effort" (KW 8, 82; SV 4, 351). It should be recalled that in the "Introduction" to Anxiety, Kierkegaard stressed that science can possess certainty only if it deals with stable, unmoving states.<sup>26</sup> The science of psychology can only deal with the abstract conditions or states predisposing the individual to the actual fall into sin.

Psychology can no more deal with the actuality of sin than geometry can deal with the sides of a triangle during the time in which they are being drawn. Science deals with states that are, not with states which are coming to be. Kierkegaard insists that sin is not a state at all: ". . . sin is not a state. . . . As a state (de potentia) it is not, but de actu it is, again and again" (15; 287).

The reason for mentioning this is that immediately before the sentence quoted above about Plato's recognition of the difficulties in the notion of transition, Kierkegaard makes an exceedingly odd statement. He uses both terms ("actual" and "state") to describe the concept of transition, the same terms which he used as opposites in reference to sin. Transition is not merely a state, nor is it purely actual; it is both at the same time. The close reader is astonished to read the following:

The term "transition" is and remains a clever turn in logic. Transition belongs in the sphere of historical freedom, for transition is a state and it is actual. (82; 351)

To say that transition is both a state and actual means that it both is and is becoming. The fact that transition contains both these elements renders problematic the attempt to explain it in terms of concepts only. It is precisely this difficulty which, according to Kierkegaard, Plato's Parmenides acutely expresses.

In the section of the dialogue with which Kierkegaard is concerned, the character Parmenides is explaining how it is that transition takes place in a moment of time which, strictly speaking, does not exist. In particular the dialogue is concerned with how the "one" (to en) can undergo changes in time from one moment to the next. The

most interesting aspect of the discourse is how "presence" is defined, and then how the "one" is conjoined with this presence. The fact that we can affirm that the one "is" one, means that it has being. Being is defined not merely as an eternal present beyond time, but as "having existence in conjunction with time present."<sup>27</sup> From this he draws the conclusion, which incidentally is refuted in an earlier section of the dialogue,<sup>28</sup> that "if the one is, it is in time."<sup>29</sup> But Parmenides has already asserted that being present means being present somewhere: ". . . anything that is must always be somewhere."<sup>30</sup> To be present is to have a place (topos).

Now because time is advancing, the "one" which is in time is becoming older. Because it is becoming older it must be becoming older than something else which is at the same time becoming younger. This younger thing is the one itself. Therefore, the one is both becoming older and younger than itself. But since Parmenides equates presence with a stable state of being, the state of being older is contrary to the fact of actually becoming older. The word which expresses this static presence or being is the word "now", which is "with the one always." This now is therefore a standing, spatial now which is the contrary of becoming:

When in becoming older, the one coincides with the present, it stops becoming and is then older. . . . the present is with the one always throughout all its existence, for at whatever time it is existing, it is existing "now".<sup>31</sup>

If the line traversed by becoming is made up of an aggregate of "stops" or "nows" in becoming, at what point will one stop change over into another stop? The argument of the character Parmenides is essentially the same as that made by the historical Zeno concerning

the flight of an arrow.<sup>32</sup> If the arrow is said to "be" somewhere at each point in its flight, and if to be at a point is to be at rest in that point, then at each point in its trajectory the arrow will be at rest. "When" does the arrow move? We assert that the arrow moves because we "actually" experience it. And yet when we piece together the movement logically, the movement is impossible. Similarly, if time is a series of static "nows", its flowing "actuality" can never be explained. What is the "actuality" of the time in relation to which the static nows are stops?

Time present, at least in the dialogue Parmenides, is equated with a state of being. Even motion is conceived as a state of being. The change between the state of rest and that of motion is an "instant" (exaiphnes) in which the "one" is neither in one state or the other. Because being present is equated in this argument with being somewhere, it means being present in a particular given state. When the one is present, it cannot be present in two places or states at the same time. On the other hand, it is in neither of those states. The word Plato uses to describe this placeless moment is atopon, "that queer thing", which is the privative of the word for place (topos). Because this change from motion to rest is sudden (the primary meaning of exaiphnes), it is no place. Because it is in no place, the transition occupies no time at all:

. . . when being in motion, the one comes to a stand, or being at rest, it changes to being in motion, it cannot itself occupy any time at all. . . . Suppose it is first at rest and later in motion, or first at rest and later in motion, or first in motion and later at rest; that cannot happen to it without its changing. But there is no time during which a thing can be at once neither in motion nor at rest. On the other hand it does not change without making

a transition. When does it make the transition, then? Not while it is at rest or while it is in motion, or while it is occupying time. Consequently the time at which it will be when it makes the transition must be that queer thing, the instant. . . . this queer thing, the instant, is situated between the motion and the rest; it occupies no time at all, and the transition of the moving thing to the state of rest, or of the stationary thing to being in motion, takes place to and from the instant.<sup>33</sup>

This conclusion seems to contradict the first assumption that the one becomes older "in" time. Time present, or the static now, seems really to mean eternal being, which in no way comes into relation with the instant of transition. In so far as the instant "is", it must come into relation to time present, or to a particular state. The course of the argument has shown, on the contrary, that it is impossible for the instant to have this sort of existence. The logical analysis of time finally usurps the common-sense understanding of time as that in which changes occur. Time present is resolved back into an eternal, unchanging present.

In the following quotation from Kierkegaard's remarks about the Parmenides, he comments on this "vacillation" in the definition of presence. The vacillation arises from the fact that eternity and the instant are contradictory and exclude one another. Kierkegaard holds that this contradictory conception is better than the explanation given by Hegel's philosophy, which Kierkegaard claims dissolves this opposition. Only in Christianity does one achieve the unity of opposites which does not dissolve the contradiction:

. . . it appears that in the Parmenides the present (to nun) vacillates between meaning the present, the eternal, and the moment. This "now" (to nun) lies between "was" and "will become", and naturally "the one" cannot, in passing from the past to the future, bypass this "now". It comes to a halt in the now, does not become older but is older. In

the most recent philosophy i.e. Hegel's , abstraction culminates in pure being, but pure being is the most abstract expression for eternity, and again as "nothing" it is precisely the moment. Here again the importance of the moment becomes apparent, because only with this category is it possible to give eternity its proper significance, for eternity and the moment become the extreme opposites, whereas dialectical sorcery, on the other hand, makes eternity and the moment signify the same thing. It is only with Christianity that sensuousness, temporality, and the moment can be properly understood, because only with Christianity does eternity become essential. (KW 8, 84n; SV 4, 354n)

Plato, however, conceives the instant or the moment "abstractly" because he does not see that the eternal and the instant, though contradictory, are yet related to one another. For the purposes of his exposition, it appears that Kierkegaard reduces Plato's position to a pure Eleatism. Indeed it may be that not even Parmenides so unequivocally opposed being and non-being. He reveals a subtler interpretation of the Greeks in the Postscript, where he affirms that they are the only ones who are truly concerned with the problem of motion and becoming.<sup>34</sup> But it is perhaps because they realized that, logically speaking, motion is impossible that they were moved to concentrate on the phenomenon of motion with such profound seriousness.

The arguments put forward in the Parmenides show the absurdity of conceiving time as a mere aggregate of "nows". Similarly, a line is not merely a row of points, since between any given two points an infinite number of points may be filled in.<sup>35</sup> The mere sequence of standing nows is not identical with the actual flow of time. The actuality of time seems to contradict the states which are found in it. The states are self-identical "places" through which a thing passes in the course of time. The "being" or presence of a state is in opposition to its non-being, which is at the same time the presence or being of

another state. The "being" of my mood of happiness is at the same time the non-being of my mood of sadness. This relative non-being is of a different order than the non-being of transition, which is the non-being of any state at all. The problem of time is therefore how transition and the states which it somehow brings into being are related.

### (iii) Christianity and the "Moment"

According to Kierkegaard, Christianity attributes a certain kind of presence to the non-being of transition in its doctrine of sin and atonement. Sin is the denial of what is real. We should recall at this point Kierkegaard's claim that the Greeks did not possess a concept of sin in the Christian sense. The philosopher in the Greek sense is in possession of an eternal relation to the eternal, in relation to which his life in becoming is merely appearance. According to Kierkegaard, the eternal "comes to be" in the moment of time. The individual has through sin "lost" the eternal relation to the eternal. This relation to the eternal must come to be again, or be repeated. This achieving of an eternal present and of true being Kierkegaard calls the atonement. The fact of the incarnation implies the absurdity that true being comes to be from non-being. The non-transitory (the eternal) comes to be out of the moment of transition:

The Christian view takes the position that non-being is present everywhere as the nothing from which things were created, as semblance and vanity, as sin, as sensuousness removed from spirit, as the temporal forgotten by the eternal; consequently, the task is to do away with it in order to bring forth being. Only with this orientation in mind can

the concept of Atonement be correctly understood historically, that is, in the sense in which Christianity brought it into the world. If the term is understood in the opposite sense (the movement proceeding from the assumption that non-being is not), the Atonement is volatilized and turned inside out. (83n; 352n)

Now the claim that the interpretation of the moment in time in Christianity is new rests on the assumption that eternity and time are related in a new way. Two elements, being and becoming, which are incommensurable according to speech, are brought together in an existing being, i.e. in Christ. God is not only the God which is beyond and before time, but is a God which has come to be in time and space. Christianity includes an historical element in so far as it presupposes the coming into being in time of an eternally necessary being. Or, as he says in the Postscript: "The historical assertion is that the Deity, the Eternal, came into being at a definite moment in time as an individual man." The contradiction in this assertion is that it attributes becoming to a being which by virtue of its essence cannot "become". This is why the "historical fact" of the Incarnation "is not a simple historical fact, but is constituted by that which only against its nature can become historical, hence by virtue of the absurd" (CUP, p. 512; SV 7, 504).

In the assertion that God has lived and died, there is contained an inherent impossibility, in so far as one assumes that God has eternal being by virtue of his essence. He therefore possesses a kind of being distinct from the "existence" of creatures in the world. Kierkegaard goes as far as to deny His existence of this sort: "God does not think, he creates; God does not exist, he is eternal. Man thinks and exists, and existence separates thought and being, holding them apart from

one another in succession" (CUP, p. 296; SV 7, 287). Christ is Christ in so far as he incarnates a God which cannot be incarnated. God is not historical in his essence, but comes into relation with the historical. Christianity is a paradox in that it both rejects and accepts the following statement about being as voiced by Empedocles:

For it is impossible that there should be becoming out of what is not at all, and impossible and unheard-of that what is should perish utterly. For there it will always be, wherever one may keep thrusting it.<sup>36</sup>

God is both above all time and existence and in time and existence. He is deathless and yet has undergone a death.

After discussing Plato's account of the instant in a long footnote, Kierkegaard proceeds to explicate his own idea of time. It should be kept in mind that through doing so he is criticizing the notion of the absolute beginning in Hegel's thought. His aim is to show that a true beginning must take into consideration the paradoxical nature of the relation of time and eternity. The explanation of time given by Hegel, according to which it is circular and therefore a necessary manifestation of the eternal, does not, in Kierkegaard's view, deal adequately with the problem of time in its true depths. He raises the problem of time in order to prepare the way for the reader to understand the Christian view of the relation between eternity and time.

He begins by repeating a sentence which I have claimed expresses a contradiction:

In the sphere of historical freedom, transition is a state. However, in order to understand this correctly, one must not forget that the new is brought about through the leap. If this is not maintained, the transition will have a quantitative preponderance over the elasticity of

the leap. Man, then, is a synthesis of psyche and body, but he is also a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal. (KW 8, 85; SV 4, 354-55)

Historical freedom is the "eternal" freedom which comes to be. Freedom is a state of being. We truly "are" free before we make any choices. At the same time our freedom comes to be in that, through sin, the state of freedom is lost. In historical freedom transition is a state. We are free even while we are moving out of the state of freedom. Freedom is united with change only through a "leap". Freedom is not a product of the process of transition. This is why he says that transition should not acquire a "quantitative preponderance over the elasticity of the leap." One chooses in time in relation to what is unchoosable or eternally necessary.

Both the fall into sin and the rising out of it are eternal acts of freedom. Like the impossible incarnation of God, an eternal act involves an inherent impossibility. All acts of the will are temporally limited. The fall of the soul into sin is not a mere product of choice, but is, nevertheless, related to choice. The movement of the individual from state to state is a leap because a constant intersection of time and eternity is implied. In Chapter four of Anxiety Kierkegaard describes the "history" of the individual as a series of such leaps:

The history of the individual proceeds in a movement from state to state. Every state is posited by a leap. As sin entered into the world, so it continues to enter into the world if it is not halted. Nevertheless, every such repetition is not a simple consequence but a new leap. (113; 381)

Were the process of time a simple series of states, there would be no essential difference between time and space. But in so

far as these states succeed one another "in" time by leaps, it seems that time and space are related as contraries. In order to point out the fact that man is a unity of these contraries, Kierkegaard designates his nature a synthesis (Synthesen). After affirming that in historical (human) freedom transition is a state, he shows the connection between this fact and the structure of the self. He continues, "Man, then, is a synthesis of soul and body; but he is also a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal" (85; 355). To affirm that freedom is historical, and that transition is a state, is equivalent to saying with regard to the self that it is a synthesis of soul and body. At the same time, man is a synthesis of the eternal and the temporal. In so far as man "is", he is in a state of being. In so far as he is a being divided in himself and in transition, he is in a "state" of non-being. Man is therefore a relation between the divided and the undivided, between non-being and being. That is to say he is a synthesis of soul and body, and a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal.

Kierkegaard must now show how the two contrary elements (Momenter) are actually united. To begin he notes a difference in the structure of the two polarities he has attributed to man's being. That which "synthesizes" the elements soul and body is the element of spirit. Spirit, as we showed earlier,<sup>37</sup> relates the changing and unchanging elements of the self to one another. Spirit "identifies" these elements in a relation and creates a "self", thereby bringing the unchoosable into relation to the choosing of the individual. It is both the self-relating aspect of the self, and that which relates the self in "absolute dependence" to the "power" which sustains the

relation. It is the "third thing" (det Tredie) which harmonizes the contraries contained in the self.

In the synthesis of the eternal and the temporal, the third thing which binds them together is not yet evident. The third thing is required in order to unite the two elements which in themselves are contradictory to one another. The synthesis cannot "be" as long as the elements are related as contradictories. The mystery of this relation prompts Kierkegaard to ask about the nature of the temporal. In the one synthesis

. . . the two elements are soul and body, and spirit is the third [det Tredie], yet in such a way that one can speak of a synthesis only when spirit is posited. The latter synthesis has only two [elements], the temporal and the eternal. Where is the third [element] [det Tredie]? And if there is no third [element], there really is no synthesis, for a synthesis that is a contradiction cannot be completed as a synthesis without a third [element], because the fact that the synthesis is a contradiction asserts that it is not. What, then, is the temporal? (85; 355)

When Kierkegaard completes his analysis of the temporal, he will put forward the moment (Øjeblikket) as the third thing through which the temporal and the eternal are related. This instant is not the immediate moment which is always passing away when we attempt to apprehend it. It is the instant in which the entirety of past and future are contained wholly in an eternal present. It is the instant in which the synthesis is actual and not merely thought.

#### (iv) Spatial Time and Actual Time

Kierkegaard proceeds to define the temporal as an "infinite

succession" (Uendelige Succession). He shows that the distinctions of past, present and future normally ascribed to time do not derive from time itself. Each moment of time "is" only in so far as it immediately ceases to be. The very moment we grasp a moment and hold onto it with our mind's eye, the moment itself is already past. The immediate moment of time seems to have no presence, because we find it impossible to attribute extension to any given moment. In order to measure time, a permanent presence is required in relation to which the various moments of time may be compared. It is in relation to this permanent presence that the distinction among the tenses of past, present and future becomes meaningful. Time itself cannot provide this stable presence, since every moment of time is at every moment passing away. If time is to have any presence whatsoever, it must be because it comes into relation with the eternal. The real distinction between past, present and future depends upon a real point of division, a point of division which the "eternal" provides. In the flow of time no moment can be said to be, since the moment we state: "it is", it is gone.

If time is correctly defined as an infinite succession, it most likely is also defined as the present, the past, and the future. This distinction, however, is incorrect if it is considered to be implicit in time itself, because the distinction appears only through the relation of time to eternity and through the reflection of eternity in time. If in the infinite succession of time a foothold could be found, i.e. a present, which was the dividing point, the division would be quite correct. However, precisely because every moment, as well as the sum of the moments, is a process (a passing by), no moment is a present, and accordingly there is in time neither present, nor past, nor future. (85; 355)<sup>38</sup>

The only way to make this division from within time is to freeze

each moment into a tiny little eternity of its own. Just as a line can be viewed as a row of discrete points, the process of time can be seen as a line of time units of equal magnitude. In this way the moments can be equated to visually represented, spatial magnitudes.

The purely spatial differences of colour, shape and position can reveal themselves to the eye in a single moment of time. A painting, for instance, can be taken in entirely at a glance. New things about the picture could appear "over" time as the result of sustained attention, but in principle such details can be present in the first glance. Music, however, requires the succession of time in order to be heard. A symphony can neither in principle nor in fact be played instantaneously. This is because music is the art corresponding to the ear, and an art which, like hearing, depends on the successiveness of time in order to be actual.<sup>39</sup> To transform before and after into units of magnitude interchangeable with one another subtly alters the character we naturally attribute to succession.

The "visual" or spatial representation of time, for Kierkegaard, can be expressed in the image of a line of kings. These spatially distinct units (i.e. the kings) cannot be conceived as passing through the present by a process of coming to be and passing away. If they were so conceived, they would cease to be complete and spatially present units. If their passage through the present is to be caught and held in a concept, the moments must be abstracted from their actual passing. Kierkegaard concludes, therefore, that when the infinite succession of time is visually represented it becomes a present which is "infinitely contentless". This is not the real present which unites being and

non-being, but the present which is simply equivalent with static, spatial being. The real present includes the qualitative character of successiveness, of "before" and "after", while the present of the spatial magnitude is quantitative in form.

In so far as these time units never pass through the real present, one could argue that they never really are. The units are equivalent to static being, which never comes to be nor passes away. Every time a given moment is expressed by a given magnitude of time, the moment itself is already past. The task of the time measurer is similar to that of one who would like to write a word in a pool of water. The word is only there in an imaginary sense as he is writing and ends up in the state it was in at the beginning: as a mere thought. The actual relation of this thought to the image successively produced in the water still remains in question. For this reason, the visual representation is referred to by Kierkegaard as an "infinite vanishing". The static "being" of the line of moments is at the same time a "nothing" which is infinitely empty. In the visual representation the successive quality of the succession is lost:

If it is claimed that this division [between past, present and future] can be maintained, it is because the moment is spatialized, but thereby the infinite succession comes to a halt, it is because representation is introduced that allows time to be represented instead of being thought. Even so, this is not correct procedure, for even as representation, the infinite succession of time is an infinitely contentless present (this is the parody of the eternal). The Hindus speak of a line of kings that has ruled for 70,000 years. Nothing is known about the kings, not even their names (this I assume). If we take this as an example of time, the 70,000 years are for thought an infinite vanishing; in representation it is expanded and is spatialized into an illusionary view of an infinite, contentless nothing. As soon as the one is regarded as succeeding the other, the present is posited. (85-86; 355-56)

The succession of one moment upon another presupposes the passage of the moments through an instant of time which is no-place. For the purposes of his argument, Zeno described the flight of an arrow as a row of now-spaces which, when placed together, yielded a single static now. For this reason Zeno could claim that the arrow was motionless during its flight. The qualitative way in which actual moments arise out of one another is obscured if the moments are set beside and after one another like pebbles. What is the ground of the presence we presuppose in all our statements about past, present and future?

In the preceding quotation, the final sentence states that when we admit succession in its fullness we "posit" or presuppose the present. Though Kierkegaard denies that the present which is "posited" in time is a simple spatial magnitude, he also denies that time and the present are simply identical. He does not by any means reduce space to time. In the human being time and space come into relation as contraries. Instead of equating presence with time, Kierkegaard equates it with the "eternal". He describes the eternal not as something which develops through a process in time. The eternal is the true present and as such contains no division of past and future:

The present, however, is not a concept of time, except precisely as something infinitely contentless, which again is the infinite vanishing. If this is not kept in mind, no matter how quickly it may disappear, the present is posited, and being posited it again appears in the categories: the past and the future. The eternal, on the contrary, is the present. For thought, the eternal is the present in terms of an annulled succession (time is the succession that passes by). For representation, it is a going forth that nevertheless does not get off the spot, because the eternal is for representation the infinitely contentful present. So also in the eternal there is no division into the past and the future, because the present is posited as the annulled succession. Time is, then, infinite succession;

the life that is in time and is only of time has no present. In order to define the sensuous life, it is usually said that it is in the moment and only in the moment. By the moment, then, is understood that abstraction from the eternal that, if it is to be the present, is a parody of it. The present is the eternal, or rather, the eternal is the present, and the present is full. (86; 356)

From this account it seems that time and eternity are sheer opposites. Eternity is present and full. Time is never present and is always empty. Eternity is the absence of succession, whereas time is the absence of presence. Eternity and time can even be defined as each the absence of the other. How, then, are they to be brought into relation? As the third thing which unites eternity and time, Kierkegaard brings forward the "moment" (Øjeblikket). Kierkegaard appears to agree with both Plato and Augustine's view of the instant in so far as he affirms that time in and of itself can have no duration.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, he disagrees with Plato in assigning the passing moment a real point of contact with the eternal.

#### (v) The "Moment" as the Fullness of Time

In the account of the Parmenides, the instant was that "queer thing" which occupied no time at all. It had no existence or presence. The instant is that "moment" when a thing is in neither one state or another. A thing can never actually change, since it cannot move into another "now" or state without being in a "now" or a state. As Kierkegaard puts it, the thing changing "cannot . . . bypass this 'now'" (84n; 354n). According to Kierkegaard the instant is the "leap" in which time and eternity touch (berøre) one another. This instant is

not a mere dividing point between past and future, because such a division is "abstract". The explanation of the instant as a mere division between past and future treats the instant as if it were an ideal mathematical point. But if the instant is to have real duration and presence, it must stand in relation to the eternal, just as a line is tangent to a certain point on a circle.

The verb Kierkegaard uses to describe this real contact is at berøre, which means "to touch", "brush against", or even "hint at". It has the same ambiguity as the English word "touch", in the sense that it may indicate both tactile contact and the state of being moved or affected by something. Indeed, its root, røre, means to cause commotion or movement. In the instant, therefore, eternity touches on time and sets it into motion. When the eternal defines time, the past and the future no longer define time. Strangely, the present as determined by the eternal is characterized in the same way as the present is defined in the sensuous life "which is in time and is merely that of time." In both the sensuous life and the religious life, past and future are "annulled" in some sense. The difference is that the eternal Moment of the religious life gathers up past and future in its presence, while the merely sensuous moment excludes past and future. Time is not a duration which wells up from the past and moves irreversibly through the present into the future. The Moment is not a "creative" moment. Time is a mere going-by and of itself does not give rise to anything. Its irreversible going-by is reversed through its relation in a synthesis to the eternal:

The moment signifies the present as that which has no past and no future, and precisely in this lies the

imperfection of the sensuous life. The eternal also signifies the present as that which has no past and no future, and this is the perfection of the eternal. If at this point one wants to use the moment to define time and let the moment signify the purely abstract exclusion of the past and the future and as such the present, then the moment is precisely not the present, because the intermediary between the past and the future, purely abstractly conceived, is not at all. Thus it is seen that the moment is not a determination of time, because the determination of time is that it "passes by". For this reason time, if it is to be defined by any of the determinations revealed in time itself, is time past. If, on the contrary, time and eternity touch each other, then it must be in time, and now we have come to the moment. (87; 356-57)

If time is to have duration or presence, it is through a relation to the eternal. After one has defined the eternal as the present, the difficulty remains as to how such an unmoving presence "comes to be" in and through time. The problem of repetition as outlined in previous sections involved how a finite act in time could bring into being an "eternal" decision. In choosing oneself, one is choosing what one really is, or that which existed before the choice. The fall out of the relation to the eternal must be done away with by an act which repeats the original innocence of the human being. If this act is to be possible, a real contact between the finite, temporal human being and the infinite, eternal presence must come into being in a particular moment of time. The problem of choosing oneself by means of a finite, temporally limited act can be reduced to the problem of how undifferentiated eternal presence enters into relation to the differentiations of time through those very differentiations.

The word which Kierkegaard uses to signify the instant is Øjeblikket, which literally means "a glance of the eye". Kierkegaard's emphasis on this "figurative expression" obliges us to ponder its

significance. The appropriateness of the eye to spatial forms has been mentioned. The whole of a painting may be grasped at once in a glance. Nevertheless this glance takes time to be executed. The moment of transition from not-looking to looking intersects with the spatial state revealed in a moment by the eye. The glance of the eye signifies the unity of state and transition, the problematic character of which is the reason for Kierkegaard's inquiry into time. Reasoning tells us that the moment of transition from state to state does not exist. But our equally convincing experience of this transition, in an act so simple as a glance of the eye, throws us into perplexity on the matter.

In the following quotation, Kierkegaard will compare his idea of "instant" with the instant (exaiphnes) of Plato's Parmenides. He will say that the Greeks lack the concept of the temporal for reasons stated above. For them, according to Kierkegaard, no finite act could actualize eternity. The attainment of the whole of what one is depends upon the actual death of the philosopher. With the concept of spirit, a concept which apparently the Greeks also lacked, one arrives at the third thing which unites the eternal self with its finite acts. Spirit makes possible the choosing of what is unchoosable. Just as the eternal corresponds to the soul, and the temporal to the body, the Moment corresponds to the spirit:

"The moment" is a figurative expression, and therefore it is not easy to deal with. However, it is a beautiful word to consider. Nothing is as swift as a blink of the eye, and yet it is commensurable with the content of the eternal. . . . A blink [et Blik] is therefore a designation of time, but mark well, of time in the fateful conflict when it is touched by eternity. What we call the moment Plato calls to exaiphnes [the sudden]. Whatever its etymological

explanation, it is related to the category of the invisible, because time and eternity were conceived equally abstractly, because the concept of temporality was lacking, and this again was due to the lack of the concept of spirit. The Latin term is momentum (from move), which by derivation expresses the merely vanishing. (87-88; 357-58)

In the "Greek" account of time, according to Kierkegaard, the present "now" was always associated with an undivided state. Each "now-state" could be described as a little atom of eternity, just as each point on the trajectory of the flying arrow is associated with a state of rest. The Greek indifference to the moment of transition Kierkegaard claims is reflected in the importance which the art of sculpture had for their culture. A piece of sculpture embodies in the simplicity of a plastic form the undivided unity of detail disclosed to the eye. The meaning of the sculpture is frozen in the spatial disposition of the parts which are held in unity by the plastic form. There is no hint of a past or a future in Myron's "Discus Thrower". There is no tension of the muscles, nor strain in the facial features, but only the pure, still radiance of the eternal circles which invisibly govern the movement of the athlete.<sup>41</sup> This form revealed to the eternal eye of the artist lacks the "glance" which implies the intersection of the static now with the moment of transition. Kierkegaard considers it "remarkable that Greek art culminates in the plastic, which precisely lacks the glance" (87n; 357n).

For the Greeks, eternity was not a matter for hope or expectation, but only acceptance and remembrance. The eternal did not come to be in time but hung placid above the world while at the same time casting its rays into it. Time was simply a non-entity in relation to the spatial and the eternal. The moment in Greek thought is an

atom of eternity which, when reduced to its root, is identical with eternity itself:

Thus understood, the moment is not properly an atom of time but an atom of eternity. It is the first reflection of eternity in time, its first attempt, as it were, at stopping time. For this reason, Greek culture did not comprehend the moment, and even if it had comprehended the atom of eternity, it did not comprehend that it was the moment, did not define it with a forward direction but with a backward direction. Because for Greek culture the atom of eternity was essentially eternity, neither time nor eternity received what was properly its due. (88; 358)

At this point, Kierkegaard returns to the problem which led him to question the nature of the temporal. He affirms that the synthesis of the eternal is not a second synthesis, but merely an expression of the first synthesis of soul, body and spirit. Just because man is a synthesis, he can come into relation to the Moment. He is in a relation to soul and body, the ground of which relation is spirit. Spirit relates the unchoosable eternal with the choosable temporal in the instant of time. Purely natural non-human beings cannot choose in opposition to what they really are. What distinguishes man from nature is just this capacity to fall out of relation to and yet at the same time remain related to his eternal being. He is distinguished by his ability to sin and to come into relation to nothingness.

In nature, therefore, time and space are equivalent. The animal does not undergo a transition which is in opposition to its true state of being. Its actions are merely the unfolding of a pre-determined essence. In a sense, the life of the animal is a bodily expression of memory. Its future is equivalent to its "past" essence, which remains unchanged throughout the course of time. The human being, on the other hand, may undergo a transition which is in contradiction

to his true state. For the human being, time becomes significant. He has lost his true state through an act both temporal and eternal in nature, and therefore has reached a state lower than that of the animal. Because he may "repeat" this relation through another transition, a higher life is made possible for him:

The synthesis of the temporal and the eternal is not another synthesis but is the expression for the first synthesis, according to which man is a synthesis of soul and body that is sustained by spirit. As soon as the spirit is posited, the moment is present. Therefore one may rightly say reproachfully of man that he lives only in the moment, because that comes to pass by an arbitrary abstraction. Nature does not lie in the moment. It is with temporality as it is with sensuousness, for temporality seems still more imperfect and the moment still more insignificant than nature's apparently secure endurance in time. However, the contrary is the case. Nature's security has its source in the fact that time has no significance at all for nature. Only with the moment does history begin. By sin, man's sensuousness is posited as sinfulness and is therefore lower than that of the beast, and yet this is because it is here that the higher begins, for at this point spirit begins. (88-89; 358-59)

Repetitions in nature are also spatial in character. As Kierkegaard pointed out in the "Introduction", repetition exists in nature in the form of an "immovable necessity". Natural objects move in cycles of growth and decay. The fact that this motion is by nature cyclical means at the same time that it is a kind of unmoving motion. The natural object which becomes by necessity is in a state of being throughout the whole process of its changing. The "history" of a plant is therefore "a state" (21n; 294n). The history of the individual comes about through freedom.

Man has the possibility of becoming other than his given state. As we have shown, however, the moment is not purely historical in nature. The moment is the meeting of eternity and time, or of the non-historical

with the historical. Freedom is in relation to the historical, or to becoming. The choice which brought about the fall was an eternal and at the same time a unique act. Whereas in Greek thought the future did not essentially influence the relation between the individual and eternity, in Christianity the future may alter this relation. We are in a relation of possibility to the eternal.

But does this historical dimension of possibility have any reality? It was argued in the first section of this chapter that the choice against God "is" not a choice at all. The choice which chooses sin finally ends in the loss of the ability to choose. The freedom which underlies this possibility is not autonomous, but dependent on the eternal "power" which grants this freedom. It is this ontological dependence that makes the "free" act ambiguous and elastic. It is at the same time my act and an act which by myself I am not capable of.

The state to which one is brought by freedom occurs through a leap which is ambiguous and elastic.<sup>42</sup> The elasticity of a substance designates the extent to which it can be stretched without snapping into two pieces. The point at which this snapping occurs is as sudden and instantaneous as when a container of water at a given temperature freezes suddenly with a single touch. When the eternal comes to be in time from out of the future, time and eternity intersect suddenly. Freedom, or the actual relation to the eternal, comes to be through time. Freedom is a non-historical historical movement. If freedom were purely historical there would be no way to distinguish it from mere becoming as such. The act of freedom, or the act which is truly

free, is that act by which one becomes what one is, and is therefore a repetition: "To become is a movement away from that place [where the self is], but to become oneself is a movement in that place" (KW 19, 36; SV 11, 149).

With the intersection of time and eternity, the divisions of past, present and future time gain their distinctiveness. The temporal is a synthesis of the successiveness of time and the undivided presence of eternity in the instant:

The moment is that ambiguity in which time and eternity touch each other, and with this the concept of temporality is posited, whereby time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time. As a result, the above-mentioned division acquires its significance: the present time, the past time, the future time. (KW 8, 89; SV 4, 359)

The Moment is ambiguous in the same way that, as was shown in Chapter two, dread is ambiguous.<sup>43</sup> The individual is in dread because he is both attracted and repelled by the possibility of sin. If he succumbs to dread, it is both by his own act and by the influence of something alien in him. The individual is both innocent and guilty in dread and in this fact consists the "elastic ambiguity" of the psychological explanation of sin. The eternal is both unmovingly present throughout time and yet comes to be in a particular moment. The individual sinner waits in expectation of a restored relation between himself and God. In one sense God is already present in the individual, and in another sense is in the future with respect to the individual. The individual's relation to eternity is therefore ambiguous.

Just as the transition from innocence to guilt is a leap, so is that from eternity to time and from time to eternity. In "historical"

freedom, transition is a state. One achieves through a temporal relation to the eternal an eternal happiness. In the sense that the eternal comes to be "in" time, the eternal is related to the individual as future. But the future is not identical with eternity but is an "incognito" of the eternal. This incognito is an expression for the fact that eternity is above or "incommensurable" with time and yet at the same time related to time. The eternal is both present and future. Again, the moment of time in which this simultaneity occurs is ambiguous:

By this division [of time into past, present and future time] attention is immediately drawn to the fact that the future in a certain sense signifies more than the present and the past, because in a certain sense the future is the whole of which the past is a part, and the future can in a certain sense signify the whole. This is because the eternal first signifies the future or because the future is the incognito in which the eternal, even though it is commensurable with time, nevertheless preserves its association with time. Linguistic usage at times also takes the future as identical with the eternal (the future life -- the eternal life). (89; 359)<sup>44</sup>

In this regard, Kierkegaard draws a contrast between Christianity and the Greek conception of time. Since they lacked the idea of the eternal coming to be in time from the instant, the Greeks lacked a true understanding of the future. The temporal was essentially a matter of indifference for the Greek as Kierkegaard understands him. Because time did not enter into a relation with eternity in an essential way, the "Moment" in the sense described above was not a crucial category. At the same time this meant that the categories of spirit and freedom, which correspond to the "Moment", were unnecessary as well.

Because for the Greek nothing essentially new happens in time, time has no decisive significance for him. As stated above the philosopher

is in an eternal relation to the eternal. His task "in" time is to recollect this eternal relation, though the relation is not realizeable in time. This is why Kierkegaard says that: "For the Greeks, the eternal lies behind as the past that can only be entered backwards" (90; 358-59). When this eternal relation is lost by sin and then regained again by an eternal decision, the eternal relation comes into being in a moment of time. The future becomes an object of attention, expectation and waiting. Repetition is the recollection which occurs in a "forward" as opposed to a backward direction: "Here the category I maintain should be kept in mind, namely, repetition, by which eternity is entered forwards" (90n; 358-59).

Kierkegaard proceeds to criticize two ways of interpreting the instant of time. First, he shows the inadequacy of understanding the present moment as a given spatial magnitude, or a simple state of being. He compares the movement of time to the walking of a man along a road. To measure the distance travelled we must cut out mentally the actual walking and measure the distance he has already covered. We cannot measure the time and distance of his stroll while he is strolling. On the other hand, Kierkegaard finds it inadequate to define the instant as the mere division (discrimen) between past and future. If the moment is essentially futural, it can never be fully present in any adequate way. Kierkegaard is denying the definition of the present moment as essentially futural.

The true "Moment", for Kierkegaard, comprehends both past and future in an eternal present. The eternal is both past and future in an eternal present. The eternal is both past in the sense that

it has always been and never changes and is "future" in the sense that it comes again "in" time. Kierkegaard calls this simultaneity the "fullness of time":

On the whole, in defining the concepts of the past, the future, and the eternal, it can be seen how the moment is defined. If there is no moment, the eternal appears behind as the past. It is as when I imagine a man walking along a road but do not posit the step, and so the road appears behind him as distance covered. If the moment is posited but merely as a discrimen [dividing point], then the future is the eternal. If the moment is posited, so is the eternal, but also the future, which reappears as the past. . . . The pivotal concept in Christianity, that which made all things new, is the fullness of time, but the fullness of time is the moment as the eternal, and yet this eternal is also the future and the past.  
(90; 360)<sup>45</sup>

Eternity enters into time by virtue of what for human understanding is a leap, and not by virtue of a necessary process. The fact that it is a repetition means that the instant is the coming to be in time of what has already been. It is the historical becoming of what is unhistorical in nature. This coheres with what was asserted in the Postscript in relation to the definition of the "absurd". The fact that Christ came in the fullness of time "is not a simple historical fact, but is constituted by that which only against its nature can become historical, hence by virtue of the absurd" (CUP, p. 512; SV 7, 504). Kierkegaard, therefore, adopts the Platonic notion of eternity<sup>46</sup> and, by means of his notion of repetition, places it in a real but contradictory relation to time. This he takes to be an adequate statement of the mystery of the Incarnation, and the mystery of its appropriation by the individual in the Moment.

## (vi) Dread and the Moment

Having defined the nature of the moment with respect to eternity and time, Kierkegaard returns to Adam and the problem of the synthesis of soul, body and spirit. He begins by reasserting that Adam and "every subsequent individual" begin "in the very same way". That is to say, they both act out of the moment of time defined above. Just as spirit "positis" body and soul, the "moment" sets time and eternity into relation. But Kierkegaard has defined the instant as the eternal, and in a similar way claims that "spirit is the eternal [det Evige]" (KW 8, 90; SV 4, 360). Since it is spirit which, in the "Moment" posits eternity and time, we are led by a simple substitution to the following assertion: the relation between eternity and time is "posited" or sustained by the eternal itself. Unless the instant is posited in this way, it "is" not at all. If the moment is only a division between past and future, it is pure tendency and direction, or an "infinite vanishing".

The eternal takes on the "incognito" of the future only in so far as the individual is either innocent or in sin. When he is innocent the individual is related to eternity but unconscious of it. In sin the individual is either unable or unwilling to realize through freedom his relation to the eternal. In both states, the eternal is related to the instant as a possibility. In so far as it is future possibility, it is an object of anxiety:

Thus the moment is there for Adam as well as for every subsequent individual. The synthesis of the psychical and the physical is to be posited by spirit; but spirit is eternal, and the synthesis is, therefore, only when spirit

posit the first synthesis along with the second synthesis of the temporal and the eternal. As long as the eternal is not introduced, the moment is not, or is only a discrimen [boundary]. Because in innocence spirit is qualified only as dreaming spirit, the eternal appears as the future, for this is, as has been said, the first expression of the eternal, and its incognito. Just as (in the previous chapter) the spirit, when it is about to be posited in the synthesis, or, more correctly, when it is about to posit the synthesis as the spirit's (freedom's) possibility in the individuality, expresses itself as anxiety, so here the future in turn is the eternal's (freedom's) possibility in the individuality expressed as anxiety. (90-91; 360-61)

The same mysterious transition through which Adam falls out of relation to the eternal is repeated in subsequent individuals. This is why everyone participates equally in the "Moment". With the example of past sin before his eyes, however, the subsequent individual anticipates the future more reflectively than does Adam. This "more" is a quantitative more, which does not explain the "qualitative leap" into sin. The later individual anticipates his own fall into sin by calling to mind the fall of Adam. In this way "the future seems to be anticipated by the past." And this anxiety consists in the thought that "possibility" for the eternal "is lost before it has been" (91;361).

The ontological structure which explains anxiety is the structure of soul and body "synthesized" by spirit. Dread does not arise through the fact that man is radically temporal or historical, or even finite. Man can experience dread, not simply because his self is an open project, but because he is a being who is a synthesis of the eternal and the temporal. The possibility of sin is a dread prospect because it is contrary with what man eternally is. One can say, therefore, that man only experiences anxiety because his life is not an open project. Even though the individual is necessarily one thing, he nevertheless

becomes (in "actuality") another thing. Even at the last moment of his spiral downwards into evil, the individual is still related to his unchanging nature. This enables him, even if only for a fleeting moment, to feel regret for his past and a twinge of fear about his future. The individual is therefore a synthesis of possibility and necessity and of time and eternity.

Anxiety, therefore, is "the psychological state that precedes sin." It is produced by the ambiguous relation between one's given state (innocence) and the prospect of a different state (guilt) which one may choose. The instant in which one or the other is posited is a qualitative leap, which is neither an arbitrary act of will nor a necessary process.

As a result of the instantaneous leap into sin, man's eternal nature comes into relation to the possibility of death. The mother who gives birth experiences dread because, as spirit, she is brought into relation with what is most opposite spirit, i.e. the mere natural necessity of childbirth: "In childbirth the woman is again at the furthest point of one extreme of the synthesis. Therefore, the spirit trembles, for in this moment it does not have its task, it is as if it were suspended" (72; 341). As a consequence of the act of sin, death follows as a punishment. The instant man sins, he falls into time and is no longer fully present to himself. The "immediate unity" of soul and body is cast asunder. Because the sinner lives in time abstracted from the eternal, his very temporality becomes sinful: "The moment sin is posited, temporality is sinfulness" (92; 362).

Now death is the complete absence of presence, and is therefore

the final end of the life in sin: "From the determination of the temporal as sinfulness, death in turn follows as punishment" (92n; 362n). The anxiety experienced in seduction and childbirth is an anticipation of sin, which in the end results in death. There is a simultaneous attraction and repulsion with regard to death. If there were no attraction to sin, there would be no psychological reason which would move one to sin. If there were no repulsion, then man would be by nature a sinner and his essence sheer possibility. It is because man is by nature a perfect being that death appears terrible for him. Just as the woman giving birth to the child, the individual at the point of death is "at the uttermost point of the synthesis":

It is true in a deeper sense that the higher man is valued, the more terrifying is death. The beast does not really die, but when the spirit is posited as spirit, death shows itself as the terrifying. The anxiety of death therefore corresponds to anxiety of birth. . . . At the moment of death, man finds himself at the uttermost point of the synthesis. It is as though spirit cannot be present, for it cannot die, and yet it must wait, because the body must die. (92n; 362n)

Again it is because man is a synthesis of the eternal and the temporal that he experiences death as an object of dread. The task for spirit is to expect life even while the body is dying, an act which is at the same time the "act" of faith. And this is at the same time to expect eternity in time.

Just as it is necessary, according to Kierkegaard, to distinguish the freedom of choice from true freedom, it is necessary to distinguish time from the Moment "in" time. In the free choice which is truly a repetition of what is eternal, we found there is an inherent impossibility which accounts for the passion or the suffering element of choice. The

individual has to choose what is not a matter of choice. The choice which does not correspond with this impossibility "is" not a choice at all. Similarly, the possession by the individual of a true present in time is dependent on the eternal being present in time, which, as was shown by Kierkegaard's analysis of the instant and of Plato's Parmenides, also involves an inherent impossibility.

Time of itself is therefore an "infinite vanishing", which, when reduced to a series of atoms lined up in a row, entirely loses the qualitative character it possesses of direction and irreversibility. If on the other hand one were to say that the present moment is a crisis point between past and future, i.e. that it is direction alone, the moment would again be an abstract "division", rather than being the impossible moment in which time and eternity meet. This impossibility is mirrored and anticipated in the very impossibility of motion, which, in the paradoxes of Zeno and the arguments of the Parmenides, achieves consummate articulation.

The logic of Kierkegaard's argument does not eliminate the Platonic dualism of eternity and time, and of being and becoming, but tacitly presupposes it. Without this tacit supposition the "Moment" would cease to be the impossible meeting of incommensurables, or the impossible unity of state and transition, that it is. To understand man as "free" is, therefore, to understand him as spirit, which is to understand him as a synthesis of the unchoosable and the choosable. And freedom of the spirit becomes actual in the moment, which, though transitory and directional, is yet pervaded by the presence of the eternal:

And now the moment. Such a moment has a peculiar character. It is brief and temporal indeed, like every moment; it is transient as all moments are; it is past like every moment in the next moment. And yet it is decisive and filled with the Eternal. Such a moment ought to have a distinctive name; let us call it the Fullness of Time. (PF, p. 22; SV 4, 188)

### III Spiritlessness, Fate and Guilt

#### (i) Spiritlessness

In a short section following his analysis of time, Kierkegaard returns to the problem of spiritlessness. Spiritlessness proves to be not only a problem for the individual but a condition characterizing the present age as a whole. The object of his attack is not only atheism or materialism, but "Christian paganism". He is criticizing those who believe they have appropriated Christianity and reconciled it with the secular city. According to Kierkegaard such men believe themselves to be Christians when in fact they are not.<sup>47</sup>

Kierkegaard describes the nature of Christian paganism by contrasting it with ancient paganism. In opposition to what he takes to be the orthodox Christian position on the matter, he claims that paganism did not "lie in sin". The true consciousness of sin was first set forth by Christianity. Paganism constantly verged on this consciousness, but never fully achieved it. Pagans were in sin, but fundamentally remained unconscious of sin. Modern or Christian pagans are aware of sin, but falsely believe they have overcome it. The modern pagans, therefore, abolish distinctions which were held apart in paganism:

The life of Christian paganism is neither guilty nor not guilty. It really knows no distinction between the present, the past, the future, and the eternal. Its life and its history go on crabbedly like the writing in ancient manuscripts, without any punctuation marks, one word, one sentence after the other. (KW 8, 94; SV 4, 364)

The fact that paganism was not conscious of sin meant that "spirit" was not yet posited. In the Parmenides, the instant of time is described as a form of non-being. In so far as one moment of time constantly succeeds another, time never really "is". Though he equated the present moment with a spatial or eternal present, the pagan thinker recognized the fact that he existed "in" the successiveness of time. The successive and irreversible quality of time prevented him from realizing wisdom in time. The pagan therefore accepted the distinction between eternity and time, yet without imagining that the eternal could come to be in time. He had a "backward" rather than a "forward" orientation to eternity.

In modern paganism, the idea that the eternal comes to be in time has been "posited" along with the category of spirit. The problem is that the terms of this relation have been placed in a mere successive relation to one another, rather than in a relation of simultaneity.<sup>48</sup> The problem of the modern spiritlessness is that it "has a relation to spirit, which is nothing" (94; 364). The ancient pagans concentrated on the contradiction of thinking eternity and time together, but the modern pagans have blurred the terms of this contradiction. While the ancients were oriented toward the spirit, which is the unity of the contraries, the moderns are in a desperate flight from it. In pagan existence anxiety was a reality (as the state precedent to the consciousness of sin). In spiritless modern existence it is absent:

In spiritlessness there is no anxiety, because it is too happy, too content, and too spiritless for that. But this is a very lamentable reason, and paganism differs from spiritlessness in that the former is qualified toward spirit and the latter away from spirit. Paganism is, if I may say so, the absence of spirit, and thus quite different from spiritlessness. To that extent, paganism is much to be preferred. Spiritlessness is the stagnation of spirit and the caricature of ideality. (95; 365)

Here Kierkegaard is also telling the reader why he will re-examine the pagan consciousness of fate and guilt. In the pagan consciousness, spirit has not yet been posited and so is still vitally present in the form of a possibility. In this section of Anxiety (93-110; 363-378) Kierkegaard deals with fate and guilt with great detail. The relation between these two aspects of human existence and modern spiritlessness is described in more detail in a short essay contained in the first volume of Either/Or: "The Ancient Tragical Motif as Reflected in the Modern" (EO 1, pp. 135-162; SV 1, 115-142). My commentary will therefore begin with the reflections contained in that essay.

Kierkegaard illuminates the differences between modern and ancient tragedy by establishing whether the fate or the guilt element predominates in the depiction of the tragic hero. The guilt element of the tragic hero refers to that part of his tragic fate which is the result of his own action. The fate element of the tragic hero consists in that part of his tragic fate which is the result of circumstance and necessity. In ancient tragedy the fate element predominates, whereas the modern concentrates on the inward guilt of the tragic hero. The individual in ancient tragedy was not fully abstracted from "substantial" categories of family and state. Modern tragedy in its

extreme form abstracts the individual entirely from substantial categories and interprets his fate as arising from himself and his own subjectivity. Oedipus' sins, though they are his own acts (the killing of his father, his incest), are nevertheless unconscious. His guilt is as much a fate which he suffers as an act which he "decides" upon.<sup>49</sup> Kierkegaard generalizes this principle to include ancient tragedy as a whole:

The peculiarity of ancient tragedy is that the action does not issue exclusively from character, that the action does not find its sufficient explanation in subjective reflection and decision, but that the action itself has a relative admixture of suffering [passion, passio] . . . In ancient tragedy the action itself has an epic moment in it; it is as much event as action. The reason for this naturally lies in the fact that the ancient world did not have subjectivity fully self-conscious and reflective. Even if the individual moved freely, he still rested in the substantial categories of state, family, and destiny. This substantial category is exactly the fatalistic element in Greek tragedy, and its exact peculiarity. The hero's destruction is, therefore, not only a result of his own deeds, but also a suffering, whereas in modern tragedy, the hero's destruction is really not suffering but is action. In modern times, therefore, situation and character are really predominant. (EO 1, p. 141; SV 1, 121)

Though Kierkegaard would be critical of the ancient understanding of guilt as equivalent to fate, he is just as critical of modern subjectivity which completely does away with the "substantial" categories of pagan fate. In modern subjectivity, the individual is abstractly isolated from the rest of the race. The guilt of the modern abstract individual is absolute and entirely self-caused. Modern subjectivity is therefore Pelagian in character, in the sense that sin is made a matter of purely individual responsibility. The true understanding of guilt describes the individual as ambiguously guilty and innocent. In the following quotation, Kierkegaard mounts an attack which could

apply to certain forms of twentieth century existentialism:

. . . it is certainly a misunderstanding of the tragic, when our age strives to let the whole tragic destiny become transubstantiated in individuality and subjectivity. One would have nothing to say about the hero's past life, one would throw his whole life on his shoulders, as being the result of his own acts, would make him accountable for everything, but in so doing, one would also transform his aesthetic guilt into an ethical one. The tragic hero thus becomes bad; evil becomes precisely the tragic subject; but evil has no aesthetic interest, and sin is not an aesthetic element. This mistaken endeavour certainly has its cause in the whole tendency of the age toward the comic. The comic lies exactly in isolation; when one would maintain the tragic within this isolation, then one gets evil in all its baseness, not the truly tragic guilt in all its ambiguous innocence. (EØ 1, p. 142; SV 1, 122)

While he criticizes paganism for not fully possessing the notion of subjectivity and decision, he at the same time judges the present age to be "comic" because everything is resolved into subjectivity and decision. This is why he says that the comic character of the age "lies in the fact that subjectivity as mere form would assert itself" (EØ 1, p. 140; SV 1, 120). Kierkegaard's aim is therefore neither to exalt nor to eliminate the subjective or the substantial elements in human existence. Instead he is seeking to establish their proper equilibrium and balance. By pointing at one moment to the excessive subjectivity and at another to the excessive objectivity of modern consciousness, Kierkegaard is indirectly pointing out the inner and necessary relationship of these two phenomena in the depths of the present age.<sup>50</sup>

The individual, in Kierkegaard's view, is not defined purely by the faculty of the will, but is instead a "synthesis" of subjective and substantial elements. The despair and spiritlessness of the age consists in the fact that the individual is conceived by the age to

be a creator of his own destiny. The modern age

holds every individual responsible for his life. Hence, if he goes to the dogs, it is not tragic, but it is bad. One might now believe that this must be a kingdom of the gods, this generation in which also I have the honour to live. On the contrary, this is by no means the case; the energy, the courage, which would thus be the creator of its own destiny, aye its own creator, is an illusion, and when the age loses the tragic, it gains despair. There lies a sadness and a healing power in the tragic, which one truly should not despise, and when a man in the preternatural manner our age affects, would gain himself, he loses himself and becomes comical. Every individual, however original he may be, is still a child of God, of his age, of his nation, of his family and friends. Only thus is he truly himself. If in all this relativity he tries to be the absolute, then he becomes ridiculous.

(EO 1, p. 143; SV 1, 122-23)

The intentional acts which arise out of the subjectivity of the individual cannot be artificially abstracted from the web of relations which are external to the individual and which constitute the enduring world in terms of which he acts. Every intended good is fraught with danger in the sense that, in the course of its embodiment, time may bring about an unexpected reversal of what was intended. Again, the tragedy of Oedipus is instructive. His very attempt to flee the fate prophesied for him was an ingredient in bringing about that fate.<sup>51</sup>

Our will to do and to perform must always enter into conversation with the occasion which may or may not make our willing efficacious. Each action, the outcome of which we would like to govern calls up a corresponding reaction in the world in which it becomes manifested. During the interval of time between the beginning and the result of the action, the individual waits with anxious expectation. In the course of life the individual would like to begin and to act ab initio,

as though his acts were not futile, and in some way, however minor, were destined to bear fruit. But the events in the life of the individual have, to a degree that becomes increasingly apparent with the passage of years, an ineradicable element of irreversibility and necessity in them, which, were the individual to concentrate on this element alone, would cause him to despair of his ability to act at all.

The ambiguous nature of action is reflected in the two words used by the Greeks to designate action. The word archein designates the "beginning" or originating aspect of action, whereas prattein (which is the root of the word praxis) signifies the achieving side of action.<sup>52</sup> The disparity between these two elements of action anticipates a basic theme running through Kierkegaard's writings. This problem also underlies Hegel's philosophy of history. Kierkegaard's quarrel is with Hegel's solution of this dilemma. Hegel's purely rational comprehension of providence unites foundered human intentions with the intricate web of necessity and historical events by means of the notion of absolute Spirit. The opposition between my intentions, and the result which seems to laugh in the face of them, is not a final opposition. My failure is at the same time the success of the absolute spirit which is manifesting itself to itself. The irreversible foundering of my intention is at the same time the absolute Spirit repeating its eternal nature in time.<sup>53</sup>

In opposition to this rational comprehension, Kierkegaard raises anew the problem of repetition in light of the irreversibility of time and fortune. How can the individual repeat himself or begin absolutely, given that he exists within the web of irreversible, temporal

events? How is the irreversible repeated? To open a way to solving this enigma, Kierkegaard turns in Anxiety to the pagan understanding of fate.

(ii) Fate

Modern historical writing tends to minimize the importance of great individuals in the working out of the historical process. The bold perspicuity of individuals in high position is diminished in importance in favour of the broader causal nexus composed of economic and social factors. Though this approach may yield greater insight into the concerns of "ordinary people" and the "collective", it tends to leave in the dark what older historical writing found most instructive about the historical process as such: the above-mentioned conversation of the free individual with his fate. What ordinary person does not wonder at a Caesar who is able to see possibilities and configurations to which mediocre politicians are blind, and which allow him to exert, as if by magic, a strange control over destiny? Part and parcel of this insight is the ever-present possibility that fortune may play false with the individual. The hero in the moment of his heroism is not gifted, as is the historian, with hindsight. In the moment of decision he is in lively conversation with the strange forces which operate in time to thwart or carry him forward. Erich Frank comments on the anxiety that the encounter with these fateful forces evokes:

True, all such men [as Caesar] feel themselves in secret agreement with Fate, and this conviction gives them the strength for their superhuman deeds. Still, in their inmost hearts they never cease watching with anxiety the

signs of destiny which are written in the stars; they remain forever fearful lest Fate turn against them and crush them relentlessly. Caesar alone felt himself in complete harmony with the destiny of history, so much so that his personal fate was of no consequence to him. Brutus could destroy the man Caesar but not his work, which continued to live.<sup>54</sup>

What is this "fate" which arouses anxiety and is not embodied in any particular thing or result? What is it that the historical genius sees as an ordered whole of possibility and which the ordinary individual sees as an incoherent and terrible jumble of events, things and feelings? Before the fall Adam experiences a dread which corresponds to no particular object, but out of which and in relation to which a new and seemingly irreversible state of affairs appears. Anxiety therefore corresponds to no-thing. Kierkegaard equates this nothing with fate:

If we ask more particularly what the object of anxiety is, then the answer, here as elsewhere, must be that it is nothing. Anxiety and nothing always correspond to each other. As soon as the actuality of freedom and of spirit is posited, anxiety is cancelled. But what then does the nothing of anxiety signify more particularly in paganism? This is fate. (KW 8, 96; SV 7, 366)

The meaning of fate for Kierkegaard is that it is a given turn of events the responsibility for which does not lie solely in the action of the individual. The act performed by the individual originates the train of events which causes the act to recoil back on the individual. The individual has no control over this unfolding of events. And yet, as in the case of Oedipus, his very guilt, i.e. his subjective responsibility, is brought about by an external, objective train of events. Guilt in pagan tragedy is the responsibility of the individual for what is not his responsibility, or as Kierkegaard puts it: "Fate is a relation to spirit as external. It is a relation between spirit

and something else that is not spirit and to which fate nevertheless stands in a spiritual relation" (96; 366).

Fate is also, according to Kierkegaard, "the unity of necessity and the accidental" (96; 366). Fate is therefore a unity of what had to be and what may be. It can be represented in the figure of a blindfolded person, "for he who walks forward blindly walks just as much by necessity as by accident" (97; 367). Fate is a necessity, but a necessity which "is not conscious of itself." This implies that when necessity becomes conscious of itself, fate is no longer conceived as fate. When spirit is related to fate, it is related to "nothing", to something which has not yet gained its proper form for consciousness. Fate is "the nothing of anxiety" because it is a picture of reality which is inadequate to reality. When spirit achieves its true understanding of itself, fate and anxiety are eliminated in the consciousness of providence: "Fate, then, is the nothing of anxiety. It is nothing because as soon as spirit is posited, anxiety is cancelled, but so also is fate, for thereby providence is also posited" (97; 367).

Fate always remains an "other" for the pagan because he cannot bring himself into a spiritual relationship with it. One means by which the pagan could bring himself in relation to fate was to consult the oracle which would prophesy his fortune. In the pagan's consultation with the oracle Kierkegaard finds the same ambiguity which he perceived in Adam's relation to the command of God. Because the pagan solicits a prophecy concerning his fate, it seems as if he may gain some controlling insight into it. But the fact that he must consult the oracle means at the same time that he is a slave to fate and its terrible

necessity. The pagan's relation to fate is tragic because he is in both a subjective and an objective relation to it. He is both an actor and a sufferer in the remorseless playing out of chance and necessity:

So the pagan's relation to the oracle is again anxiety. Herein lies the profound and inexplicable tragicalness of paganism. However, what is tragic does not lie in the ambiguity of the utterance of the oracle but in the pagan's not daring to forbear taking counsel with it. He stands in relation to it; he dares not fail to consult it. Even in the moment of consultation, he stands in an ambiguous relation to it (sympathetic and antipathetic). And at this point he reflects on the oracle's explanations! (97; 367)

A similar problem arose in explaining the participation of the individual in original or inherited sin. In so far as the individual is a son of Adam and a member of the race, he is implicated in the sin and guilt which has gone before him. In this sense, the individual's own particular sin is a necessary consequence of the original sin of the race. On the other hand, individuals are not related to the species as mere copies, but as individuals. By his own action the individual "actualizes" the original sin which he has inherited from the race. The individual's relation to sin is ambiguous in the sense that it is both a relation which he enacts and a fate which he suffers.

Here the pagan and the Christian understanding of guilt part company. The dread of the pagan consists in the possibility that his next act will bring about an irreversible chain of events which negates the intention of the act. His action brings him into relation to an impersonal mechanism which cannot be known on any higher level than in the attitude of noble acquiescence. The function of tragedy and its theatrical performance is the purging of the emotions broodingly

preoccupied with this seemingly meaningless mechanism.

The Christian, however, is still in the position of creating new sin the moment he acquiesces in fate. The task is not to see guilt in terms of fate, but to see fate in relation to guilt. The Christian is to believe and accept that his fate is a providence, that his fall into sin is not final, and that his refusal to so believe brings about a further fall into sin. But this refusal is still not conceived as a purely arbitrary act of subjectivity. His inability to act is an impotence as well as an action. The terms of pagan fate are therefore taken up into the subjectivity of the individual. This subjectivity is both his own and not his own; he is both the "subject" which suffers change and the "subject" which originates change. The pagan found freedom from the irreversible consequences of his acts by either refraining from action, in the manner of the philosophers, or by acquiescing in the strange radiance of death. The Christian is to find the courage for new action, and to believe that a new action, though bringing irreversible events in its train, is a repetition of the highest good, and therefore a manifestation of providence.

But from what mysterious quarter does such conviction arise? In Anxiety Kierkegaard is concerned with the individual who is not yet so convinced. Pagan thought and poetry dealt with the contradiction that guilt was occasioned by an external fate over which one had no control. In Christianity the fate is no longer external and impersonal, but has entered into the very soul of the individual in the form of the idea of original sin. Christianity is concerned with the "supreme contradiction" that one's guilt arises by fate:

The concepts of guilt and sin in their deepest sense do not emerge in paganism. If they had emerged, paganism would have perished upon the contradiction that one became guilty by fate. Precisely this is the greatest contradiction, and out of this contradiction Christianity breaks forth. (97-98; 367)

The Christian idea of original sin at first seems to put the individual in a terrible isolation unknown to the Greeks. In so far as the believer must appropriate all guilt as in some sense his own (because with his refusal to do so, new sin is added to the race), he seems to be cut off from direct relation to the world. And yet this very guilt remains in conversation with fate in the following way:

The concepts of sin and guilt posit precisely the single individual as the single individual. There is no question about his relation to the whole world or to all the past. The point is only that he is guilty, and yet he is supposed to have become guilty by fate, consequently by all that of which there is no question, and thereby he is supposed to have become something that precisely cancels the concept of fate, and this he is supposed to have become by fate. (98; 367-68)

The assertion that man becomes guilty by fate seems to imply that sin is a necessity. For Kierkegaard this conclusion involves a "misunderstanding of the concept of original sin," of which he claims Hegel is guilty. In so far as the individual becomes guilty, it seems as if his responsibility is total, and that the world and the past disappear in relation to this guilt ("There is no question about his relation to the whole world or to all the past"). But in so far as the guilt comes about by fate, it seems as if the past and the world caused the sin, and as if the individual were not responsible. In order to explain this contradiction Kierkegaard re-introduces the point articulated in the first two chapters of Anxiety. This point is that the individual is both himself and the race, and that the

earlier individual is not essentially different from the later individual. Sin is neither a product of necessity nor of chance:

A misunderstanding of this contradiction will result in a misunderstanding of the concept of hereditary sin; rightly understood, it gives the true concept, in the sense that every individual is both himself and the race, and the subsequent individual is not essentially different from the first. In the possibility of anxiety, freedom collapses, overcome by fate, and as a result, freedom's actuality rises up with the explanation that it became guilty. Anxiety at its most extreme point, where it seems as if the individual has become guilty, is not as yet guilt. So sin comes neither as a necessity nor as an accident, and therefore providence corresponds to the concept of sin. (98; 368)

The individual's conversation with fate is exemplified in its clearest form in the historical genius. As has been said,<sup>55</sup> our fascination with such geniuses as Napoleon, Caesar and Alexander is aroused by the confrontation of their subjective actions with the secret forces which may at one moment favour and at another obstruct their intentions. Kierkegaard attributes such genius neither to strength of intellect, nor to a certain practical canniness (traits which even the most mediocre of men can possess), but instead to a capacity for spirit. The energy and lightning clarity with which the genius discovers the contingencies of a situation depends on the sharpness of his eye for what is possible and for the limit of fate. Before this limit the genius is a slave, and yet by entering into relation to fate with all his action and insight, his power rises like the sun:

The genius shows his primitive strength precisely by his discovery of fate, but in turn he also shows his impotence. To the immediate spirit, which the genius always is, except that he is an immediate spirit sensu eminentiori, fate is the limit. (99; 368)

The genius is not designated an intelligent technician, but

an "immediate spirit". It is because he is unconscious spirit that he can enter into situations with such vitality and have an actual dialogue with fate. Fate is nowhere present in any individual thing; it is the "nothing" which at the same time weaves the threads of action and reaction into the whole which is the life of the genius and the world he inhabits. The genius is so different from the ordinary man that even when to the latter victory seems certain, one bad sign visible only to the demon insight of the genius may cause him to despair. The genius, therefore, experiences anxiety at a different moment than the ordinary individual:

Therefore the timing of the genius's anxiety is quite different from that of ordinary men who first discover the danger in the moment of danger. Until then they feel secure, and when the danger is past, they are again secure. In the moment of danger, the genius is stronger than ever. His anxiety, on the other hand, lies in the moment before and after the danger, that trembling moment when he must converse with the great unknown which is fate. (101; 370)

The historical genius, though essentially an immediate spirit, is not conscious of his spiritual nature. His activity is directed outward to the finite, temporal outcome of his actions. He is not aware of his own spiritual destiny, which is non-temporal in character. Because his attention is directed outward, "the planetarean core that radiates everything never comes into existence." Spirit, which explains the dread felt in relation to fate, is blocked from the consciousness of the historical genius because of his concern for "fortune, misfortune, esteem, honour, power, immortal fame -- all of which are temporal determinations" (101-02; 371). In spirit is found that immortality which is beyond this world, not that temporal immortality which can only be realized within the world.

Kierkegaard has examined that consciousness which is characterized by the dread of fate. He now moves to comment on that dread which he holds to be characteristic of Judaism: the dread of guilt.

(iii) Guilt

It is possible to view one's own action, even from the moment of its beginning, as subject to an irreversible necessity. The individual despairs before fate when he accepts that his action, despite the conviction and deftness with which he executes it, can never issue in a new and pure "beginning". Just as the individual's dread of fate can prevent him from living wholly in the moment, so can his pre-occupation with his own guilt prevent him from so living: "Guilt has for the eye of the spirit the fascinating power of the serpent's glance" (103; 372). Actions can not only be reversed by the impersonal mechanism of external events, but actions may be reversed by an inward will inadequate to bringing about the good intended.

In Judaism, according to Kierkegaard, there is an anticipation of Christian guilt in the sense that, at any moment, God can manifest through upheavals in nature and the lives of men his displeasure with the hard hearts of his chosen people. The Jew is not subject to the impersonal necessity of fate, but to the commandments of God, from the observation of which he from time to time departs. To re-establish himself as pleasing before God, he must repeat the sacrifice which atones for the sins incurred. The very mysteriousness of man's relation to God in Judaism, according to Kierkegaard, reflects the lack of a

complete explanation of guilt as to its origin and destiny. Guilt in Judaism "is a power that spreads itself everywhere, and although it broods over existence, no one can understand it in a deeper sense" (104; 373). The fact that an external sacrifice must be performed and not only once, but repeatedly, signifies that guilt remains an object of anxiety which is neither explained nor overcome. In Judaism man may never know when the Lord will manifest man's guilt through mighty acts of will which show His displeasure, any more than Cain knew beforehand that Yahweh would prefer the offering of Abel. Because his relation to God is mysterious, so is man's guilt. The pagan's relation to the oracle, which is both free and slavish, is mirrored in the Jew's relation to the sacrifice. The sacrifice is freely offered by the individual, but the fact that the sacrifice can never be final means that the individual is unfree and subject to an unknown necessity. Therefore, "an actual relation" must be posited which annuls this dread:

Herein lies the profound tragedy of Judaism, analogous to the relation of the oracle in paganism. The Jew has his recourse to the sacrifice, but this does not help him, for that which properly would help him would be the cancellation of the relation of anxiety to guilt and the positing of an actual relation. Since this does not come to pass, the sacrifice becomes ambiguous, which is expressed by its repetition, the further consequence of which would be a pure skepticism in the form of reflection upon the sacrificial act itself. (104; 373)

The actual relation to guilt is posited, according to Kierkegaard, in the specifically Christian doctrine of sin. Further, he points out that just as providence is "posited" when the individual is conscious of sin, so it is that "only with sin is atonement posited." In a clear reference to the crucifixion which occurred once and for all, he adds that "its [atonement's] sacrifice is not repeated" (104; 373). The

idea of original sin does not throw the individual back upon himself as if he alone were responsible for both the sin and its atonement. Because the sin is not purely his own, he alone is not able to atone for his sin. On the other hand it is through his inability to realize or repeat his relation to this already realized and unrepeated atonement that the individual is isolated and true inwardness begins.

The true understanding of guilt occasions the problem of repetition. The problem is not only an inward one but also one of explaining "how my religious existence comes into relation with and expresses itself in my outward existence . . ." (105; 374). To discover guilt is to discover these elements in one's past life which do not correspond with this "religious existence", or to find that one's outward existence does not correspond with the inner. The individual must repent of his past existence and appropriate his true existence in a new existence. Here the paradox again appears that one must re-enact in time what is essentially past or eternal. The problem is the relation of the temporal, guilty self to the self which is eternal. The individual, however, does not need to leave his body, nor should he retire to the monastery. He must renounce his temporal self, but renounce it in such a way that the temporal self is recovered:

The fault of the Middle Ages was not religious reflection, but that it broke off too soon. Here the question about repetition reappears: to what extent can an individuality, after having begun religious reflection, succeed in returning to himself again, whole in every respect? (106; 375)<sup>56</sup>

The religious genius, as opposed to the immediate or historical genius, is preoccupied with an inward dread rather than an external one. Kierkegaard calls him a "genius" because he manifests in a clear

and conscious way the states and stages of inward anxiety which are present in other individuals in an unclear way. Though the first thing the genius of religion does "is to turn toward himself", he is not merely in conversation with himself. Just as the immediate genius enters into conversation with fate, the religious genius enters into conversation with God, for "in turning toward himself, he eo ipso turns toward God . . ." (107; 376).

The concern of the individual, as has been said, is not simply the purity of inwardness in so far as it is distinct and abstracted from the world in which it is embodied. The problem of repetition is to realize the inward religious existence in the domain of finitude and sin. Therefore it is an error to understand Kierkegaard's concept of freedom to be equivalent with a pure will distinct from nature. To become inward is at the same time to realize freedom, not by means of mastering external events as does the immediate genius, but instead to know the whole of one's being, bodily and spiritual, as free:

In turning inward, he discovers freedom. He does not fear fate, for he lays hold of no outward task, and freedom is for him his bliss, not freedom to do this or that in the world, to become king and emperor or an abusive street corner orator, but freedom to know of himself that he is freedom. (108; 376-77)

The only true limitation of the freedom of the individual is not bodily existence but guilt, for "guilt alone can deprive him of freedom." Freedom is not an immaterial faculty which, by means of some mysterious causation, imposes limitations on inclinations, or masters events. The opposite of freedom is not necessity, but guilt:

Here it is readily seen that freedom is by no means defiance nor is it selfish freedom in a finite sense. . . . When freedom is apprehended in this way, it has necessity

as its opposite, which shows that it has been conceived as a category of reflection. No, the opposite of freedom is guilt, and it is the greatness of freedom that it always has to do only with itself, that in its possibility it projects guilt and accordingly posits it by itself. And if guilt is posited actually, freedom posits it by itself. If this is not kept in mind, freedom is confused in a clever way with something entirely different, with force. (108; 377)

It appears from this quotation that the guilt of the individual is a product of his own will. If he were constrained to perform an evil act by something other than his will, he could not be conceived as being guilty of the act. The necessary responsibility of the individual, however, does not constitute the whole of the lesson we are to draw. To be under its own control and fully responsible, the will would have to be free from conditions of time. The individual does not exist in an undifferentiated unity with himself beyond the differentiations and limitations of time. Because he exists in time, his acts must be played out in a temporal series. His will cannot be "posited" all at once, but always requires a space of time to exert itself, a time during which particular ends may or may not be achieved. During a lapse of time the individual may become truly free or guilty. Freedom for the existing individual is a possibility because the individual is related to his freedom under conditions of time. The individual is not free with respect to guilt, and cannot eliminate guilt in a single moment of time. The individual must be free in relation to guilt, which, because it is a relation of possibility, is an object of an anxiety capable of causing the will to recoil against itself:

The relation of freedom to guilt is anxiety, because freedom and guilt are still only possibilities. However, as freedom with all its passion wishfully stares at itself and would keep guilt at a distance so that not a single

particle of it might be found in freedom, it cannot refrain from staring at guilt, and this staring is the ambiguous staring of anxiety, just as renunciation within the possibility is itself a coveting. (109; 377-78)

Now to say that human freedom always acts under conditions of time, is not to say that freedom is essentially temporal and historical. The freedom of the individual is eternal, but as such is related to or synthesized with conditions of time. This eternal freedom corresponds to the eternal "self" we must bring into being by means of a temporal act. The individual must repeat an eternal self in and by a medium which renders everything unrepeatable. There is a qualitative difference between the temporal, limited self which is the product of purely temporal, limited acts and the eternal self. The eternal self is in no way a product of temporal action, but that in relation to which all temporal acts are defined. The problem of repetition, as has been shown, is the problem of realizing an inward true self in the light of the limitations of the temporal, historical self. Dread is the form in which this eternal, free self appears to the temporal unfree self, or "freedom's disclosure to itself in possibility" (111; 379).

Will and decision are important issues in Kierkegaard's thought precisely because there is something real in human beings which finally cannot be willed and decided upon. This is what we have referred to as the inherent impossibility involved in repetition. It is because there is a categorically real element in the self which is not subject to process that the task of willing and deciding is so difficult. In the experience of anxiety, the individual comes to know the limitation that his freedom does not consist in his willing but in that which defines and measures his willing.

Just as the immediate genius is divided within himself because of his relation in dread to fate, the religious genius is divided from his freedom because of his dread of guilt. The immediate genius observes as his self is destroyed by the force of fate which can take shape in the most trivial event and unite with the whole of reality to bring about his downfall. The religious genius, however, must look on as his very self brings about the downfall before which he remains helpless. The division is not between the individual will and its external fate but a division in the will itself. This is why in the following quotation that it is said that in guilt the individual "by himself . . . sinks before himself . . .":

Just as fate at last captures the immediate genius, and this is indeed his moment of culmination, not the glittering outward realization that amazes men and even calls the artisan from his daily work to stop and take notice, but the moment when by himself he collapses for himself by fate, guilt likewise captures the genius who is religious, and this is the moment of culmination, the moment when he is greatest, not the moment when the sight of his piety is like the festivity of a special holiday, but when by himself he sinks before himself in the depth of sin-consciousness. (110; 378)

Having dealt with the forms of life which are unconscious of sin though still related to it, Kierkegaard moves on to examine the individual who, as described above, is mired in the consciousness of sin.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN

Heretofore we have dealt with those stages of existence in which the individual is not conscious of sin. The first two chapters of Anxiety discussed the states of the soul prior to the fall. In specific they dealt with the innocence of Adam and that of the "later individual", and the sense in which the innocent individual carries within him the possibility for sin. Following this state of innocence is the stage in which sin is actual but not conscious. Under this category Kierkegaard places not only Judaism and Greek religion, but also the modern secularized or spiritless Christian religion which has lost the true concept of sin. The third and final stage is the one which we have just reached, where the individual, in becoming aware of the Incarnation and Atonement, also becomes aware of his sin and, therefore, is not able to achieve an actual experience of the forgiveness implied in the Atonement.

We left the individual at the end of the last chapter at just the point where "by himself he sinks before himself in the depth of sin-consciousness" (110; 378). The divided state which is a result of sin can now, because of the Atonement, be restored to a unity under God. The relation of the individual to God, however, is not an immediate one. The Christian is not born a Christian, nor does he become one by simply being informed of its teachings. In pagan religion, and in spiritless Christianity, the individual self existed in a divided

state, but remained essentially unconscious of the division. Now the individual is aware of his divided state but is unable to fully "repeat" or actualize the truth of which he has been informed. The Atonement for sin was accomplished in a past and unrepeated act, but the individual is inwardly divided in his experience of this truth. Kierkegaard's reflection on this stage, which constitutes the fourth chapter of Anxiety and nearly the whole of The Sickness unto Death, is quite simply an extension of St. Paul's classic formulation of the problem of sin in Romans 7. There we find that man has a true self which he is unable to realize through his own acts, "for to will is present in me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Over against his own knowledge of the good, the individual becomes aware of the self which is not able wholly to will the good: "For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do."<sup>1</sup>

The existence of the individual in this state would not be so terrible were it possible by an act of will to step out of this state. The state itself is a bewitchment of the will in which every new step forward, because of a kind of optical illusion, appears to take the individual backward and away from the goal of his walking. It is not a matter of doubt that the individual knows the good. It is, rather, a matter of concern whether he can will the good that he knows.<sup>2</sup> In what sense, however, does the individual know the good if he does not manifest this truth in action and live wholly within it? If his striving never fully manifests the good, in what sense is he related to this good? On the other hand, if he is not related to this good, what is it that gives rise to the striving for the good?

As we have been told in the Postscript, "The unmoved is a constituent of the motion as its measure and end" (CUP, p. 277; SV 7, 267-68).

What is the measure and end to which we are related even at the utmost point of despair and sin?

It is the need to understand how the individual is divided from and yet related to eternity which gives rise to Kierkegaard's study of consciousness and the self. The fact that the individual is expected to do the good means that he must possess the good. As it is said in the Postscript, "Ethically the ideality is the real within the individual himself" (CUP, p. 289; SV 7, 280). In this sense, the good is a possession of the self and needs only to be manifested, just as the mature oak tree develops from its seed. In terms of the description of the self given in the last chapter, the self by virtue of this inner seed "relates itself to itself." That the good is an inner possession which gives the self identity is the presupposition of the ethical stage and of the stage referred to in the Postscript as Religiousness "A".

In The Sickness unto Death, on the other hand, we are told that the self relates itself to itself only through the fact that it is related to the "other" which sustains it. On the basis of this statement, it was argued that the self was dependent on something external for its measure and end. The integrity and therefore the freedom of the self in this sense cannot be actualized through an act of the will. While the ethical man is infinitely interested in manifesting the good that is within him, the religious man is interested in what is real beyond his own self. As we find in the Postscript: "The believer differs from the ethicist in being infinitely interested in the reality of

another (the fact, for example, that God has existed in time)" (CUP, p. 288; SV 7, 279). This relation is characteristic of what is named "Religiousness 'B'" in the Postscript.

In the last chapter an important distinction was made between time and temporality. Time as such is an "infinitely vanishing", the moments of which possess no internal distinction. The flowing of time is in this sense a perpetual absence of being and is essentially unrepeatable. Time achieves differentiation into the distinctions past, present and future only when it "touches" upon eternity. When the relation between time and eternity is actualized, "temporality" is posited. Only by reference to an unchanging continuity does time gain any presence at all. It is necessary to demonstrate at this point that "temporality" in the above described sense only appears in "Religiousness 'B'". In the states in which the good is simply an inward possession, there is a more or less direct relation between eternity and time, in so far as the vagaries of time cannot affect the individual's possession of the eternal self. In the so-called paradox religion (Religiousness 'B') the eternal self is lost by an act. The eternal self must be recovered "in" time by means of the eternal itself. The relation of the self to the eternal becomes paradoxical and gains its true temporal form. What exactly is meant by this can only be made clear by means of a brief account of the stages of existence as they are conceived in the Postscript.

## I Time and the Stages of Existence

### (i) The Aesthetic

The claim that time is crucial for the correct differentiation of the stages of the self's existence is put forward in the following passage from the Postscript:

The significance attached to time is in general decisive for every standpoint up to that of the paradox, which paradoxically accentuates time. In the same degree that time is accentuated, in the same degree do we go forward from the aesthetic, the metaphysical, to the ethical, the religious, and the Christian religious. (CUP, p. 265; SV 7, 256)

The first stage, that of aesthetic existence, is exemplified by the Seducer of Either/Or. Though the Seducer finds infinite possibility in time, he also finds in time his ultimate limit. He finds it difficult to accept that in spite of the successiveness of time, he is the "same" individual from moment to moment. For him, the intensity of the experience of the moment is of greater importance than the continuity of that moment with the other moments of his life. This form of existence should not be described as "living in the here and now" or even "in the present," because the Seducer and the aesthetic man have no "here and now" and no "present". The whole of the aesthetic man's attention is absorbed in the heightening, by means of poetic activity, of the experience of expectancy and mood.<sup>3</sup>

Because the conscious life of the aesthetic man is permeated by expectancy and mood, he can never be present to himself and have identity in himself, but is always attending to the next moment. His life is not ever realized in "this" time and place, but is only the perpetual promise of a realized life, or a kind of unending pregnancy. Since he possesses no continuous self and no stable world in terms of which he must manifest himself, he seems to possess at the same time the most unrestrained existential freedom. Because he dwells, however,

in the unremitting ecstasis of expectancy, he is essentially divided in himself.<sup>4</sup> The future which he expects is not the true future which is defined by a concrete present. In the consciousness of the Seducer, the present and the future are never truly differentiated because they are merely instances of the same abstract, vanishing time. The moment within which he lives is a perpetually recurring absence or "vanishing". In this sense the ecstatic "moment" which he expects turns out to be nothing:

Johannes the Seducer ends with the proposition that woman is only the moment. This is in its generality the essential aesthetic principle, namely, that the moment is everything, in so far again essentially nothing; just as the sophistic proposition that everything is true means nothing is true. (CUP, p. 265; SV 7, 256)

The aesthetic man cannot repeat himself because there is no true self which can be defined in opposition to the immediate moment. Repetition of the self implies a true self just as counting presupposes the number one. The goal and origin of the aesthetic man's action lies outside the self, whereas that of the ethical man is found within the self. The seeming existential freedom of the aesthetic man can be equated with necessity. Though the aesthetic man experiences time as a repeated ecstatic freedom, he has an equally intense experience of time as an unrepeatable fate. In the following selection from the "Diapsalmata" of Either/Or I, the aesthete "A" evidences his despair concerning the unrepeatability of time, which also implies an endless repetition of his own dividedness:

Time flows, life is a stream, people say, and so on.  
I do not notice it. Time stands still, and I with it.  
All the plans I make fly right back upon myself; when I  
would spit, I even spit into my own face. (EO 1, p. 25;  
SV 1, 10)

## (ii) The Ethical

The ethical man, as opposed to the aesthetic man, removes himself from the immediacy of feeling and finds within himself the true self which is the goal of action. As seen in the last chapter,<sup>5</sup> he makes the absolute choice by which he chooses, not a particular, temporal end, but the eternal end which is at the same time his true self. The ethical man experiences the instant of time not as defined by mood, but in relation to the co-present but non-temporal end which gives the moments of time both connection and division. The true self which is the self's eternal end is the "remainder" which will not "go into mood" (Eo 2, p. 234; SV 7, 206). Mood is not annihilated, but instead restored to its proper place within the self.

When mood is restored to its proper place within the self, a permanent present is established in relation to which all particular moments can be ordered. The ethical man gains an identity and an enduring present in relation to which his action acquires repeatability and freedom. The partial and ecstatic mood of the aesthetic existence is replaced by the "total" mood of the ethical personality. The immediate mood is replaced by the freely acquired mood:

He, too, who lives ethically experiences mood, but for him this is not the highest experience; because he has infinitely chosen himself he sees the mood below him. The remainder which will not "go into" mood is precisely the continuity which is to him the highest thing. He who lives ethically has (if I may recall an earlier expression) memory of his life -- and he who lives aesthetically has not. He who lives ethically does not annihilate mood, he takes it for an instant into consideration, but this instant saves him from living in the moment, this instant gives him mastery over the lust for pleasure, for the art of mastering lust consists not so much in annihilating it or entirely

renouncing it, as in determining the instant. Take whatever lust you will, the secret of it, the power in it, consists in the fact that it is absolutely in the moment. . . . When a man lives aesthetically his mood is always eccentric because he has his centre in the periphery. Personality has its centre within itself, and he who has not his self is eccentric. When a man lives ethically his mood is centralized, he is not moody, he is not in a mood, but he has mood and he has mood in himself. What he labours for is continuity, and this is always master over mood. His life does not lack mood, yea, it has a total mood; but this is acquired, it is what one may call aequale temperamentum, but this is no aesthetic mood, and no one has it by nature or immediately. (E2, pp. 234-35; SV2, 206-07)

The ethical stage as it is embodied in Judge William, the pseudonymous author of Either/Or2, can be distinguished from the Kantian understanding of ethics on three points. In the Kantian philosophy there is a strict division between the noumenal self which is free and the particular, concrete, "phenomenal" self which is not. The moral end is imposed on the phenomenal self by the noumenal, though we are at a loss to explain the causality of such an imposition.<sup>6</sup> Judge William, on the contrary, claims that the self in its particularity constitutes the "aim" of the ethical life. While Kant's noumenal self can never be fully realized in the particular relations of social life, the ethical self of Judge William finds its home precisely in those finite relations:

The self which is the aim is not merely a personal self but a social, a civic self. He has, then, himself as a task for an activity wherewith as this definite personality he takes a hand in the affairs of life. . . . From the personal life he translates himself into the civic, and from this into the personal. The personal life as such was an isolation and hence imperfect; in the fact that through the civic life he comes back into his personality the personal life manifests itself as the absolute which has its teleology in itself. (E2, p. 267; SV2, 235-36)

The ethical self is not a self which exists independently of the

limitations of time and space. For the ethical self to be itself, it must necessarily manifest itself in the visible, bodily relations of ordinary civic life. The second point of difference with respect to Kantian ethics concerns the definition that is given the universal. Though Judge William defines duty as the universal, he does not mean by this the formal universality delineated in Kant's philosophy.<sup>7</sup> The true universal is that which displays and manifests itself in the concrete life of the individual. To be truly concrete is to be universal and to be truly universal is to be concrete. The ethical self, therefore, not only implies an immanent teleology, but also a unity of the particular and the universal. For the law to be universal means not that it is applicable to all possible rational beings, but that it is identical with what the individual manifestly is:

I never say of a man that he does duty or duties, but I say that he does his duty, I say, "I am doing my duty, do yours." This shows that the individual is at once the universal and the particular. Duty is the universal which is required of me; so if I am not the universal, I am unable to perform duty. On the other hand, my duty is the particular, something for me alone, and yet it is duty and hence the universal. Here personality is displayed in its validity. It is not lawless, neither does it make laws for itself, for the definition of duty holds good, but personality reveals itself as the unity of the universal and the particular.  
(EO 2, p. 268; SV 2, 236)

Thirdly Judge William makes the general claim that his ethics take up and preserve the desire manifested in the aesthetic stage.<sup>8</sup> Such a claim is entirely at odds with Kant's well-known distinction between virtue and happiness.<sup>9</sup> For Judge William, the life of the ethical, bourgeois man is at the same time the most rational and the most happy life. For Kant, man's phenomenal being and noumenal being can never coincide. The truly moral life implies a never-ending progress

toward the actualization of that moral life.<sup>10</sup> The implication here is that man's temporal existence is not adequate for the embodiment of his atemporal, universal will. Just as God is required as a postulate to unite the ends, disparate from the point of view of the human individual, of virtue and happiness,<sup>11</sup> so also is the postulate of immortality required in order to explain the ultimate coincidence of the endless progress toward the good and its actual achievement.<sup>12</sup> These postulates, and the very fact that they are needed, imply that there can never be a true or actual coincidence of time and eternity in time.

Judge William, however, would strongly disagree with such a suggestion. Because there is a kind of reciprocity of universal and particular, the time allotted to the individual is precisely what he needs to acquire the good demanded of him. Though Kant emphasized the principle that "ought implies can", it is clear that he did not mean "what you can do is what you ought to do." This latter phrase, however, clearly sums up what Judge William wants to say. In the ethical life of the individual there is a separation between the eternal being which he must acquire and the temporal being which is given him. But time is the very medium in which the continuity between the inward eternal being and the outward temporal being of the individual can be restored. While the aesthetical individual exists immediately in the moment, the ethical man labours to acquire the moment in order to restore the passing moment to its true order within enduring eternal being: "The aesthetical . . . is that in a man whereby he immediately is the man he is; the ethical is that whereby he becomes what he

becomes" (EO 2, p. 254; SV 2, 224).

The ethical individual possesses the condition within him that enables him to do the good. The history of the ethical man is the inward history in which what he already possesses is acquired throughout the succession of time. Freedom and temporal action coincide:

It is precisely the beauty of the temporal that in it the infinite Spirit and the finite spirit are separated, and it is precisely the greatness of the finite spirit that the temporal is assigned to it. . . . it exists for man's sake and is the greatest of all the gifts of grace. For man's eternal dignity consists in the fact that he can have a history, the divine element in him consists in the fact that he himself, if he will, can impart to this history continuity, for this it acquires only when it is not the sum of all that has happened to me or befallen me but is my own work, in such a way that even what has befallen me is by me transformed and translated from necessity to freedom. (EO 2, pp. 254-55; SV 2, 224)

The labour by which continuity is acquired is not an outward act but the inward act of repentance. While for Kant the continuity between the noumenal and phenomenal selves is an object of hope, for Judge William it is a matter of knowledge. This knowledge is, of course, not simple reflective knowledge, but the knowledge which is identical with the activity of the self in translating itself from possibility into actuality. The condition for the unity of universal and particular lies not outside the individual but within him. By the act of repentance the individual finds within himself the resource that will produce identity among the disparate moments of experience.

The ethical man can find at each moment a true beginning for his act, because at every moment the beginning lies not in sensation, nor in a finite end, but at the very centre of his soul. The aesthetic man can make a beginning only by fashioning and shaping the moment to

such a degree that his given, concrete life in a sense disappears into a dream. Judge William finds the resource of decision within himself, but directs his activity against himself, so that he may acquire the given and the finite in the continuous life of the ethical.

(iii) Religiousness A

From the ethical stage we pass on to what is the truly religious stage. In this stage the individual no longer finds within himself the condition which will afford him a true beginning in action. In the ethical man the eternal self can immediately express itself in its temporal manifestation. Just as a whole theory can be expressed in a determinate number of sentences, the eternal self of the ethical man can be displayed and manifested in a definite number of acts in time. There is therefore a continuity, and a more or less direct relation, between the eternal and the temporal in the self of the ethical man.

In the ethical man, any guilt either past or present can find its appropriate neutralization in some act of repentance. But just as heroic action initiated by the tragic hero calls up seemingly demonic forces which oppose and reverse the intention of his action, the true beginning intended by the ethical man collides with time and appears to reverse itself. Judge William did not doubt that he could annihilate or "despair" of the immediate and actualize the universal. His resignation from the finite is equivalent to his action in the finite. In the religious stage, the complete and total resignation

of the inward man conflicts with the limited amount of time available in the individual life. The true beginning which lies at the centre of the soul begins to slip away from the individual. Time and existence come between the inward, eternal self of the individual, and his temporal self:

In existence the individual is a concretion, time is concrete, and even while the individual deliberates he is ethically responsible for his use of time. Existence is not an abstract spurt but a continuous meanwhile; even at the instant when the task is clearly set there has been some waste, for meanwhile time has passed, and the beginning was not made at once. Thus things go backward: the task is presented to the individual in existence, and just as he is ready to cut at once a fine figure . . . and wants to begin, it is discovered that a new beginning is necessary, the beginning upon the immense detour of dying from immediacy, and just when the beginning is about to be made at this point, it is discovered that there, since time has meanwhile been passing, an ill beginning is made, and that the beginning must be made by becoming guilty and from that moment increasing the total capital guilt by a new guilt at a usurious rate of interest. The task appeared so lofty and one thought, "Like for like; as the task is, so surely must he be who is to realize it." . . . But then came guilt as the decisive determinant -- and now the exister is in thorough distress, i.e. now he is in the medium of existence. (CUP, p. 469; SV 7, 459)

The key determination of the ethical man as opposed to that of the religious man is that he considers himself capable of entirely renouncing himself and resigning from the finite, while at the same time remaining in the finite. The "infinite" act of resignation and the finite act in time, though distinguishable in principle, are united for the ethical man in the simple harmony of social life. For the ethical man it is his own self which "makes" the synthesis of his true self (the universal) and his immediate self (the particular).

For the religious man, however, the reconciliation of these two spheres of absolute resignation and temporal action become problematic.

When it is assumed that there is a perfect harmony of inward resignation and its external, temporal expression in action, there is no conflict between the inwardness of the individual and his existence. In the religious stage, as we have seen in the last citation, time and existence come in between infinite resignation (or the "dying from immediacy") and the temporal expression of this resignation. Through its contact with the irreversible flowing of time, the act of resignation, however pure its beginning, almost magically reverses itself and brings about an end the very opposite of the one intended. The very act which was to annihilate past guilt in fact produces new guilt to the precise degree in which it differs from perfection. The individual becomes aware that every step forward causes him to recede from the goal which he had in mind when he first put his foot forward.

With every step forward in time the individual becomes aware of the lack of correspondence between his temporal self and the real self which lies within him. While the ethical man welcomes the moments of time as the medium for his own repetition of himself, the religious man learns to look forward in fear to what the unrepeatability of time places between his finite self and his true self. The religious man no longer has time to state his true self in the successive sentences of external action. He must spend all his time in dying from immediacy. The religious man therefore acts with the consciousness that he is able to do nothing of himself. Nevertheless, he still exists and must necessarily act, since, even though he can do nothing, everything is required of him: "The religious does not preach indulgence, but proclaims that the greatest exertion is nothing -- at the same time requiring it"

(CUP, p. 414; SV 7, 403).

The religious stage is therefore characterized by self-renunciation. In the language of The Sickness unto Death, the ethical man relates himself to himself through himself. The religious man relates himself to himself through the fact that he relates himself to another, which is God or the eternal. The relationship of the religious individual to his true self is a suffering, or what Kierkegaard calls a "pathetic" relationship. For the ethical man the relation between his eternal self and his temporal self is completed through himself, whereas the religious man knows that the relation between the eternal and temporal elements is only maintained by the eternal itself. The existing individual must annihilate himself in order to allow the eternal to be the relation.<sup>13</sup>

This form of religiousness is not the specifically Christian religiousness, but is that which every human being as such is capable of realizing.<sup>14</sup> The practitioner of what Climacus calls "Religiousness A" can only truly suffer and experience guilt through the fact that he is in relation to that which is not suffering and guilt. The fact that the individual suffers indicates that at bottom there persists an eternal and indissoluble relation between himself and eternity. Through the continued act of renunciation, the individual repeats his relation to the eternal. By steadfast recollection of guilt, the individual at the same moment keeps himself before the eye of the eternal. By the recollection of guilt he repeats his simultaneous relation to eternal happiness:

The consciousness of guilt is the decisive expression for existential pathos in relation to an eternal happiness. As soon as one leaves out the eternal happiness, the consciousness of guilt drops out essentially. . . . The decisive

expression for the consciousness of guilt is in turn the essential maintenance of this consciousness, or the eternal recollection of guilt, because it is constantly put together with the relationship to an eternal happiness. (CUP, pp. 474-75; SV 7, 465)

Though the individual is separated from the good by the totality of his guilt, the very fact that guilt can be grasped as a totality indicates that a relation persists between the individual and the good. Suffering in the religious sense is only possible on the basis of a real relation between the individual and the eternal. This relation is eternal and indissoluble and cannot be augmented by any act in time. While the ethical man found identity through his own self-mastery, the religious man finds his identity through renouncing self-mastery. The latter thereby discovers the relation between himself and eternity which in fact precedes all time and all action. In the stage of Religiousness A, therefore, time does not become "decisive" for an eternal happiness. The individual by recollection discovers that he is eternal:

The problem consistently dealt with here is this: how there can be an historical starting-point, etc. In religiousness A there is no historical starting point. The individual merely discovers in time that he must assume he is eternal. The moment in time is therefore eo ipso swallowed up by eternity. In time the individual recollects that he is eternal. The contradiction lies exclusively within immanence. (CUP, p. 508; SV 7, 500)

Religiousness A is therefore identical with the standpoint of recollection, a standpoint which Kierkegaard claimed Greek philosophy and Socrates in particular had most fully perfected. In none of the stages of the aesthetic (the Seducer), the ethical (Judge William), nor religiousness A (Socrates), has the form of temporality, as opposed to that of time, been fully present. The Seducer lives within a form of time which is a pure succession or a pure vanishing. Judge William

finds an identity in time which is not purely successive but which is differentiated according to the ethical categories of good and evil. Though he finds a real present within the continuous non-presence of time, the Judge understands that this constant presence is always available, and that he is at any moment capable of realizing his own identity in time. The ethical man is therefore always capable of an eternal choice which unites him with and repeats his already eternal soul.

In the stage of religiousness A, the individual becomes aware of the fact that his existence in time prevents him from repeating his eternal soul through his own action. Because every act arising from himself is inevitably limited in relation to time and existence, his action can only add to the difference between himself and the eternal. While the ethical man sees each new act in time as adding to the brilliance of the eternal metal within, the religious man understands that each new act only subtracts from this brilliance. The religious man must annihilate the self which is the source of this subtraction, and thereby recollect his eternal relation to the eternal by means of sorrow and laughter.

In the account of religiousness A, or what may be called the religion of recollection, the relation to the eternal is "behind" the existing individual. The relation to the eternal therefore does not come to be in time. The final stage, which is the specifically Christian stage of religiousness, not only brings forward the problem of temporality, but conjointly involves the concept of original sin.

## (iv) Religiousness B

While in the earlier stages of existence repetition and recollection are essentially identical, in the stage of Religiousness B, repetition gains its true form as the repetition of the eternal in time. In B the individual becomes aware that the division between himself and the eternal is not an eternal division, but division produced by sin or by an eternal act in time. This awareness is created in the individual by his simultaneous consciousness of the fact of the Incarnation, that the breach has been healed by the entry of the eternal itself into time. A new relation to eternity has been established.

But this relation is actual for the individual only if he is willing to surrender himself to it. The guilt of the individual is not a given fact within an already established relation to the eternal, but is a quantity which has become and continues to become as long as through sin the individual does not actualize or repeat his relation to the Atonement. The individual must retire from time and yet at the same time exist in a definite moment of time. While according to reason this retirement from time requires a lifetime, the passion of faith requires one to believe that this resignation, which takes an infinite amount of time to be completed, can occur in a single moment of time, or at a particular time. It is as if one were to say that perfection implies the traversing of an infinite series of steps in a finite space of time.

In the stage of Religiousness B we therefore reach the understanding of time as an intersection of time and eternity. In A the

eternal "is" not in any particular time. The "positive" or eternal relation of the individual to eternity is recognized in the suffering of self-annihilation, or in the "negative". The eternal is ever-present but not actual. In B, the eternal is both ever-present and actual, both present and absent at the same time. In the paradoxical religiousness, the eternal has come to be in time:

Religiousness A accentuates existence as actuality and eternity (which nevertheless sustains everything by the immanence which lies at the base of it) disappears in such a way that the positive becomes recognizable by the negative. To the eyes of speculative philosophy, existence has vanished and only pure being is, and yet the eternal is constantly concealed in it and as concealed is present. The paradoxical religiousness places the contradiction absolutely between existence and the eternal; for precisely the thought that the eternal is at a definite moment of time, is an expression for the fact that existence is abandoned by the concealed immanence of the eternal. In the religiousness A the eternal is ubique et nusquam, but concealed by the actuality of existence; in the paradoxical religiousness the eternal is at a definite place, and precisely this is the breach with immanence. (CUP, p. 506; SV 7, 497-98)

In the religion of recollection the individual discovers that he is eternal. The moment in which the individual fully recollects himself is an eternal moment in which the temporal moment is "swallowed up by eternity." In the religion of repetition the individual becomes eternal in a moment of time, and yet this becoming is at the same time an accomplished or eternal fact. This must be the case, otherwise the repetition of becoming eternal would be an entirely unique, historical, and unrepeatable event.

The state of the individual before he becomes "eternal" is not that of a being which is purely historical or temporal. The individual human being according to his essence is eternal and has come to be

historical and temporal. The act by which he comes to be historical and temporal is the fall into sin, which is both eternal and unique at the same time. Within the consciousness of sin, the individual realizes that his eternal soul is not only to be recollected, but is to be repeated in time. This repetition does not arise from the will of the individual, but is an act of freedom which is simultaneously a condition he receives from outside himself. It is precisely in the ethical stage that the individual believes that the relation between his eternal and temporal selves is accomplished through himself and through his own act. In the stage of religiousness B, the individual learns to act in the consciousness that the relation between eternal and temporal is established not by himself but by the eternal itself. His eternal identity is a possession, but is only truly actual in so far as it is at the same time a gift.

Immediacy, the aesthetic, finds no contradiction in the fact of existing: to exist is one thing, and the contradiction is something else which comes from without. The ethical finds the contradiction, but within self-assertion. The religiousness A comprehends the contradiction as suffering in self-annihilation, although within immanence. . . . The paradoxical religiousness breaks with immanence and makes the fact of existing the absolute contradiction, not within immanence but against immanence. There is no longer any immanent fundamental kinship between the temporal and the eternal, because the eternal itself has entered time and would constitute there the kinship. (CUP, pp. 508-09; SV 7, 499)

The identity of the self in view of the fact of sin is not constituted by the self alone. The self is simultaneous with itself when it is contemporaneous with Christ in time.<sup>15</sup> The self is a self that relates itself to itself because it is transparently grounded in the "other" which constitutes the whole relation. The understanding

of the "moment" of time in which eternity touches time is therefore dependent on a doctrine of human freedom, according to which the freedom and identity of the self is dependent on the external reality of God. The moment is not novel by virtue of being unrepeatable in the existentialist sense, but by virtue of it being a repetition of what is at the same time eternal. The novelty consists in the fact that it is the eternal self which becomes in a moment of time. What makes this novelty possible is not the will of the individual but the eternal itself which "has entered time and would constitute the kinship" (CUP, p. 508; SV 7, 499).

In the discussion of the Platonic understanding of the instant,<sup>16</sup> it was clear that, for Plato, neither a moment of time nor time itself was adequate to the truth of the eternal. To say that time is a "moving image" of the eternal is to say that time can never "be" eternal. Kierkegaard's doctrine of repetition seems to say the opposite. Because the eternal comes to be in time, an adequation of the temporal moment or "present" to the eternal seems to occur in the moment of choice. In the idea of the "fullness of time", Kierkegaard appears to be asserting that there is a mediation of time and eternity, even though, as we have shown, this occurs by virtue of an impossibility. The impossibility, or in Kierkegaard's language, the "absurdity" of the correspondence of the temporal to the eternal can only be conceived as an impossibility, however, in light of the Platonic assumption that time is inadequate to eternity.<sup>17</sup>

It can be a contradiction that eternity enters time only if one assumes that eternity and time are qualitative opposites. If the

eternal is merely the principle of continuity of a wholly temporal or historical present, then it becomes difficult to explain how a temporality so described could be "paradoxical", except in a relative sense.<sup>18</sup> The "eternity" of which Kierkegaard speaks is that in relationship to which the temporal is "nothing" and at the same time that through which the temporal gains its being. In religiousness A the individual becomes aware that in relation to eternity he is nothing, and that every temporal action in comparison to this relation is nothing. In religiousness B the individual comes into relation to the eternal in time in the fullness of time. In this sense he becomes "something", and his temporal action becomes "decisive". It must be noted, however, that the temporal act becomes decisive only paradoxically, because it occurs in relation to what has been decided from behind.<sup>19</sup>

It is my claim that the moment in time, as Kierkegaard understands it, presupposes the Platonic dualism of being and becoming, while at the same time overcoming or mediating this dualism. Repetition requires both assumptions that the eternal is in time and above time.<sup>20</sup> The truth is therefore above time, but must be realized by the individual in time. To become "subjective" therefore means at the same time to become eternal. In the sense that the eternal is that which is real, the distinctions of time are unreal distinctions, and the whole of time only amounts to the one time of eternity. Time as a totality is not an infinitely extended series of moments, but the instant of eternity which is only "once":

Though suffering lasts seventy years, that is only once; though the "once" is the seventy times ten of the seventy years, that is only once, it is still only one time. For time itself in its totality is the instant; eternally

understood, the temporal is the instant, and the instant eternally understood is only "once" . . . . For eternity is the opposite; it is not the opposite to a single instant (this is meaningless), it is the opposite to the temporal as a whole, and it opposes itself with the power of eternity against the temporal amounting to more than that. (CD, pp. 103-04; SV 10, 104)

The problem of repetition enters in when it is recognized that the eternal which "is" only "once" at the same time "becomes". The presence of eternity is not only immutably realized outside of time in the repetition of eternity, but must be realized in time. The eternal repetition does not drop out to be replaced by a purely temporal repetition, but is put in relation to the temporal or "existential" repetition. Kierkegaard expresses this contradiction by comparing two individuals of different age who utter the same truth. The task of the individual, as it is stated in this passage, is to make true what is already eternally true. The non-successive "once" of the eternal is repeated within the successive many times of a human life:

Therefore the youth who stands at the beginning of life says with the same justification as does the old man who stands at the end of it and looks back over the distance travelled: "We live only once." With the same justification, that is to say, by virtue of eternity, but not with the same truth, although the saying is equally true. For the young man says what is true, but the old man has verified it, has made that true which yet is eternally true. The only difference here is that which in these times has been overlooked, when with all this proving and proving it has been forgotten that the highest thing a man is capable of is to make an eternal truth true, to make it true that it is true . . . by doing it, by being himself the proof, by a life which also perhaps will be able to convince others. Did Christ ever undertake to prove some truth or another, or to prove the truth? No, but He made the truth true, or He made it true that it is true. (CD, p. 104; SV 10, 104)

The difficulty of such a statement of what truth is, and indeed the difficulty which leaves Kierkegaard so open to the misinterpretations

of the existentialists, is that such a statement can be confused with the proposition that whatever I act or make is true. Kierkegaard makes a much more subtle combination of the traditional ontological assumption that the real is real apart from my willing and doing, and the existential or "phenomenological" position that only what I do or experience is real.

The consciousness of temporality, as we have found in the examination of the stages of existence, arises only with the consciousness of sin, which itself belongs only to the stage of the so-called religiousness B. In all the prior stages the relation between eternity and time is decided eternally before time. In the last stage, the relation is eternally decided in time. The individual, having become aware of the fullness of time and the Atonement, is aware that the mediation between himself and the eternal has been established. The task remains of repeating this truth in his own life. He must gain a lived experience in time of an eternal truth which has come to be in time:

For as the eternal came into the world at a moment in time, the individual does not in the course of time come into relation with the eternal and think about it (this is A), but in time it comes into relation with the eternal in time . . . (CUP, p. 106; SV 7, 497)

With the awareness of the mediation, however, there appears the knowledge also that the mediation took the form of an individual who suffered death. This is not a happy mediation, like the mediation of terms in logic, but the suffering and humiliated mediation of love. That the eternal, which is only "once", at the same time comes to be, is merely an algebraic expression for the paradox that an eternal God suffered on the cross. The inability to reconcile these poles of God's being, i.e. his untroubled eternity and his strange and ignominious

death, gives rise to the "offence" of the individual who stands perplexed before the cross.

The consciousness with which Kierkegaard deals in the last major chapter of Anxiety is therefore mainly the offended consciousness. This individual is aware of the eternal truth as it is presented in Christianity but cannot "make it true that it is true". This individual who is described again in The Sickness unto Death as the despairing individual, is divided within himself in the manner I have indicated by referring to St. Paul. Or, in terms of time, he has not realized in time his relation to eternal truth.

## II Anxiety in Sin

### (i) Freedom, Time and Sin

It has been constantly affirmed that it is impossible to understand Kierkegaard's account of freedom and time except in relation to the dependence of the self on a reality external to the self. Anxiety is brought forward in order to explain the relation between the action and the passion of the self when it chooses. In one sense the individual has an apprehension of the good and a will sufficient to the realization of it, but in another sense is divided from and ignorant of the good, and therefore impotent to realize it. The self's simultaneous relation to and division from the good is expressed psychologically in the ambiguity of anxiety. Anxiety is ambiguous because of the self's simultaneous relation to and division from what is real and good.

Kierkegaard's interpretation of the moment in time is grounded

in this understanding of freedom. The existentialist notion of freedom that equates it with the individual will, would seem hopelessly abstract to Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard's assumption is the Christian one that at each moment of time the self is in the grip of sin. What makes the individual responsible for this sin is that the sin has come about through an "act" of freedom. On the other hand, his act of freedom is at the same time unfree in so far as he has not chosen what he truly is:

. . . for to be what one is by one's own act is freedom. And yet the individual is in reality unfree and bound and exiled; for to be free from the Truth is to be exiled from the Truth. (PF, p. 19; SV 4, 185)

It appears from this quotation that, when divided from the reality which gives it being, human freedom has the power only to subdue itself and therefore further exclude itself from that reality.

Freedom, according to Kierkegaard, is not willing what one happens to be, but willing to be what one truly is. Ordinarily, we think of free choice as being "decisive" to the extent which it follows from our own independence and autonomy. At any moment we feel ourselves capable of summoning up hidden resources within ourselves in order to begin a new train of events which will fully manifest our desires. This idea of choice, however, is precisely what for Kierkegaard makes the moment in time indecisive. This view of choice does not adequately account for the condition of sin in which the will is mysteriously mired. The fall into sin is not the result of a mere temporal or historical act which can be annulled by another temporal act. The act of freedom cannot be repeated in the same way as can the flipping of a light switch. The moment of choice is decisive just because the

things of the soul are not simply at one's disposal. If sin were of another nature, then the state of sin would vanish into a past state instead of being re-membered in forgiveness:

. . . if by willing to be free the individual could by himself become free, the fact that he had been bound would become a state of the past, tracelessly vanishing in the moment of liberation; the moment would not be charged with decisive significance. (PF, pp. 19-20; SV 4, 185)

The moment, therefore, is "decisive" in the sense that through it the self comes into relation in time to the real source of his being. The soul of man is therefore not temporal or historical by nature, but stands in relation to the historical or to becoming. Sin is a product of this relation and that which causes the relation to decay. The act of sin is not an act which vanishes "tracelessly" into the past when it is succeeded by another act, but is an eternal act which comes again and again. Suffering, by contrast, is purely temporal and vanishes into the "once" of the past. Sin is an eternal act in time which harms the soul:

Sin is man's distinction. Only the rust of sin can consume the soul or eternally destroy it. For here indeed is the remarkable thing from which already that simple wise man of olden time Socrates derived a proof of the immortality of the soul, that the sickness of the soul (sin) is not like bodily sickness which kills the body. Sin is not a passage-way which a man has to pass through once, for from it one shall flee; sin is not (like suffering) the instant, but an eternal fall from the eternal, hence it is not "once", and it cannot possibly be that its "once" is no time. (CD, p. 108; SV 10, 108)

That the fall is an eternal fall cannot mean that the individual is forever divided from the real, but only that this division is a constant and repeated issue. This constant presence of freedom is not the immediate or existentialist constancy, but the freedom of repetition

which at each moment either makes or unmakes in time the truth of eternal truth. And this very act is at the same time an act of the eternal; in so far as the eternal is that which is the enabling condition of the repetition. The "act of the eternal" is simply what is meant by grace.

Kierkegaard begins the fourth chapter of Anxiety with an examination of the individual who is conscious of the true distinction between good and evil. Sin is no longer a "possibility" as it was for the child and the pagan, but an "actuality". Since anxiety was defined as "freedom's disclosure to itself in possibility," it would seem that freedom, having become "actual" in an actual sinner, would no longer be the object of dread. When the individual becomes conscious of his own sin, the "nothing" of anxiety has become a "something". Once sin is posited:

. . . the object of anxiety is a determinate something and its nothing is an actual something, because the distinction between good and evil is posited in concreto -- and anxiety therefore loses its dialectical ambiguity.  
 (KW 8, 111-12; SV 4, 379-80)

Nevertheless, sin is not all that man is. The reality of sin in the actual individual is an "unwarranted actuality". It is because the human soul is not one immediate element but a synthesis, that sin can be experienced as other to the self. There is a true or eternal part of the soul that remains untainted by sin, otherwise the individual could not be aware of the sin as sin.<sup>21</sup> In so far as the individual is in possession of his soul, his own acts, however depraved, can never harm it. In so far as these very acts divide the individual from his soul, or true self, he must reappropriate the soul which in one sense

he already possesses. For the soul to be a synthesis means that it both possesses and yet has to acquire what it is. The external object either needs to be acquired or is possessed, and cannot be both acquired and possessed at the same time. Because the individual is not an immediate unity of the temporal and the eternal but a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal, he is this contradiction of possessing and having to acquire what he is at the same time: "Hence the soul is the contradiction between the eternal and the temporal, and for that reason it can be possessed and acquired at one and the same time" (ED 2, p. 72; SV 4, 58).<sup>22</sup>

To say that sin is an unwarranted or illegitimate actuality is therefore to say that man's soul is a synthesis of the kind just described. To acquire in time what one already possesses eternally, is what has been called repetition. The task is to unite in time the immediate temporal being of the soul with its true eternal being. As has been shown, the cause of the actuality of this unity is not the self but that in which the self is transparently grounded. What man immediately is, however, is always passing away. To what extent can the true present of his eternal soul be united with the vanishing present of the actual? At bottom the same question is being asked as that of the relation between all the stops of the trajectory of an object and the actuality of its moving. How can the identical and the repeatable be realized in the unrepeatable and always different flowing of time?

The psychologist, for Kierkegaard, looks at the soul of the human being and analyzes it in relation to "states" of consciousness.

Any act undertaken by the self automatically occurs in relation to a given state which limits the act. In relation to the given state the individual is passive. Since the individual is also free, there must be a possibility within him which can give rise to other states. This possibility is at the same time the source of the movement or transition of the soul from state to state. Because the simple combination of the states is not identical with the actual change to which these states are related, the psychologist who analyzes these states cannot explain through them alone the actuality of the fall of the soul into sin.

On the other hand, since every act of the self is at each moment related to a particular passive state, the act is not entirely arbitrary or indeterminate. When sin has become actual and has determined the states of consciousness in a specific way, there is still the "possibility" of moving out of or remaining in this state. The psychological state which relates the given state with this "possibility" is anxiety. Anxiety is not that which effects or actualizes the transition, but the state which immediately precedes the transition. To the degree to which there is a disharmony between the given state and the transition dread appears in consciousness. The dread and the disharmony are only overcome when possibility and dread are annihilated by faith. And what brings about this annihilation is the good itself:

Now psychology again has anxiety as its object, but it must be cautious. The history of the individual life proceeds in a movement from state to state. Every state is posited by a leap. As sin entered into the world, so it continues to enter into the world if it is not halted. Nevertheless, every such repetition is not a simple consequence but a new leap. Every such leap is preceded by a state as the closest psychological approximation. This state is the object of psychology. To the extent that in every state possibility is present, anxiety is also present.

Such is the case after sin is posited, for only in the good is there a unity of state and transition. (KW 8, 113; SV 4, 381)

When freedom is not realized the possibility of transition is an object of fear, and the unity of one's given state and what is to be becomes a matter of doubt. In the first section of the fourth chapter of Anxiety, Kierkegaard indicates the different forms of this anxiety.

### (ii) Anxiety in the Free Individual

At first the individual is not at home in the state of sin. What is properly the object of anxiety in this state is the evil of sin itself. The first form of anxiety in this kind of individual, is the dread of the very reality of sin. When the individual is aware of sin, he is also aware of it as something brought about by his own act. This act, since it was not in accordance with the true self of the individual, gave sin an "illegitimate actuality" in the individual. Instead of negating the act by the act of faith, the individual allows the condition of sin to become an object of dread. The individual attempts by his anxiety to annihilate sin:

The posited sin is indeed an annulled possibility, but it is also an unwarranted actuality, and as such anxiety can relate itself to it. Since sin is an unwarranted actuality, it is also to be negated. This work anxiety will undertake. Here is the playground of the ingenious sophistry of anxiety. (113; 381)

In this first stage the individual is still in a free relation to the good, and is conscious of sin as a bondage. The object of his dread is the evil within him and not the good which has been partially

effaced by this evil. The second stage of the anxiety in sin arises in relation to the possibility that the individual may sink deeper into the sin in which he is already mired. As a consequence of being so mired, the state of sin starts to acquire what Kierkegaard calls the "right of naturalization [Indfødsret]" in the individual. In light of this naturalization, the true nature of the self is forgotten and the anxiety of the individual with respect to his condition relaxes. The anxiety of the first stage concerns the present actuality of sin, whereas the anxiety of the second stage concerns the future "possibility" of sin.

The third and final stage constitutes the transition to the qualitatively different stage of the dread of the good. This stage could be designated as that stage in which freedom and repetition are lost. In the earlier stages the individual felt himself to some degree free of the evil just because he was able to experience it as other to his self. The individual conceived himself as being able to act in opposition to the state of sin and thereby "repeat" his true self. In the earlier stages, repentance was a possibility, but in the third stage the ability of repentance to repeat the true self of the individual becomes a matter of doubt. The individual begins to look upon repentance as an act which puts him even further from the forgiveness he requires. Because repentance occurs in time, it is always a moment too late for the sin which it attempts to eradicate. The individual becomes inwardly the same as the walker described earlier. Under the illusion of anxiety, every step forward appears to take him further from his destination. The certainty of repetition and continuing life is replaced by the

certainty of the irreversibility of time and the certainty of death:

Sin advances in its consequence; repentance follows it step by step, but always a moment too late. . . . Anxiety is ahead; it discovers the consequence before it comes, as one feels in one's bones that a storm is approaching. The consequence comes closer; the individual trembles like a horse that gasps as it comes to a halt at the place where once it had been frightened. Sin conquers. Anxiety throws itself despairingly into the arms of repentance. Repentance vertures all. It conceives of the consequence of sin as suffering penalty and of perdition as the consequence of sin. It is lost. Its judgement is pronounced, its condemnation is certain, and the augmented judgement is that the individual shall be dragged through life to the place of execution. In other words, repentance has gone crazy.  
(115-16; 383-84)

It should be clear from the last sentence of the quotation that the extremity of inward suffering depicted here is not a condition which Kierkegaard takes to be the natural state of the human being. The extremity of soul depicted is in fact a perversion of nature, a "sickness unto death", or an insanity of the spirit. Nevertheless, the fact that the individual finds himself in this extreme condition is an indication that sin is not completely naturalized in him. The second stage of dread in which sin tends to become naturalized in the individual, and in which dread "relaxes", is essentially identical with what Kierkegaard understands by spiritlessness. Kierkegaard does not look upon the individual mired in the extremity of sin with the eyes of the modern spiritless bourgeois, who, from the vantage point of a lucky family and public life, shakes his head at the weakness of a soul in bondage. Though far from recommending this extremity or praising the individual's persistence in it as if it were an act of heroism, Kierkegaard nevertheless wants to understand how the eternal is present in this extremity. He wants to understand how this annihilation

of the will in despair is at the same time providential.

The spiritless individual and the spiritually insane individual are in an almost identical flight from the good. The difference between these individuals lies more in the degree to which each is conscious of that flight. The spiritless individual is able to give himself the illusion of repetition and a feeling of the efficacy of his self by absorbing himself in the manifest life of familial and public existence. Death and the unrepeatable make their appearance only occasionally in moments of boredom or distraction which from time to time grip the soul with an odd tenacity. At these odd moments the soul verges on an awareness of its own nothingness, and of the sin of the self in imagining itself to be more than nothing. As we have seen, the religious self as opposed to the ethical self is aware that the self is constituted or sustained by a reality external to it. The individual must come to know and experience both the self and the will as a "gift". The self is nothing because the self is not the cause of the self, and yet something, because it is allowed to be in spite of this nothingness.

In Anxiety Kierkegaard therefore states:

Therefore, in the sphere of the religious, genius must not be spoken of as a special gift that is bestowed only on a few, for here the gift is that of willing. . . . (114; 383)

The bourgeois unconsciously fears the unrepeatable. This fear is the reminder to him of his own nothingness which he must keep at bay at all costs. This fear manifests itself in various forms whether it be a certain smug scorn of the weak individual, or an over-enthusiastic trumpeting of ethical and civic duties. The fact that in the depths of his soul he has not exorcized the unrepeatable and the germ of death

within means that, even on the most happy occasion, a shadow may fall and cause him to shudder in astonishment at his own nakedness of soul.

The spiritually insane individual, however, cannot stop shuddering and becomes a slave to his own astonishment. In Kierkegaard's view, the condition of such an individual is accompanied by a certain willfulness, and at the same time by a compulsion to chatter. The repentant individual, though he is in one sense utterly destitute of will and the repetition which accompanies it, nevertheless inwardly contributes to this spiritual impoverishment through the activity of his own will. The will is mad precisely because it works against itself under the illusion cast by anxiety. This individual shares the same fault as the spiritless individual in the sense that he will not give the will over to the reality which in truth constitutes it.

The individual who thinks he can by an effort of will confer integrity and unity upon his self does not truly will to be himself. The doctrine characteristic of existentialism, according to which the self is a kind of infinite form which creates its values or laws for itself, and in relation to which the finite bodily existence is a mere material for the shaping activity of the self, is rejected by Kierkegaard. To undertake to create the self is to "despairingly will to be oneself." The individual crippled by insane remorse, just as the spiritless bourgeois and the existentialist, is unable to truly lose himself. The true "willing" of oneself occurs when "through the aid of the eternal the self has the courage to lose itself in order to win itself." As opposed to this, the defiant or despairing self "is unwilling to begin with losing itself but wills to be itself" (KW 19, 67; SV 11, 178-79).

True action and repetition inevitably require a true beginning. The self would like to begin at any time under the assumption that a new act will free it from past failures and restore the self whole. A self which would heroically will itself, however pure and heartfelt the willing is, ends up in despair. The relation between the infinite self does not consist in the infinite capacity of the self to negate what it is. The awareness of the infinite self is found not in the ability, but in the inability to negate what it is. The individual must find the true beginning out of which the infinite self and its true present may unite with the finite self and its immediate present. In order to accomplish this unification, the self must begin within the unchangeable limitations of the given self. In the following passage from The Sickness unto Death, the argument is put this way:

In order in despair to will to be oneself, there must be consciousness of an infinite self. This infinite self, however, is really only the most abstract form, the most abstract possibility of the self. And this is the self that a person in despair wills to be, severing the self from any relation to a power that has established it, or severing it from the idea that there is such a power. With the help of this infinite form, the self in despair wants to be master of itself or to create itself, to make his self into the self he wants to be, to determine what he will have or not have in his concrete self. . . . In other words, he wants to begin a little earlier than do other men, not at and with the beginning, but "in the beginning"; he does not want to see his given self as his task -- he himself wants to compose his self by means of being the infinite form. (KW 19, 67-68; SV 11, 179)

It is still unclear, however, what Kierkegaard understands by the third thing in virtue of which the true self and the immediate self are united. In passages cited earlier the "spirit" and the "instant" were stated to be the third things in relation to which the eternal and temporal aspects of the self are united. The spiritless

bourgeois remains in dread of the unrepeatable because he has not united his true self with his finite self by virtue of the spirit and the eternal, but instead by virtue of his own "self-assertion". While the spiritless man avoids the unrepeatability, the insanely repentant individual stands helpless and astonished before it. The crazed will of the despairing self manifests itself in a tendency toward monologue, in the face of which all rational persuasion is apparently useless:

No dialectic is capable of defeating the sophism that crazed repentance is capable of producing at every moment. . . . To attempt to stop this horror by words and phrases is wasted effort, and whoever contemplates doing it may always be sure that his sermonizing will be like children's babble when compared with the elementary eloquence that is at the service of such repentance. (KW 8, 116; SV 4, 384)

The common feature of the spiritless individual and the insanely repentant individual is willfulness, although the spiritless individual is always suppressing the consciousness of it. The reaction of the bourgeois to "the spiritual trial is to become spirit-less" (117; 385). The condition of the repentant individual is an impotence in the face of the seemingly immovable shapes of his past sins. The spiritless individual lives in an abstract eternity where, for him, every instant of time offers an occasion for realizing his true self and negating his past sin. For the repentant individual the moments rush by with such rapidity that his true self seems immovably past and incapable of realization in the immediate present.

The polarities of the human self (body/soul, freedom/necessity, the eternal/the temporal) are grounded in a real unity which transcends and yet is present in them. This third thing is the spirit, which is "actual" in the self at the "instant" in which time and eternity touch.

The moment of the fullness of time is the moment in which the soul comes into possession of faith, when, as if by reversal of the forces of gravity, the individual is freed from his dread of the unrepeatable and unites the true present of eternity with the temporal present in which he dwells. Only faith can drag the individual out of his dread of the unrepeatable, which is at the same time the dread of death, and restore him to the living present and the certainty of repetition:

The only thing that is truly able to disarm the sophistry of sin is faith, courage to believe that the state itself is a new sin, courage to renounce anxiety without anxiety, which only faith can do; faith does not thereby annihilate anxiety, but, itself eternally young, it extricates itself from anxiety's moment of death. Only faith is able to do this, for only in faith is the synthesis eternal and at every moment possible. (117; 385)

The true ground of this faith, however, still remains in question. Kierkegaard states quite explicitly in Philosophical Fragments that "faith is not an act of will; for all human volition has its capacity within the scope of an underlying condition" (PF, p. 77; SV 4, 227). A condition or ground is required in order that the individual can have this faith. In order to understand what Kierkegaard means by faith, it must first be understood how the eternal touches upon time in the human self. Only in this way can it be distinguished from the accounts of faith which oppose faith to knowledge and assume an essential division between the individual and the real. But in order to rise to the great height of Kierkegaard's doctrine of the instant in which the temporal is touched by the eternal, we must first descend to the depths where the soul experiences the total absence of the eternal. This fearful state of the soul Kierkegaard calls the demonic.

## III The Demonic

## (i) Anxiety in the Unfree Individual

In the stages of dread discussed in the last section, the individual was still in possession of freedom in so far as he could still fear his participation in evil and feel it as alien to his true self. In section two of the fourth chapter of Anxiety, Kierkegaard examines the individual who has lost his freedom and who, in a sense, has become possessed. Sin has begun to be second nature to the individual. The individual who is free more or less consciously seeks the good and avoids evil. This free individual is therefore in the bondage of sin. The demonic individual, however, actively avoids the good and sees it as an enemy. The demonic individual, instead of being in mere bondage to sin, is possessed by it. Because of this possession he is in dread:

The individual is in sin, and his anxiety is about the evil. Viewed from a higher standpoint, this formation is in the good, and for this reason it is in anxiety about the evil. The other formation is the demonic. The individual is in the evil and is in anxiety about the good. The bondage of sin is an unfree relation to the evil, but the demonic is an unfree relation to the good. (KW 8, 119; SV 4, 387)<sup>23</sup>

The individual who essentially is "in the good", or in the bondage of sin, still longs for the restoration of his free relation to the good and is saddened over his impotence to realize it. Under the slavery of possession, the individual who is in despair is repelled by the presence of that which ought to save him. The demonic in an individual is revealed at the very instant that he is "in contact" with the good. The word [before] which Kierkegaard uses to indicate this contact, is the very word used in Chapter three of Anxiety to

designate the "touching" of eternity and time in the instant. When a soul sundered, divided and lost in the temporal comes into contact with the good, it at the same time comes into relation to the eternal. It is this interpretation which Kierkegaard gives to the remarkable passages in the New Testament concerning Christ's encounter with demons.<sup>24</sup> The moment of time in which the soul is touched by or in contact with the eternal is the same moment in which the soul is touched by the good. In this sense the eternal and the good are identified.

The flight from the external manifestation of the good is at the same time a flight from the presence of the eternal within one. One is prevented from truly dwelling in the present because "anxiety about the eternal turns the moment into an abstraction" (152; 418). The dread of the good is the fear of the shipwreck of the will, which, in a moment of time, reveals the utter nothingness of self and will: "If the eternal is posited, the present becomes something different from what a person wants it to be. He fears this and thus he is in anxiety about the good" (152; 417). The fact that the demonic individual unconsciously recognizes the embodiment of the good [Christ] which stands before him means that he must possess some inner relation to the good. At the same time he does not recognize the good because for him it is an object of fear and dread. Here we return to the paradox of the human self that it is both a possession and something which is to be acquired. If the individual were not related to the good, he would be entirely in the power of evil, which would in turn make salvation impossible. It would also be impossible to call the evil act a sin, were the individual not simultaneously in possession of the condition

which enabled him to act according to the good:

. . . if there could be a question of salvation, the individual was not entirely in the power of evil, and if the individual was entirely in the power of evil, punishment would be a contradiction. (122; 390)

The demonic individual wishes to cut himself off from the good and retain the desired immediate present rather than acquire the true present of the eternal. The very fact that he cannot cut himself off in this way indicates his simultaneous inward relation to the good. The instant in which the good approaches him from the outside is the same instant at which his true self is revealed:

The demonic is unfreedom that wants to close itself off. This, however, is and remains an impossibility. It always retains a relation, and even when this has apparently disappeared altogether, it is nevertheless there, and anxiety at once manifests itself in the moment of contact with the good . . . (123; 390)

In light of this paragraph we are prepared for the first formation of the demonic, which is called "inclosing reserve unfreely revealed" or "demonic reserve".

### (ii) Demonic Reserve

One of the forms which the demonic takes manifests itself in the domain of speech. Kierkegaard first defines the demonic as "inclosing reserve" and "the unfreely revealed". The nouns Indesluttede and Indesluttethed are used interchangeably to indicate "inclosing reserve", a neologism which is necessary in order to carry the sense implied in the context. Indesluttethed ordinarily means simply "reserve" or "reticence". Indesluttede is a gerund formed from the verb indeslutte,

which means to confine, lock up or enclose. The demonic reserve, or "inclosing reserve", indicates an inward flight from the good. It is the good which would arrest the will and make the soul manifest, a manifestation which the demonic individual fears.

The reluctance of the self to manifest itself is at the same time a refusal to speak and enter into conversation, not just with one's own self, where one can have one's own way, but with the good and the order of being to which it gives rise. I have examined in Chapter three<sup>25</sup> the historical genius who seeks through his actions to silence fortune and to impose his "speech" upon the course of the world. It was shown that when the heroic acts of the historical genius enter into the actual web of contingencies that make up the world, a strange reversal occurs through which the hero comes to experience the collision of his acts with destiny. The genius of fate begins as the sole speaker in a void but, by virtue of the irreversible and uncanny flow of time, is caught and finally mastered in the "conversation" of fate.

The ability to speak has nothing to do with the tendency to chatter. The demonic individual precisely manifests the latter tendency. The ability to truly speak is dependent upon the discernment by the individual of the appropriateness at different times of both speech and silence. The demonic individual cannot find the right time to speak or to be silent. Against his will, the "inclosed" individual is always revealing his anxiety about the good through the inappropriateness, and thereby the unfreedom, of his speeches and silences:

The demonic is inclosing reserve [det Indesluttede] and the unfreely disclosed. The two definitions indicate, as intended, the same thing, because inclosing reserve is precisely the mute, and when it is to express itself, this must take place contrary to its will, since freedom, which underlies unfreedom or is its ground, by entering into communication with freedom from without, revolts and now betrays unfreedom in such a way that it is the individual who in anxiety betrays himself against his will. Therefore, inclosing reserve in this case must be taken in a very distinct sense, for in the common use of the term it may signify the highest freedom. (123; 391)

The individual who is silent in a particular situation may therefore be the one who essentially is able to speak, while those who are busy chattering are really incapable of truly speaking a single word. Just as the genius of fate, the demonically reserved individual must, simply by virtue of the fact that he exists, enter into conversation with time and the irreversible web of events it weaves. Language, the true word spoken in truth, "is precisely what saves, what saves the individual from the empty abstraction of inclosing reserve" (124; 392). The demonic individual persists in his inclosedness and cannot speak this true word. In this inability is concealed a great mystery, that the unfreedom of demonic reserve, by a kind of incessant monologue, drowns out the sound of the true conversation which would free it. The demonic makes a prisoner of itself:

The demonic does not close itself up with something, but it closes itself up within itself, and in this lies what is profound about existence, precisely that unfreedom makes itself a prisoner. (124; 391)

The demonic individual subjects his will through his own will. Yet this subjection is a mystery in which the whole of being and the passage of time seem to co-operate, since the individual cannot release himself from unfreedom by his own will. Just when the demonic feels

himself to have produced a free act, time and being carry it through only to reverse it, thereby revealing the nothingness of that act and the self which gave it birth. In its contact with the good the demonically reserved self manifests its true nature: ". . . the law for the manifestation of the demonic is that against its will it 'comes out with it'" (124; 392).

Because the bondage of the demonic is a bondage of the will, no purely intellectual persuasion can free him. That which can compel the inclosed individual to speak is "the good, which is absolutely able to keep silent" (125; 392). Only the good itself is able to restore the demonic to himself, so that his involuntary revelation becomes a free manifestation of his true self in the web of what is. The word utterance has its roots in the German word äussern, which literally means to externalize.<sup>26</sup> In the utterance of the true word, the individual utters forth his true self: "Here disclosure is the good, for disclosure is the first utterance of salvation" (127; 394).

The will, according to Kierkegaard, is not entirely private, nor can it fully isolate itself from the enduring world of being in relation to which it exists. The attempt of the will to conduct a kind of monologue is vitiated by the very inappropriateness of its speeches and silences. The ability to speak implies, not a fast tongue, but a certain orientation of the self in the light of which the true word may be spoken at the appropriate time.

Freedom of the will in Kierkegaard's thought should not be confused with an infinite capacity to change or negate what is given in the self, but the ability of the self to manifest itself as what

it truly is. As soon as the will becomes "infinitely" negative, it becomes demonic and loses the ability to live the manifest life of the good. The true will of the eternal self, which ever wills the good, is rendered impotent in the face of the stronger will of the temporal will, which wants to close itself up within its own monologue. Despite the monologue of his soul, the individual nevertheless maintains a relation to the good, a relation which, despite his efforts, makes itself manifest in those instants when the eternal presents itself:

What determines whether the phenomenon is demonic is the individual's attitude toward disclosure, whether he will interpenetrate that fact with freedom and accept it in freedom. Whenever he will not do this, the phenomenon is demonic. This must be kept clearly in mind, for even he who wishes it is essentially demonic. He has, that is to say, two wills, one subordinate and impotent that wills revelation and one stronger that wills inclosing reserve, but the fact that this will is the stronger indicates that he is essentially demonic. Inclosing reserve is involuntary disclosure. . . . The disclosure may declare itself in words, as when the unhappy man ends by thrusting his concealed secret upon every one. It may declare itself in facial expression, in a glance, because there is a glance by which one involuntarily reveals what is concealed. (128-29; 396)

For Kierkegaard the negative activity of the self, an activity which reaches its apogee in the state of the demonic, is not purely a product of necessity, but a product of both freedom and necessity at the same time. Because the individual relates to the moment in dread, he is ambiguously guilty and innocent of the choice or act which manifests a certain side of his self. This means that he is both free and under the constraint of necessity with respect to that manifestation. The negativity or demonism of the self is not a product of a necessary process of development, but is also an act of freedom in the moment of time when eternity and time touch, a moment of time as sudden as heat

lightning.

(iii) The Sudden and the Vacuous

The appearance of the demonic is not a steady revelation of a higher continuity of the self, but in fact the absence of continuity. For Kierkegaard, the appearance of negativity and evil is not part of the continuous manifestation of an inner law of the self, but is sudden and enigmatic, a phenomenon which obeys no immanent law. This suddenness is due to the nature of freedom, which is "infinite" and makes its appearance in the "leap" of the instant in which time and the eternal touch.

The instant of freedom is the moment when the "something" of sin arises out of the "nothing" of anxiety, and is at the same time the moment when freedom is lost. The individual becomes lost in the immediate present of the unrepeatable instant, while at the same time remaining in relation to the continuous presence of the eternal. In relation to this state of the soul, the eternal remains "behind", since any further act only increases the sin and increases the distance of the self from the eternal. In order to recover freedom, the eternal must come to be again out of the non-being or the "nothing" of sin. The soul, in relation to itself, is in the same position as Zeno's Achilles is in relation to the turtle. Achilles must cross an infinite number of spaces in a finite time in order to reach the turtle moving in front of him.

The relation of freedom to time, therefore, occurs suddenly

and by virtue of a "leap". The leap of sin destroys the continuity of the self and therefore its freedom. At the same time that continuity and freedom are lost, the ability of the self to manifest itself in speech is lost. The negativity of the demonic self is in fact a form of impotence that is unwilling to manifest itself. Continuity and communication of the self, therefore, go hand in hand. The continuity of the demonic self is not the manifest life of the good but instead a kind of dizziness which earlier was associated with the individual who succumbed to the "infinite possibility" of anxiety:

Inclosing reserve is the effect of the negative self-relation in the individuality. Inclosing reserve closes itself off more and more from communication. But communication is in turn the expression for continuity, and the negation of continuity is the sudden. It might be thought that inclosing reserve would have an extraordinary continuity; yet the very opposite is the case, although when compared with the vapid, enervating dissolution of oneself continually absorbed in the impression, it has the appearance of continuity. The continuity that inclosing reserve has can best be compared with the dizziness a spinning top must have, which constantly revolves upon its own pivot. (129-30; 396-97)

The symptoms of the demonic self may appear and disappear as suddenly as the disease of which they are the indication. Just as the historical genius, at the most crucial of moments, may launch into an hysterical tirade at the trivial errors of a subordinate, the demonic individual may be thrown into a kind of spiritual hysteria at some sign which seems to hint at his own guilt. A good example of this kind of spiritual hysteria can be found in the beginning of Euripides' Hippolytus, where Antigone, feverish with guilt over her strange passion for her own stepson, lets fly a dozen whims in a disordered frenzy in order to avoid the ceaseless prying of the nurse as to the source of her misery.<sup>27</sup>

The "sudden" is therefore an indication of the dread of disclosure

as well as of dread of the good. The self fears the disclosure which would impose a continuity on the self which is opposed to its own will. The fever of demonism is not a bodily or "somatic" illness at the basis of which a physical law can be found, but a fever of the spirit which obeys the "law" of freedom. It is because the demonic is a manifestation of the spirit that it manifests itself suddenly and not in the course of a continuous process:

If the demonic were something somatic, it could never be the sudden. When the fever or the insanity etc. recurs, a law is finally discovered, and this law annuls the sudden to a certain degree. But the sudden knows no law. It does not belong among natural phenomena but is a psychical phenomenon -- it is an expression of unfreedom. The sudden, like the demonic, is anxiety about the good. The good signifies continuity, for the first expression of salvation is continuity. (130; 397)

Because the demonic individual lacks an essential continuity and an essential self, the continuity the self possesses is merely a kind of dizzy nothingness in which all distinctions and differences are lost: "The continuity that corresponds to the sudden is what might be called extinction. Boredom, extinction, is precisely a continuity in nothingness" (133; 399). Though freedom expresses itself in a kind of quiet continuity, the depths of unfreedom can also express itself in the demonically quiet sleep of the walking dead. The very opposite of freedom may be "the quietness that comes to mind when one sees a man who looks as if he were long since dead and buried" (133; 399). An essential aspect of evil and the demonic individual who is in its possession is a "dreadful emptiness and contentlessness" (133; 399). This emptiness is the unmistakable sign of a soul which has collapsed back upon its own will and cannot manifest itself freely in continuity

with itself and its environment.

It is clear that we should not confuse Kierkegaard's notion of the manifest self with the dreadful "openness" encouraged by modern "pop" psychology. This kind of openness is precisely a form of demonic chatter which erases the difference between speech and silence. The manifest, good life is the life which is lived within the understanding of the appropriate time and place of speech and silence. The attempt of the soul to place, by means of a kind of monologue, the axis of being within itself, produces those very states of vacuity, suddenness and inclosedness which ought to remind it of its necessary limitedness. It is the very inability of the self to shut itself off from "communication" or manifestation that indicates its inner relation to the good. The external contact with or recognition of the good implies an inward, though hidden, relation to the good:

We now return the definition of the demonic as anxiety about the good. If on the one hand unfreedom were able to close itself off completely and hypostatize itself, but if on the other hand it did not constantly will to do so (in this lies the contradiction that unfreedom wills something, when in fact it has lost its will), the demonic would not be anxious about the good. Therefore anxiety manifests itself most clearly in the moment of contact with the good . (135; 401-02)

The dread Kierkegaard is talking about is not anxiety concerning the abyss, or the meaninglessness of existence, but is that mood felt by the individual who prefers the abyss of his own will and fears the good which limits and defines that abyss. Because the demonic state of willfulness is not the true state of the soul, the individual cannot remain at rest in it. The state of evil is an encrusted state of the soul which does not correspond to the germ within. The self is always

in transition as long as the state which encrusts it does not correspond to its true e-state. The self will achieve rest only when by virtue of the good a correspondence occurs between its state, or its immediate present, and its inner nature, or its true present. Kierkegaard repeats that it is only in the good itself that there is a unity of state and transition:

Unfreedom, the demonic, is therefore a state and psychology regards it as a state. Ethics, on the other hand sees how out of this state the new sin constantly breaks forth for only the good is the unity of state and movement. (135; 402)

This unity provides at the same time the basis for the continuity and simultaneity of the self. The continuity of the self is the repetition in which the soul freely manifests itself in the true speech and the true silence. The demonic appears when out of the abyss of the will the individual despairs of his inability to manifest his very soul in the words and acts of his life. His words may speak the truth, but inwardly the soul is pointed away from the permanent meaning manifested in those words. Always disappearing into the ceaseless flow of time, his actions tend to reverse, by means of almost indiscernible transitions, the meaning of the words that prompted them. In the end, the self is driven to those demonic attempts to hide from such reversals and the picture they give of the self's own nothingness.

There is therefore a discontinuity in the demonic self between the words spoken and the action by means of which their content is actualized. The actual itself, in its aspect of temporal irreversibility, plays havoc with the continuity of the act. The ever-vanishing actual present seems to be just that place where the possible can be manifested,

repeated and therefore made actual. But in the soul's experience of sin the actual moment exhibits a dual nature. The attempt at repetition begins with the warm glow of possibility, but, through contact with time, is reversed into the iron coldness of an irreversible necessity.

The third thing which unites the true moment with the actual moment, is still not in evidence. It is only in the light of this third thing that repetition can be realized and the unspoken become spoken. The next section will attempt to discover this third thing.

#### IV The Origin of the Loss of Freedom

##### (i) The Somatic-Psychic and the Spiritual Loss of Freedom

In the first part of section two of the fourth chapter Kierkegaard investigated the characteristic forms taken by the demonic anxiety concerning the good. In sub-sections A and B of section two, he examines the causes which give rise to the loss of freedom after dread of the good becomes established in the individual. The first section deals with that form of demonism in which the loss of freedom occurs by virtue of a disruption of the proper relation of soul and body. The second section concerns the loss of freedom deriving from a perversion of the third element of the self, the spirit.

The distinction between these two forms of perversion is not entirely clear, mainly due to insufficient definition by Kierkegaard himself. The first perversion is rather vaguely described as a reversal of the psychic-somatic relation in the self. Though Kierkegaard's view of the soul is different from that envinced by some variants of Platonism,

according to which the soul is eternal, uncreated and entirely separable from the body, he does adhere to the Platonic notion that a good order of the self implies a subordination of the irrational bodily element to the rational psychic element. In the somatic-psychic form of demonism the body rebels against its subordination to the soul. The third element of the self, which is freedom, "enters into a conspiracy" with the body against the soul.

Because for Kierkegaard the self is not infinite, as in the doctrine of Fichte according to which the body is the immediate form of externalization of the absolute I,<sup>28</sup> Kierkegaard does not see the self as "producing" its body. The body-soul relation is taken as simply given relation. In the absence of the third thing which would restore the harmony and subordination of the two elements, freedom goes over to the body and gives rise to the demonic:

It is not my purpose to present a pretentious and bombastic philosophical deliberation on the relation between [soul] and body and to discuss in which sense the [soul] itself produces its body (whether this be understood in the Greek way or in the German way) or, to recall an expression of Schelling, in what sense the [soul] itself, by an act of "corporization", posits its body. Here I have no need of such things. For my purpose, I shall express myself to the best of my ability: The body is the organ of the [soul] and in turn the organ of the spirit. As soon as the serving relation comes to an end, as soon as the body revolts, and as soon as freedom conspires with the body against itself, unfreedom is present as the demonic.  
(136; 402-03)

The division Kierkegaard makes between the somatic-psychic loss of freedom, and the pneumatic loss of freedom seems artificial when one realizes that really it is through the absence of freedom, and therefore of the spirit, that the free unity of soul and body is lost. If one looks at man purely from the somatic-psychic side, he

has no more "freedom" than an animal. Were the individual merely a unity of two elements, the individual would not be free, since it is only through the third element, spirit, that the soul "relates itself to itself." If spirit is lacking, the relation between soul and body is a mere product of natural necessity or fate.<sup>29</sup>

This insubordination of the body to the soul therefore has its source neither in the body or the soul itself, but in the spirit, or better said, in the absence of spirit. The absence of spirit is brought about by that act of freedom which at the same time is the loss of freedom. It is the inability of the self to repeat the eternal being which is its own essence. The spirit is that place in the soul where the soul takes leave of itself and becomes subject to the irreversible vagaries of time. And yet it is through the spirit that the unrepeatable, which has become sewn into the fabric of the soul, can yet be experienced as a repetition of the good.

The annihilation of the self in the abysmal impotence of the will is reversed and gives way to the birth of a new self. The reversal is of such a quality that it can be compared to the reversal experienced by a rock which, after falling from a great height, suddenly lands without force. This disappearance of inertia requires the assumption, against all logic, that the previous states of falling through which the rock passed are actually subject to influence by later states, and even nullified. The self, just like the rock, must become another self than it factually has been, in order to be truly itself.

The state of sin implies a lack of correspondence between the word and the act of the self. The word and its meaning is continuous

and eternal while the act which corresponds to it is temporal and discontinuous. Just when the individual would manifest in his self the truth of the word, time reverses his intent and lays waste to his act. Therefore, when Kierkegaard asserts in the following quotation that the truth is only true when the individual realizes it in action, one must keep in mind that the human self is incapable of realizing by means of its own temporal acts the truth which is eternal:

. . . what I am speaking about is very plain and simple, namely, that truth is for the particular individual only as he himself produces it in action. If the truth is for the individual in any other way, or if he prevents the truth from being for him in that way, we have a phenomenon of the demonic. Truth has always had many loud proclaimers, but the question is whether a person will in the deepest sense acknowledge the truth, will allow it to permeate his whole being, will accept all its consequences, and not have an emergency hiding place for himself and a Judas kiss for the consequence. (138; 405)

In the act of manifesting a truth the individual does not create that truth, but only makes true in time what is eternally true. What is translated as "produces" in the first line of the above quotation is frembringer, which literally means "to bring forth." The task for the individual is to bring forth his self into manifest correspondence with the truth of eternal truth. The moment in which the soul is unable to "bring forth" itself is at the same time the moment in which the soul is unable to repeat the truth of eternal truth. The demonic self, therefore, cannot manifest itself in truth.

The second point that should be made with respect to the last quotation is that a recognition or an understanding of the truth implies that the self become "permeated" with truth. The Danish word gjennemtraenge means to press through, penetrate, or saturate. The

truth is not to be known by the discursive reason which in principle remains distinct from the object about which it thinks. Instead the self must be "saturated" and "permeated" by the truth, so that it is fully present in the truth and the truth in it. Were the acting side of the self left separate from the truth, the temporal side of the self would therefore be excluded from the truth. It is precisely the active, temporal and unrepeatable side of the self which must be restored by means of the "instant" to the eternal. Not only must the eternal thoughts of the soul become identical with the truth. The whole self, body and soul, must become a possession of the truth.

Action, by virtue of its connection with temporality, cannot realize repetition. Kierkegaard does not say that "action is the true repetition" but instead that "eternity is the true repetition" (18n; 291n). Action therefore does realize repetition, though not by virtue of itself, but instead by virtue of the eternal. Repetition is given and acquired at the same time. In turn, the soul is both possessed and acquired at the same time, not by virtue of its own activity, but by virtue of the eternal. In action the individual acquires not what is a product of action alone but what is already a possession. In repetition the fleeting momentariness of action is made adequate to the "past" eternal being of the eternal. The eternal which cannot enter into the temporal present, nevertheless comes to be in the instant.

The self which has manifested the eternal in time, according to Kierkegaard, is the soul which is in possession of certainty and inwardness. He therefore moves on to more closely define this state. It is precisely the absence of inwardness and certainty, which according

to Kierkegaard gives rise to the demonic.

### (ii) Certitude and Inwardness

To acquire inwardness is to acquire what one already possesses. If either the eternal fact of the possession or the simultaneous necessity to acquire it is omitted, inwardness is not a reality. On the one hand, Kierkegaard states that inwardness is an attainment of action, that it "can be attained only by and in action" (138; 405). In the same chapter, on the other hand, he can say that it is an unchanging, though perhaps unrealized, constituent of the human self: ". . . inwardness is therefore eternity, or the constituent of the eternal in man" (151; 417).

In order to distinguish his own understanding of inwardness and certitude from the cognitive certainty espoused by some philosophical traditions, particularly Cartesianism, Kierkegaard criticizes the attempt to give proofs in order to produce conviction on certain matters. With respect to the doctrine of immortality, it is foolish to offer proofs, not because, as is commonly assumed, immortality is uncertain, but because it is so certain that the attempt to prove it can be only understood as an evasion.<sup>30</sup> The thought of immortality is at the same time the thought of the true present. The attempt to prove the presence of the eternal is to deny the reality of its presence at each lived moment. This is a certainty which is not the product of cognition or a prolonged brooding, but which is radically prior to all thought and action.

The thought of immortality, because it is connected with the

true present, threatens the will of the individual and the immediate present which it inhabits. The simple talk of the simple man of faith who has realized this true presence produces a dread in the individual who is in flight from this presence. This dread is not a purely mental curiosity, but both a thought and feeling, which, when prompted by the appropriate "phenomenon", fills the mind of the individual and reminds him of his true self:

The thought of immortality possesses a power and weightiness in its consequences, a responsibility in the acceptance of it, which perhaps will recreate the whole of life in a way that is feared. And so one saves and soothes one's soul by straining one's mind to produce a new proof. . . . Every such individuality (to stay with the example) who knows how to set forth the proof for the immortality of the soul but who is not himself convinced will always be anxious about every phenomenon that affects him in such a way that he is forced to seek a further understanding of what it means to say that a man is immortal. This will disturb him. He will be depressingly affected when a perfectly simple man talks quite simply of immortality. (139; 405-06)

It is therefore a mistake to understand the certainty of faith as an irrational leap taken out of an abyss of ignorance. It is precisely the attempt of the subject to bring God's existence before its own court and prove it which, in Kierkegaard's view, is irrational. It is irrational because it is a procedure which does not correspond with the true order of relation between the individual and the truth. Faith is a leap, to be sure, but it is the leap in which the self lets go of the immediate subjectivity of rationalism and acquires the true subjectivity of the eternal. The self lets go of its proving and permits the eternal to be present, not merely in the thoughts of the thinker, but as that which possesses or "sustains" the self in body and soul. Kierkegaard explains the leap as a letting go of doubting in the following

passage from the Philosophical Fragments:

As long as I keep my hold on the proof, i.e. continue to demonstrate, the existence of God does not come out, if for no other reason than that I am engaged in proving it; but when I let the proof go, the existence is there. But this act of letting go is surely also something; it is indeed a contribution of mine. Must not this also be taken into the account, this little moment, brief as it may be -- it need not be long, for it is a leap. (PF, p. 53; SV 4, 210)

Subjective certainty and historical knowledge are, according to Kierkegaard, fictions. They are false externalizations of the true certainty which is always present in the core of the self. There is therefore "a basic certainty that supports doubt," and the doubt of the subject "consists in a false interpretation of a basic certainty" (CUP, p. 299n; SV 7, 290n). The certainty of inwardness is not the abstract or cognitive subjectivity of modern rationalism. For Kierkegaard certainty is not achieved by, nor is it identical with, the inner examination of the data of consciousness. It is instead a certainty achieved by means of the presence of the eternal itself in the individual, a presence which is by no means "produced" by the human self.<sup>31</sup>

Instead of going further into the connection between certainty and subjectivity, Kierkegaard first explains the psychological forms which explain the absence of inwardness and of the eternal, and thereby of freedom. After a brief consideration of these forms, we will return to a fuller discussion of inwardness itself.

### (iii) The Absence of Inwardness

Kierkegaard defines the absence of inwardness as a state in which action does not correspond with understanding. When inwardness

is absent the individual does not understand the proper relation of action and understanding. He is therefore unaware of the third thing which will give determinacy to action and understanding. In so far as the individual is in possession of a certain degree of understanding on the basis of which he has acted, he is an agent of the absence of inwardness. On the other hand, since he is dispossessed of the second understanding which would make possible the actualization of the first understanding, he is a patient of the absence of inwardness. The absence of inwardness can therefore be defined as the absence of correspondence between thought and action, or the absence of the understanding that harmonizes these two elements. With respect to the self, every form of the absence of inwardness is always defined ambiguously as a combination of action and passion, guilt and innocence, freedom and necessity:

Every form of the absence of inwardness is therefore either activity-passivity or passivity-activity, and whether it is the one or the other, it is in the sphere of self-reflection. The form itself runs through a considerable series of nuances in proportion to the degree of the concretion of the inwardness. There is an old saying that to understand and to understand are two things, and so they are. Inwardness is an understanding, but in concreto the important thing is how this understanding is to be understood. To understand a speech is one thing, and to understand what it refers to, namely, the personal, is something else; for a man to understand what he himself says is one thing, and to understand himself in what is said is something else.  
(KW 8, 142; SV 4, 408)

Every form of the absence of inwardness reflects back on the orientation of the self to its own speech, and the degree to which the understanding implied in that speech is manifest in action. The meaning of the speech can be repeated at any time, while the action in accordance with the speech is subject to the reversals of the temporal medium in which it must be realized. When the individual experiences the

contradiction of understanding and action, and thereby the irreversibility of time, the inward disposition of the self is revealed. It is the experience of the tragic distance between thought and action, or what is the same, the experience of suffering, through which one comes to know one's need for God. It is the concentration of this need, this poverty of the soul in which God is absent, through which one truly comes into relation to God.<sup>32</sup>

If the individual, however, takes fright at the manifestation of the contradiction between thought and action, and if he will not acquire the "understanding" of inwardness in relation to which speech and action come into accord, the consciousness of the individual, according to Kierkegaard, lacks concreteness. It is in relation to inwardness that true concreteness, and therefore true outwardness, is obtained. Kierkegaard claims that "when this understanding is absent to consciousness, we have a phenomenon of unfreedom that wants to close itself against freedom" (142; 408).

Inwardness is therefore that understanding in light of which the relation between thought and action is determined. Inwardness is always on the look-out for the evasions of the self which prevent the self from existing in the true presence of the eternal. This "self-consciousness" is not merely given, but something acquired in time. In so far as the self-consciousness is inwardness, which has already been identified with the presence of the eternal in the individual, the inwardness acquired is a possession. Inwardness is not mere inner probing, brooding or contemplating, but a form of concentration which is as much an act as an understanding:

The most concrete content that consciousness can have is consciousness of itself, of the individual himself -- not the pure self-consciousness, but the self-consciousness that is so concrete that no author, not even the one with the greatest power of description, has ever been able to describe a single such self-consciousness, although every single human being is such a one. This self-consciousness is not contemplation, for he who believes this has not understood himself, because he sees that meanwhile he himself is in the process of becoming and consequently cannot be something completed for contemplation. This self-consciousness, therefore, is action and this action is in turn inwardness and whenever inwardness does not correspond to this consciousness, there is a form of the demonic as soon as the absence of inwardness expresses itself as anxiety about its acquisition. (143; 408-09)

Neither inwardness nor the absence of inwardness is suffered with total passivity by the individual. Both conditions imply an act of the self which is simultaneous with them. A large error is made, however, if the "act" which is the true act of inwardness is held to be a mere act of will. Quite apart from any self-assertion of the self, the attainment of inwardness is a kind of active suffering where the soul reverses its accumulated tendency to close itself off and allows its true core to become manifest. In a journal entry Kierkegaard states that "the inwardness of religiousness is a crushing of the self before God" (JP 2, 2116; Pap VI B 98; 77). It is because the "action" of inwardness is conceived in such a way that Kierkegaard claims in the Postscript that "the distinguishing mark of religious action is suffering." (CUP, p. 387; SV 7, 375)

To support his claim that the forms of the demonic absence of inwardness always involve some combination of action and passion, Kierkegaard gives brief examples of some forms of this absence. Incredulity, or unbelief, is passive through an activity, while its opposite, superstition, is active through a passivity. They are both "dread of

faith", but "unbelief begins in the activity of unfreedom, and superstition begins in the passivity of unfreedom" (KW 8, 144; SV 4, 410).

Incredulity is a defiant pride, while superstition is a weak indolence.

In actuality unbelief and superstition are active and passive forms of the same condition. Incredulous individuals are in fact superstitious with regard to their own strength, while the superstitious are incredulous of their own ability to realize inwardness. Hypocrisy and offense at the religious, pride and cowardice correspond to one another in a similar way. Pride is actually an inverted cowardice and cowardice an inverted pride. Similarly, the hypocrisy of the church-goer is in fact an inverted form of offence at Christianity.

#### (iv) Love and Inwardness

Since inwardness has been defined as a deed, it is tempting to conceive of it as the opposite of rest. In the Postscript, we get the impression that there can never be an understanding between eternity and time, or between the thought and the act. Existence is therefore a striving which, like a kind of infinite courtship, never achieves rest in time:

. . . since an eternal happiness is a telos for existing individuals, these two (the absolute end and the existing individual) cannot be conceived as realizing a union in existence in terms of rest. This means that an eternal happiness cannot be possessed in time, as the youth and the maiden may possess one another, both being existing individuals. But what this means, namely, that they cannot be united in time, every lover readily understands. It means that the whole of time is the period of courtship. (CUP, p. 355; SV 7, 344)

Two objections can be raised to this statement. Firstly, it

is precisely the nature of repetition to be a repeating or becoming of the eternal in time. If the action of the individual is a repeated absence of the goal which he is seeking, what stops the act from being identical with that very vanishing or immediate time which Kierkegaard has labelled abstract? Is not the true act the act which occurs out of the instant in which time and eternity touch, and therefore "understand" one another? Is not the good the "unity" of state and transition?

In making an attack on "contemplation" and abstract rest, Kierkegaard is actually opposing the claim of Hegel that absolute knowledge, and therefore rest, is achieved in the course of a history which culminates in a scientific system of truth. For Hegel, the suspension of the self between knowledge and non-knowledge, eternity and time, is abolished by circular, integral history and the actual attainment of knowledge. Philosophy in Hegel's view can only attain the form of a science when "it can lay aside the title of 'love of knowing' and be actual knowing."<sup>33</sup> For Kierkegaard human existence is always a striving by virtue of the fact that he is a synthesis of the eternal and the temporal. In his view the existing individual is always in a relation of love to truth, because he is always striving between eternity and time. To understand the individual as an existing thinker is to understand him as a lover.<sup>34</sup>

To be a lover of truth, and therefore remote from it implies a certain kind of presence of that truth in the lover in order that it may be loved. In so far as the learner is necessarily present in time he cannot attain to the presence of the eternal. The eternal is always "behind". In this sense the action of the individual is always

an approximation that can never truly "begin":

. . . the eternal aims from above at the existing individual, who by existing is in a process of movement, and thus at the moment when the clock strikes, he is always a little moment away. The beginning of an absolute decision in the medium of existence is the last thing in the world that can be characterized as once and for all, as something behind . . . (CUP, p. 436; SV 7, 425)

Repetition presupposes an understanding or correspondence between unequals. Because the individual is unable to realize the eternal in time by an act of will, he is unequal to the truth. There is an infinite distance between himself and God which cannot be traversed by a finite series of steps. Though it is only by means of the eternal that the eternal can be achieved, it is precisely the eternal which the individual lacks. Still, it is just in the moment of the incommensurability of lover and beloved that the Moment occurs when time and eternity touch: "The Moment makes its appearance when an eternal resolve comes into a relation with an incommensurable occasion" (PF, p. 30; SV 4, 194).

The individual does not possess the eternal condition which allows him to understand the truth. Because he is the condition of sin, he is unequal to the truth he wishes to understand. The condition for understanding the truth is itself given in the Moment. An understanding is therefore achieved but within the fact of the simultaneous non-understanding of the sinful individual. The unity and equality of incommensurables is achieved not by the individual raising himself up to the eternal, but by a descent of the eternal itself to the learner. To understand the necessity of the descent of the eternal is at the same time to understand that the essence of the eternal is neither static nor ever changing, but instead to understand that its essence

is love. The understanding effected between time and eternity in the moment is in fact effected by the eternal itself. It is in and by love that the infinite series and the finite act, the state and the transition, achieve identity and rest:

Moved by love, the God is thus eternally resolved to reveal himself. But as love is the motive so love must be the end; for it would be a contradiction for the God to have a motive and an end which did not correspond. His love is a love of the learner, and his aim is to win him. For it is only in love that the unequal can be made equal, and it is only in equality or unity that an understanding can be effected, and without a perfect understanding, the Teacher is not the God, unless the obstacle comes wholly from the side of the learner, in his refusing to realize that which had been made possible for him. (PF, pp. 30-31)

The "moment" is therefore the instant in which the understanding of love is achieved within the non-understanding sin of the individual. Love is the third thing which is the condition for the repetition of the eternal in the unrepeatable instant of time. In love an equality is established between unequals, the effect of which is a correspondence of the inner and the outer self, or of thought and action. This correspondence is the true rest within the conflict of rest and unrest:

For one who is willing to obey in action what he understands in thought, the dialectical difficulty in being a real Christian is to find the point of rest between rest and unrest. (JP 2, 2119; Pap VIII A 511)

To understand the relation of the "existing individual" to the eternal as love is to understand the eternal as simultaneously present and absent in the individual. In so far as the individual is love in all he thinks and does, he is in possession of the eternal. In so far as this love, turned back by a hardened will, undergoes a transformation and becomes the motor of violence within the self, the individual is dispossessed of the eternal. But what is the presence of the eternal

within the simultaneous presence and absence? Or, in terms used above, what is "the point of rest between rest and unrest?"

Love is the reality which is motive, end and means at the same time. It is because the self is love that it will not rest at anything that is not love.<sup>35</sup> It is because God is love that he cannot be achieved or known by any other means than love. The love of the aesthetic man is a false love because it never truly "is". It never achieves true presence. The love of the ethical man is love of the autonomous man who will not give up his self in the true love of the religious. Christian love is the rest within unrest where the division of lover and beloved is endured in suffering love.

The immediate love of the self undergoes a certain kind of annihilation or "crushing", by means of which the self is brought "paradoxically" to eternal happiness and its true "utterance". The entry into Christian love, for Kierkegaard, is an entry into division and contradiction, which, in a moment of time, is converted into the presence of the eternal.<sup>36</sup> The truth is characterized by contradiction, and to dwell in this contradiction is to be dragged to the heart of love's true rest. The positive character of love is in fact indicated by its negativity: "A revelation is signalized by mystery, happiness by suffering, the certainty of faith by uncertainty, the ease of the paradoxical-religious life by its difficulty, the truth by absurdity" (CUP, 387n; SV 7, 375n).

The paradoxical character of the Christian doctrine of love was livingly embodied in the mystery and strangeness of Christ's life and death. The God of Christianity not only is present in all times

and places, but "has been" at a particular time and place. The eternal God which "is" everywhere and nowhere, "came to be" in time and will "come again". The relation to the eternal is not a recollection in the backward direction but a recollection in the forward direction. The individual must acquire in time the real relation to suffering love that was established for him in the beginning and in the Atonement.

#### (v) Inwardness as Earnestness

In the last section of the fourth chapter of Anxiety, Kierkegaard mentions the connection between love and inwardness only in terms of an analogy. The closest he comes to defining inwardness is to say that it is "earnestness". After offering what appears to be a serious definition, he abruptly states that he is "not aware that there exists a single definition of earnestness" (KW 8, 147; SV 4, 412). This refusal to define is not due to the indeterminacy of the thing defined, but has to do with the inappropriateness of certain kinds of speech to the thing defined. Kierkegaard designed the pseudonymous authorship in order that readers could begin learning, not by learning definitions, but by beginning at the stage of learning appropriate to their stage of development. His object is not to instruct, but to "build up" or edify what is already present in the learner.

Kierkegaard therefore abstains from a definition of inwardness and love because, like the proofs of immortality and God's existence, such definitions actually pare down and mask the very closeness to the individual of the realities they are intended to "utter". Kierkegaard's

imprecision as to the definition of the earnestness of inwardness arises in fact out of a very precise and certain knowledge of its essence. The truth of love will not dawn on the unloving soul by means of definitions spoken without love. Love and inwardness, though it may not be "made external" in objective speech, is nevertheless manifest in every word that the simple man of faith speaks. This is why the demonic individual who wishes to have his immortality proven is "depressingly affected when a perfectly simple man talks quite simply of immortality" (139;406). Kierkegaard therefore gives the following explanation of his refusal to define inwardness:

Whoever loves can hardly find joy and satisfaction, not to mention growth, in preoccupation with a definition of what love properly is. Whoever lives in daily and festive communication with the thought that there is a God could hardly wish to spoil this for himself, or see it spoiled, by piecing together a definition of what God is. So also with earnestness, which is so earnest a matter that even a definition of it becomes a frivolity. . . . What does this prove? To my mind what I say here proves much better than any conceptual development that I do know in earnest what the discussion is about. (147; 413)

Though clear about the unclarity of inwardness and love, Kierkegaard proceeds to make some observations on the nature of earnestness. These observations do not define earnestness but simply serve "for orientation". In a manner unusual to him, Kierkegaard makes use of a quotation from another author, Karl Rosenkrantz, a fact which is doubly surprising given that the latter was a Hegelian. Kierkegaard likens his own conception of earnestness to the description of "disposition" (Gemüth) given by Rosenkrantz, according to which it is the unity of feeling and self-consciousness.

The important feature of the definition is that both the conceptual

element and the feeling element are held to compose the total disposition of the self. If the clarity of understanding is lacking, feeling is only immediate, and cannot be distinguished in principle from what a purely natural being experiences. If feeling is lacking, according to Rosenkrantz, then the consciousness is abstract and not unified with the inward self of the spirit. The description given here is essentially a restatement of the earlier description of man as a synthesis of thought and feeling, soul and body.

Earnestness, according to Kierkegaard, is a "higher as well as the deepest expression for what disposition Gemüth is" (148; 414). While one can have Gemüth from birth, earnestness can only be acquired during the course of life. To a certain extent, then, Gemüth is an immediate reality, a kind of heartfelt feeling which may wax and wane depending on the circumstances. The inwardness of seriousness, however, can be repeated at any time, and is therefore as "original" in the last moment of life as it was in the first. Because it is eternal, it can never become habitual. The serious man can at any moment open his self to the moment and draw forth the necessary act and word that will repeat the eternal:

When the originality in earnestness is acquired and preserved, then there is succession and repetition, but as soon as originality is lacking in repetition, there is habit. The earnest person is earnest precisely through the originality with which he returns in repetition. It is said that a living and inward feeling preserves this originality, but the inwardness of the feeling is a fire that may cool as soon as earnestness no longer attends to it. On the other hand the inwardness of feeling is uncertain in its mood, i.e. at one time it is more inward than at another. (149; 414)

When the individual lacks earnestness he tends to flee from the

moment in which the self is called forth to manifest itself in the web of relations in which it exists. Earnestness is therefore not a mood but an accord in which thought and feeling, inward and outward, correspond. It is a unity of feeling and self-consciousness, which is acquired in time by an eternal act or by a "repetition". Inwardness is not a moody or vague feeling, but the perspicacity in which thought and action correspond. In addition it is not merely action but an acting and a receiving at the same time. Subjectivity, according to Kierkegaard is both finite feeling and the eternal itself:

Inwardness, certitude, is earnestness. This seems a little paltry. If at least I had said, it is subjectivity, the pure subjectivity, the ubergreifende [encompassing] subjectivity, I would have said something, something that no doubt would have made many earnest. However, I can also express earnestness in another way. Whenever inwardness is lacking, the spirit is finitized. Inwardness is therefore eternity or the constituent of the eternal in man. (151; 417)

The final points which Kierkegaard makes further illustrate the general claim that the individual who does not understand the eternal lacks inwardness. Not only must the individual understand the eternal, he must understand it "concretely", that is, in relation to action and feeling. To understand the eternal is to understand it, not from a vantage point outside of time, but in time. In order to remind the reader of the contradictoriness inherent in the repetition of the eternal in the concrete, he reaffirms in a footnote the fact that eternity is itself the means of realizing repetition: "It was doubtless in this sense that Constantine Constantius [the pseudonymous author of Repetition] said of the eternal that it is the true repetition" (151n; 417n).

Kierkegaard sums up the dread of the good by mentioning four

ways in which the eternal or the good may be absent in the individual. All these ways make the instant an abstraction and defend against the intrusion of the eternal, since the eternal makes the moment a different thing than the self wills. The first way of avoidance of the eternal is the simple denial of it, which "may express itself directly or indirectly in many various ways, as mockery, a prosaic intoxication with common sense, as busyness, as enthusiasm for the temporal, etc." (152; 418). Secondly, the eternal can be accepted by the individual, but conceived in an entirely abstract way. The eternal is seen at a distance "like the blue mountains," but the self never actually reaches the limit of the temporal and therefore that of the eternal. Thirdly, the eternal can be conceived merely poetically. The poetic soul is inclined to "bend eternity into time for the imagination" (152; 418). This individual has the sensuousness of intuition but not the inwardness of earnestness. Accordingly, the eternal is simply an object of longing, rather than a present reality which has a determinate relation to particular thoughts, feelings and actions.

Finally, the eternal can be avoided by conceiving it in a purely metaphysical way. By conceiving the eternal metaphysically the self presupposes that it can occupy a standpoint outside of time in light of which truth in its totality can be systematically articulated in speech. The philosopher who surveys the whole of world history and is able to unveil the totality of being must be in relation to a universal self or ego which stands outside of time. The differentiations and separations of time are moments in the development of this eternal self, rather than rigorous limitations external to the self. The contradiction

that the eternal is present in time, according to Kierkegaard, is blurred by such a conception according to which time is an externalization of Spirit.

As long as the individual exists in time, all his attempts to associate himself with a universal self are subject to the ridicule of comedy. With all the accusations made against Kierkegaard's ridicule of Hegel, which at times seems almost pathological, it has gone unnoticed by many how this approach accords with a very precise view of comedy, and constitutes a genuine criticism of the Hegelian standpoint. In comedy it is seen how inflated intentions, by virtue of their intermingling with ordinary events, trip up the comic heroes who originate them. As in tragedy, time with its irreversible levelling reverses intended acts and returns the self to a consciousness of its own poverty.

But the self is not left with this simple contradiction. Otherwise humour would revert to the cruel nihilism of romantic humour, which Kierkegaard so strongly criticizes in The Concept of Irony.<sup>37</sup> By the individual's simultaneous relation to the eternal the contradiction is converted into grace and providence. In the repetition of the eternal, the contradictions that crush the self are eliminated:

If one has reflected thoroughly upon the comic, studying it as an expert, constantly keeping one's category clear, one will easily understand that the comic belongs to the temporal, for it is in the temporal that the contradiction is found. Metaphysically and esthetically it cannot be stopped and prevented from swallowing up all of the temporal, which will happen to the person who is developed enough to distinguish inter et inter between one and the other. In eternity, on the other hand, all contradiction is canceled, the temporal is permeated by and preserved in the eternal, but in this there is no trace of the comical. (154; 420)

## (vi) Love and the True Understanding

The chapter ends inconclusively. Though we are given some indications of the purpose of the argument given, we are still not given a clear definition of that which makes true inwardness, and therefore freedom, possible. Freedom is precisely the correspondence between thought and action which the true seriousness is to effect. The confidence of the ethical man, who by means of will gathers the possibilities and necessities of the moment and repeats his eternal self, has been done away with by the "scepticism" of sin. Because of sin, one is infinitely, qualitatively different from God: "God and man are two qualities separated by an infinite qualitative difference" (KW 19, 126; SV 11, 235).

To think earnestly is to see the self within this essential limitation, which is at the same time the measure and end of the self. By comparing himself to his measure the individual comes to know what he is not and that he is mired in the non-being of sin. But by understanding what one is not, one becomes at the same time what one is. In the comparison of the self with God and his incarnation in Jesus, the self is condemned but at the same time gains a measure:

. . . but what an infinite accent falls on the self by having God as the [measure] ! The [measure] for the self is always: that directly before which it is a self, but this in turn is the definition of "[measure]." Just as only entities of the same kind can be added, so everything is qualitatively that by which it is measured, and that which is its qualitative [measure - Maalestok] is ethically its goal [Maal] ; the measure and goal are what define something, what it is, with the exception of the condition in the world of freedom, where by not qualitatively being that which is his goal and his [measure] a person must himself have merited this disqualification. Thus the goal

and the [measure] still remain [condemningly] the same, making it clear just what a person is not -- namely, that which is his goal and [measure]. (KW 19, 79; SV 11, 191-92)

To think the annihilation of the self is to think the irreversibility of time and inevitability of death. If infinite time were at the disposal of man, either in the form of infinitely extended time, or in the form of the intensity of infinite subjectivity, his life would be without essential limitations. What meaning or significance would the present moment have if it were merely the instant of an infinite succession? Repetition occurs in that moment when the infinite successiveness and unrepeatability of time are made determinate. The continuity of the self is established within the manifest relations of the concrete life. The limitedness, the weakness, and the distance of the self from God properly ought to make possible the fullest presence of the self in the actual moment.

The self truly thinks death when he views it not merely as contingency, or a meaningless horror, but when it is viewed as an unconditional good. The action of the self is a constancy and persistence in the suffering which returns the soul to true presence and at the same time to its true happiness and joy. This suffering is not self-indulgent agonizing, nor merely a feeling, but the actual experience of the self's simultaneous relation to and difference from the eternal. When time is experienced in earnest it is experienced as a good. It is therefore the thought of death as a judgement, and not as a romantic mystery, which converts the actual moment into the fullness of time. In the true thought of death, or in the thought of the nothingness of the self, the living man repeats his living and receives time anew:

And no bowstring can be drawn so tight, and can so speed the arrow, as the thought of death can hasten the living forward when earnestness tenses the bow. The earnestness lays hold of the present yet today, and condemns no time as too short, labours with utmost exertion, though it is willing to smile at itself if this exertion were to be reckoned a merit before God, and it is willing in impotence to understand that a human being is absolutely nothing, and that he who labours with all his might merely finds a better opportunity to wonder over God. Time is also a good. . . . the earnest man is able by means of the thought of death to produce a period of scarcity, so that the year and the day become infinitely valuable.

(TCSL, p. 91; SV 5, 237)

Death according to the existentialist is an abyss, and ultimately unknowable. Though for Kierkegaard death is an abyss, and in some sense unknown, it nevertheless can be determined. While the romantic or existentialist views death as a perpetual stranger, for Kierkegaard earnestness determines death: "Death is indeed [a strange mystery] , but only earnestness can determine it" (TCSL, p. 103; SV 5, 245). When death is determined by inwardness, which is only achieved in the knowing ignorance of faith (a condition which itself is made possible only by the relation of the individual to Christ), it is no longer an object of dread. Because he can exist in the moment the individual does not dread the good which steps forward to meet him in the moment. This courage is indeed a providence since it is provided for, not by the will of the self, but by that which is at the same time the measure of the self.

There cannot be, according to Kierkegaard, an identity of knower and known effected by objective knowledge. The actual understanding of God and man in the moment of time requires that the truth be brought nearer to the soul than it is by the operations of the intellect. By living in time with the acceptance of love, the soul does not gain

possession of God, but an experience of the fact that he is himself "possessed" by God. The whole self of the individual is gathered up body and soul and drawn forth by the causality of love into the manifest. The unlikeness of God and man is made a likeness in the perspicuous understanding of love. Man understands God by being himself transformed into the likeness of God, a likeness he nevertheless "possessed" from the beginning. It is therefore in love that the action accords with the word, and the inwardness of repetition is achieved:

Christ says: I will manifest myself to him who loves me. But it is generally true that something manifests itself to one who loves it; truth manifests itself to the one who loves truth, etc. We usually think that the recipient is inactive and that the object manifesting itself communicates itself to the recipient, but the relationship is this: the recipient is the lover, and then the beloved becomes manifest to him, for he himself is transformed in the likeness of the beloved; the only fundamental basis for the understanding is that one himself becomes what he understands and one understands only in proportion to becoming himself that which he understands. (JP 2, 2299; Pap IX A 438)

Kierkegaard does not therefore adhere to a Kantian dualism of knower and thing-in-itself. An identity or "understanding" occurs between God and man, but is an identity which is realized in the simultaneous absence and presence, the suffering happiness of love. It is on the basis of this understanding of love that faith is grounded. Faith therefore presupposes a real contact of the individual with the eternal. In the soul which has been possessed by love, consciousness is infused by the very reality which is its source and true being. Kierkegaard held it to be "a mistake for the supernaturalist to link his faith to the non-knowledge of Kant" because "from the non-knowledge of Kant must come non-faith" (JP 2, 2252; Pap II C 48). Faith is therefore dependent on there being a prior and higher participation of the individual in

the eternal, the condition of which participation is love. The faith of the "supernaturalist" is not a mythical leap beyond consciousness and reason, but "is precisely a new consciousness" (JP 2, 2252; Pap II C 48). But in the true consciousness, and in the true inwardness, the self ceases to be an observer, and becomes a repeated participant in the love which gave it birth.

## CONCLUSION

The two forms of life designated in the last two chapters as the genius of fate, or the historical genius, and the genius of religion, can be contrasted with respect to their differing relation to temporality. For the genius of fate, the object which he is attempting to acquire is temporally distant from the moment in which he initiates, by means of his own insightful acts, the train of events which will bring about that acquisition. The historical genius experiences anxiety because, regardless of the extent of his spirited insight, an expanse of time intervenes between the temporally near beginning of the act and the temporally distant consummation of it. The chief thing which gives the genius courage is the inner bond he feels there exists between himself and the "nothing" of fate, the forces of which may carry him forward or lead him to his annihilation.

The relation of the religious genius to temporality is more difficult to define. Because he is mired in sin, the religious genius is temporally distant from the object of his striving, which is the actualized relation to God. The good which he seeks is not by nature temporally distant, but is only so because through sin he has become distant from it. The place which he seeks is not a temporally or spatially distant place, but a place within himself which, through the change effected by salvation, becomes the place in which the object sought for is present. This becoming, as it has been stressed, is a repetition

of that which was originally and eternally possessed by the soul. The thing which was lost in the "misunderstanding" of despair, was not a temporally distant object, but an object which was present and near from the beginning: himself. "But where might there be found a worthier object of wonder than when the seeker with his wishing and striving, the desparate man about to perish in despair, suddenly discovered that he was the thing sought, that the misfortune is that he stands there and loses it!" (SLW, p. 261; SV 5, 189) The self which is found in repetition is not the immediate, temporal self but the self the nearness of which is connected with the nearness of God:

And so it is with this wonder which changed the seeker, so it is with this wonder, that this thing of seeking became something different, yea, the very opposite: that to seek signifies that the seeker himself is changed. He does not have to find the place where the object of his search is, for it is right beside him, he does not have to strive towards it, for God is right beside him, very near, near on every hand, [at every moment] omnipresently near, but the seeker has to be changed so that he himself becomes the place where God truly is. (SLW, p. 461; SV 5, 189)

The religious genius is, paradoxically, both temporally near and temporally distant from the object of his striving. In so far as this object is near it is a possession of the soul which it "knows". In so far as this object is distant it is a goal of acquisition which the soul does not know. The simultaneous presence and absence of this object, in which it is both known and unknown, is what Kierkegaard understands by love. As has been shown in the last chapter, love is that which effects a likeness between the qualitative opposites God and man. If the relation to God were merely the constant object of acquisition and never a possession of the soul, man's existence within time relations would be unsurpassable. Kierkegaard's claim is not that

man is always striving, and therefore strung between the time relations of before and after, but instead that within time relations a repetition of the eternal is possible. This repetition occurs when, mediated by love, eternity and time come into relation in the Moment.

The freedom of the self, therefore, does not consist in its ability to continually shape itself into what it wills. The freedom of the self, according to Kierkegaard, consists in the self's manifesting itself in correspondence with what it is before God. The characteristic assumption of the existentialist view of the self, in particular that of Sartre, is that the self is inevitably caught, until death, in the time relations of before and after and the duration between them. The manifest correspondence of the self with a permanent being transcending time, in Sartre's view, is therefore an impossibility. Repetition in the existentialist sense would imply, rather than the realization of the eternal in the temporal, a constant and self-willed vigilance in the face of the essential impossibility of such a realization.

Those interpretations of Kierkegaard which stress the essential "futurity" of the self in his thought, and therefore its essential historicity, falsify what is implied in his doctrine of the Moment.

Mark C. Taylor, in claiming that, for Kierkegaard, "time is a reality that grows out of, and is related to, the lives of selves in the stance of purposeful activity,"<sup>1</sup> is saying, like John W. Elrod,<sup>2</sup> that the goal of the self is a perpetual object of acquisition. The "moment" in which the goal is achieved would imply the "annulment" of the present moment's relation to the past and future moments which lie on either side of it.

Taylor's intention in conceiving Kierkegaard's view of time as "life-time"<sup>3</sup>

is to stress the historicity and directionality of human existence, and therefore its necessary imprisonment within time relations. My claim is that the Moment in which time and eternity touch implies an annulment of the time relations characteristic of ethical striving.

The expectation of the eternal is not, for Kierkegaard, the expectation of an event or thing which is temporally distant. The fulfillment of the eternal expectation is not dependent on temporal fulfillment, but is a fulfillment which operates independently of time relations and is therefore eternally near the self. The expectation of the lover is not the same as the expectation of the genius of fate who looks forward in dread to a specific moment in time which means his victory or his downfall. The true lover dwells in the temporal moment divided between past and future with the consciousness that love binds the strands of divided time relations into an eternal present. If love is conscious only of temporal relations, then it is not capable of the eternal expectation of true love:

If love's expectation is able to make a man, essentially understood, weak, it must be because his expectation stands in a dependent relation to time; so that time has the power to decide whether or not the expectation becomes fulfilled or not. That is to say, the expectation is principally a temporal expectation, but such an expectation the love which abides does not have. . . . the lover, who abides, has an eternal expectation, and this eternal gives proportion to the unrest which in time swings between fulfillment and non-fulfillment, but independently of time, for the fulfillment is not at all made impossible because time has passed: this lover is not consumed. (WL, pp. 289-90; SV 9, 297)

The truly free act is therefore not the act which has merely temporal and external duration, and a merely temporal and external end. The free act, according to Kierkegaard, is the inward act which is within time relations and above them at the same time: "A man's highest

inward act is to repent. But to repent is not a positive movement outward or in toward something, but a negative movement inward; not a doing but a letting something happen to oneself" (SLW, p. 430; SV 6, 442-43). The free action of the self is the action which permits a kind of annihilation in virtue of which God becomes the sustainer of the self. The free choice becomes the choice of what is not a matter of choice, or the acquisition of what was already possessed.

The existence of the self in the time relations of past, present and future can only gain determinacy and "proportion", for Kierkegaard, when the self relates itself to itself and thereby to the eternal presence which is God. The actualization of this relation to the eternal inevitably involves the suffering experience of the essential unlikeness of oneself to God, and therefore the experience of the self's own nothingness. What makes this experience of suffering repeatable, and therefore a passage-way to the real experience of the eternal, is that it occurs within a prior and eternal love which obtains between God and man.

Just as the anxiety of the genius of fate anticipates his own nothingness before the forces of fate, so the anxiety of the religious genius is an anticipation of his nothingness before the supernatural machinery of grace. In the last chapter, it was shown how the genius of religion collapses before the idea of his own guilt to the extent that he becomes entirely incapable of action. His dread is a dread of the good. Kierkegaard's end in presenting such an individual is to educate the individual by means of the possibility of such guilt: "Whoever is educated by anxiety is educated by possibility, and only he who is educated by possibility is educated according to his infinitude" (KW 8,

156; SV 4, 422). But the completion of such an education consists not in the entertaining of infinitely many more possibilities but in the return to the limited possibility of actuality:

So when such a person graduates from the school of possibility, and he knows better than a child knows his ABC's that he can demand absolutely nothing of life and that the terrible, perdition, and annihilation live next door to every man, and when he has thoroughly learned that every anxiety about which he was anxious came upon him in the next moment -- he will give actuality another explanation, he will praise actuality, and even when it rests heavily upon him, he will remember that it nevertheless is far, far lighter than the possibility was. (KW 8, 156; SV 4, 422)

With respect to the genius of fate, it remains for the temporally distant events of fate to bring the pride of the hero to its annihilation. In the religious individual, however, anxiety is present at each moment to break the pride of the soul who is in demonic flight from the good and its eternal presence. Instead of causing the individual to rely on his own resources and on his own will, the suffering of anxiety, "with the help of faith, . . . brings up the individuality to rest in providence" (161; 427). It is the supernatural machinery of grace, operative in providence, which reverses the failures and sadnesses of an astonished soul into the presence of the eternal.

Not only is it Kierkegaard's notion of freedom which differentiates him from the existentialist tradition, but also his confidence in the revelatory character of suffering. The shipwreck of the self is not constituted by a meaningless connection of events which ends in an equally meaningless death, but is instead a series of stations in which the necessary relation of the soul to God is revealed. For there to be a relation between the suffering of the self and the eternal means

at the same time that a relation of love obtains between the self and the eternal. There must be at the bottom of the soul, if suffering is to be redeemed, a pure core which, when tapped by the monotonous clang of the hammer of suffering, manifests itself. Or, to use Kierkegaard's own metaphor: "For as gold is purified in the fire, so is the soul in suffering" (CD, p. 108; SV 10, 108).

Just as the child who is punished remains in a relation of understanding with the parent who punishes out of love, so the suffering individual remains in relation to the God which permits suffering out of love. The connection between the individual, caught within time relations of before and after, and God who is free of such relations, depends upon what Kierkegaard calls the redoubling power of love. This redoubling power is also characteristic of the eternal. For the genius of fate, his goal is a temporal object. He is not in possession of his goal until it actually has come to be in time. The religious individual, however, is in possession of his goal even when it is still the object of acquisition. The eternal in a man not only comes to be in time but is above all time. While the temporal object is possessed only outwardly, the eternal dwells in a man both inwardly and outwardly:

The temporal has three times and therefore essentially never is completely nor is completely in any one of the periods; the eternal is. A temporal object can have a multiplicity of characteristics; in a certain sense it can be said to have them simultaneously, insofar as in these definite characteristics it is that which it is. But reduplication in itself never has a temporal object; as the temporal disappears in time, so also it exists only in its characteristics. If, on the other hand, the eternal is in a man, the eternal reduplicates itself in such a way that every moment it is in him it is in him in a double mode; in an outward direction and in an inward direction back into itself, but in such a way that it is one and the same, for otherwise it is not reduplication. (WL, p. 261; SV 9, 267)

The persistence of the self in suffering, though outwardly accomplishing nothing, nevertheless is the only thing which puts a man in the position of being able to know the eternal. The presence of the eternal does not consist in possessing a temporal object for a long time, but in the continuous surrender of the self into God's possession. That the self turns outward by turning inward is part of the redoubling character of love:

The eternal is not merely by virtue of its characteristics but in itself is in its characteristics; it does not merely have characteristics but exists in itself in having the characteristics. So it is with love. What love does it is; what it is, it does -- at one and the same moment; simultaneously as it is in itself, it thereby goes beyond itself in such a way that this going beyond and this inward turning, the inward turning and this going beyond are simultaneously one and the same. (WL, p. 261; SV 9, 267)

There is no differentiation of before and after in love, no temporal stretch of time in which love's intention is divided from love's object. Love is both the means and the end, both that which is acquired and the means of acquisition. Love accomplishes that reduplication in virtue of which man is present both in time and eternity.

It is impossible, in the light of the argument presented here and in the rest of the thesis, to assume, as does Marck C. Taylor, that there is a sharp distinction between Kierkegaard's concept of love and his concept of faith.<sup>4</sup> The experience of faith is dependent upon the redoubling power of love, that it both relates man to God, as to that which is qualitatively different and therefore remote, and unites man to God as to that being who has descended into time to redeem him. The freedom and the temporal existence of man is entirely grounded on the dependent relation of the self to the supernatural machinery of love,

a love which both binds the self and yet saves the soul:

Love is the firmest of all bonds, for it makes the lover one with the beloved; more firmly no bond can bind, or so firmly can no bond bind. And the love which loves God is the bond of perfectness, which in perfect obedience makes man one with the God he loves. And the love which loves God is the most beneficial bond, which by keeping a man wholly in God's service saves him from anxieties. This love unifies a man, it makes him eternally in agreement with himself and with the Master who is one; and it unifies a man in likeness to God. (CD, p. 86; SV 10, 87)

## NOTES TO TEXT

### INTRODUCTION

1. See M.C. Taylor, Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship: A Study of Time and the Self (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 109-22, and J.W. Elrod, Being and Existence in Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 53-65. Elrod and Taylor both understand "necessity" to be the historical givenness of the self: the fact of being a Dane, having an invalid father, living on a certain kind of pension, etc. For slightly different interpretations see J. Sløk, Die Anthropologie Kierkegaards (Kopenhagen: Rosenkilde und Bagger, 1954), p. 47, and Søren Holm, Soren Kierkegaards Historiefilosofi (København: Bianco Lunos Bogtrykkeri, 1952), pp. 22-23, pp. 30-47. For Sløk necessity in the self is a consequence of the fact that the self is posited by God. Holm holds that the concept of necessity is essentially identical with the concept of the eternal.
2. Elrod, op. cit., p. 58.
3. Ibid., p. 65. Cf. pp. 201-02.
4. Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason alone, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 3.
5. Elrod, op. cit., pp. 200-01.
6. Ibid., p. 255n.
7. See Elrod, Kierkegaard and Christendom (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 55, where he states that Kierkegaard claims an allegiance to this Kantian scepticism about "the capacity of the human being to the philosophical goal of knowing ultimate reality."
8. Elrod, Being and Existence, p. 255.
9. See JP 2, 1261; Pap X<sup>2</sup> A 428: ". . . Christianity can say to a man: You shall choose the one thing needful, but in such a way that there must be no question of any choice -- that is if you fool around a long time, then you are not really choosing the one thing needful; it must be chosen first. Consequently there is something in relation to which there must not be, and by definition there can [not] be a choice, and yet there is a choice. . . . The content of freedom is decisive for freedom to such an extent that the very truth of freedom of choice is: there must be no choice, even though there is a choice." This essentially constitutes Kierkegaard's particular solution of the problem of free will and pre-destin-

ation. Cf. his early reflections on the question in the journals: JP 2, 1230 (Pap I A 5); 3, 3543 (I A 19); 3, 3544 (I A 20); 3, 3545 (I A 22); 3, 3546 (I A 43); 3, 3547 (I A 295); 1, 227 (I C 40).

10. Jann Holl, Kierkegaards Konzeption des Selbst: Eine Untersuchung über die Voraussetzungen und Formen Seines Denkens (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1972), p. 128. See also previous note.

11. Elrod, Being and Existence, p. 255.

12. Mark C. Taylor, "Love and Forms of Spirit: Kierkegaard vs. Hegel", Kierkegaardiana 10 (1977), pp. 95-116.

13. Ibid., p. 104.

14. Ibid., p. 112.

15. Ibid., p. 97.

16. Ibid., pp. 99-100.

17. Ibid., p. 103.

18. Ibid., p. 102.

19. Ibid., p. 109.

20. Ibid., p. 112.

21. Ibid., p. 111.

22. Ibid.

23. Cf. CD, p. 86; SV 10, 87, where, again, Elskov and Kjerlighed are used interchangeably to describe man's relation to God, and E/O 2, p. 31; SV 2, 29, where Kjerlighed is used in the sense of romantic love.

24. There are, of course, great differences of detail which distinguishes Kierkegaard's view of love from that of Plato's. The point is that Kierkegaard, like Plato, does not differentiate so strictly between the love based on need and love of the eternal. The lower loves are partial and limited expressions of a love which lies in germ at the basis of the soul, and which has been hidden, as will be shown, by a fall of the soul from an original state of grace. Human love is not evil by nature, according to Kierkegaard, but has come to be selfish and evil because of an original sin. For Kierkegaard, this fall occurs through an act, while for Plato "forgetting" precipitates the fall of the soul from an original vision of the good. See Plato's Phaedrus 248c.

25. See M.C. Taylor, Journeys to Selfhood: Hegel & Kierkegaard (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), p. 171: "Through the freedom of spirit or of the self, infinitude and

finitude, possibility and necessity, eternity and time, come together in the concrete life of the individual. Opposites are synthesized by means of the individual's free self-conscious activity. For Kierkegaard, free resolution overcomes the dissolution endemic to speculative philosophy and to Christendom." See also Ibid., p. 103, 175, 178.

26. Taylor, Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship, p. 117.

27. Ibid., pp. 124-25.

28. Calvin O. Schrag also interprets the self's relation to time in this way. For Schrag, Kierkegaard rejects the timeless now of Hegel and Plato and holds a view of time which is more consistent with the "authentic present" of Heidegger. The unity of the self is not substantial, timeless unity, but a unity which occurs in the Moment during which the future (possibility) and the past (actuality) are dynamically interrelated. See Schrag's Existence and Freedom: Towards an Ontology of Human Finitude (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1961), pp. 119-53 and passim. Schrag's claim that it is "in the moment of decision [that] the self is unified" (p. 136), is not entirely incorrect. The claim of this dissertation will be that Kierkegaard uses precisely the idea of a timeless present to illuminate the moment of decision.

29. Taylor, Journeys to Selfhood, p. 175.

30. See ibid., p. 103.

## CHAPTER ONE

1. Throughout the dissertation, The Concept of Anxiety will be referred to as Anxiety. Where the references to this work are numerous and frequent, I will adopt the practice of citing page numbers only of the English and Danish editions respectively. For all other works of Kierkegaard, the full abbreviations as described above have been used.
2. See KW 19, 87-96; SV 11, 199-207.
3. Alexandre Kojève, "Tyranny and Wisdom", in Leo Strauss, On Tyranny (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp. 179-80. To a great extent, Kojève's discussion in this essay has shaped my interpretation of the Socratic relation to truth and Hegel's response to it.
4. Charles Taylor, Hegel (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 85.
5. G.W.F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), para. 30. Hereafter: Phenomenology.
6. Ibid., para. 29.
7. Ibid., para. 44.
8. Ibid., para. 34.
9. Ibid., para. 5.
10. G.W.F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), pp. 78-79. Hereafter: Philosophy of History.
11. Newton also claimed that time was absolute and distinct from the objects it contained. This was the source of his disagreement with Leibniz, who claimed that time, being ideal, was ultimately rooted in the order of succession of phenomena and therefore not distinguishable from this order. Hegel's understanding of time is essentially a development of that of Leibniz, from whom Hegel derived the expression, "the concrete present is the result of the past and is pregnant with the future" (Hegel, Philosophy of Nature, quoted in M.C. Taylor, Journeys to Selfhood, p. 108). For materials relevant to the disagreement between Leibniz and Newton, see The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence, ed. H.G. Alexander (New York: Barnes & Noble Press, 1956).

12. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Toronto: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 76-78.
13. See "General Observations on Transcendental Aesthetic," in ibid., pp. 82-88.
14. Ibid., p. 20.
15. Stephen Crites, In the Twilight of Christendom: Hegel vs. Kierkegaard on Faith and History (Chambersburg: American Academy of Religion, 1972), p. 22.
16. Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 78.
17. John Elrod, Kierkegaard and Christendom (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 55. This claim is echoed by Stephen Crites, op. cit., pp. 22-23, 22n. 1, 23n. 2. Cf. Gregor Malantschuk's account of Kierkegaard's objections to Kant in Fra Individ til den Enkelte: Problemer omkring Friheden og det etiske hos Soren Kierkegaard (København: C.A. Reitzels Boghandel, 1978), pp. 238-58. My argument sides with Malantschuk over against that of Elrod and Crites.
18. See above, pp. 19-20.
19. S. Crites, op. cit., p. 77.
20. Ibid.
21. I. Kant, op. cit., p. 137, italics mine.
22. Hegel, Phenomenology, para. 808.
23. To illustrate Kierkegaard's distinction between essence and existence, it is useful to refer to his distinction between God's being and his existence. Contrary to popular belief, Kierkegaard did believe God to have an essence, that certain statements could be made about what does and does not constitute his nature. God is a being who by virtue of essence is eternal. Therefore the question of God's existence is a false one: "God does not exist, He is eternal" (CUP, p. 296; SV 7, 287). To attribute existence to God is to confuse two distinct spheres of being, the unmoving being of the eternal and the concept with the moving, temporal being of factual being and historical existence. Accordingly Kierkegaard claims that one does not have "faith" that God exists, but only that He has come to be at a certain point in time (i.e. in the Incarnation). He therefore distinguishes between God's eternal being and his existence in time, of which only the latter is the object of faith: "From the eternal point of view, one does not have Faith that the God exists, even if one assumes that he does not exist. The use of Faith in this connection enshrines a misunderstanding. . . . Faith does not have to do with essence, but with being, and the assumption that God is determines him eternally and not historically" (PF, p. 108; SV 4, 250-51). The absurdity of God's appearance in time derives not from the idea of

God itself but instead that God's essence, according to which he "is" eternally, "is inflected in the dialectical determinations of coming into existence" (PF, p. 109; SV 4, 251). This kind of argument leads some interpreters to claim, as I do, that Kierkegaard presupposes the dualism characteristic of the pre-modern thought of Plato. See Soren Holm, Soren Kierkegaards Historiefilosofi, pp. 21-29, and Jann Holl, Kierkegaards Konzeption des Selbst, pp. 27, 119-20; Holl believes this dualism is implicit in Kierkegaard's understanding of suffering, see ibid., p. 149. Cf. Johannes Sløk, Die Anthropologie Kierkegaards, pp. 28-29. Sløk claims Kierkegaard's position cannot be compared to Plato's dualism of time and eternity. Michael Theunissen, in Der Begriff Ernst bei Soren Kierkegaard (Freiburg/München: Karl alber, 1958), p. 32, agrees with Holm and Holl, and claims that Kierkegaard's dualism of ideal, eternal being and factual being derives from the Platonic dualism of being and becoming.

24. This problem is central to the Philosophical Fragments, where Kierkegaard makes the following introductory remarks: "For what a man knows he cannot seek, since he knows it; and what he does not know he cannot seek, since he does not even know for what to seek. Socrates thinks the difficulty through in the doctrine of Recollection, by which all learning and inquiry is interpreted as a kind of remembering; one who is ignorant needs only a reminder to help him come to himself in the consciousness of what he knows" (PF, p. 11; SV 4, 179-80).

25. The concept of double-mindedness (Tvesindethed) plays a large role in Kierkegaard's psychology, and provides the context for the problem of "repetition", or the problem of how from a state of corruption the will can reascend to the "good" it has lost. The essential point is that in the condition of sin, the individual still maintains his relation to, or his "knowledge" of, the good. As it will be shown, his experience of anxiety is entirely dependent on the persistence of this relation.

## CHAPTER TWO

1. It must be repeated that very few commentators explicitly compare Kierkegaard's idea of freedom to that of Sartre's. As was shown in the introduction, however, many commentators presuppose a view of freedom which in its essential respects cannot be distinguished clearly from that of Sartre's. In any case, it is certainly the popular notion that human freedom, according to Kierkegaard, is not limited by an essence.
2. J.-P. Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1948), p. 28.
3. Ibid., p. 33.
4. See Chapter one of this dissertation, p. 42.
5. See also PF, p. 64; SV 4, 183.
6. Sartre, op. cit., p. 28.
7. Ibid., p. 47. Cf. Karl Barth's comment on Sartre's concept of man: "It is as man that man assumes the functions of deity, and in spite of the strangeness of his form is still clothed with the attributes of at least the conventional Western conception of God, existing of and by and for himself, constituting his own beginning and end as absolute actuality without potentiality, unique, omnipotent, and certainly omniscient" (Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics III, 3, ed. G.W. Bromiley, T.F. Torrance [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1960], ss. 50, p. 342).
8. Sartre, op. cit., p. 41.
9. Ibid., p. 55.
10. Sartre's view of the relation between being and human existence is borrowed with some modifications from the analysis of Heidegger in Being and Time. Cf. Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism", trans. F.A. Capuzzi, in: Heidegger, Basic Writings, ed. David Farrel Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 193-246, where Heidegger differentiates his own position from Sartre's particular interpretation of it. There are basic similarities, however. For Heidegger, man does not have an essence in the metaphysical sense, and therefore an "existence" which is an actualization of that essence. Unlike animals, man stands "outside" his own being. While animals have existence which is the realization of a static essence, man has "ek-sistence" and is perpetually on the way to his essence. Man's "ek-sistence is not the realization of an essence, nor does ek-sistence itself even effect and posit what is essential" (ibid., p. 206), or that

is to say, "the essence of man lies in ek-sistence" (ibid., p. 224). Heidegger and Sartre both reject the idea of permanent being transcending time, in virtue of which all things in time have an "essence". Sartre's "humanism" is repugnant to Heidegger, on the other hand, because it presupposes the metaphysical tradition Heidegger wishes to overcome. Because Sartre conceives man to be a maker of his own values, he still labours under the "subjectivity" of the metaphysical tradition according to which man has a self which can impose its will on the external world. Sartre still confuses the "actuality" or "existence" of the self with the "ego cogito" of the rationalist tradition. Man, for Heidegger, does not project himself on the universe, nor does he create his own values, but is himself a projection of Being (ibid., p. 217). The idea that man "makes himself" and "creates his values" is in fact a metaphysical idea which veils the question of Being and man's relation to it (ibid., p. 224). Man's ek-sistence for Heidegger is not his projecting of himself into the future, but dwelling in "the nearness of Being." Ek-sistence "is not the actuality of the ego cogito. Neither is it the actuality of subjects who act with and for each other and so become who they are. 'Ek-sistence', in fundamental contrast to every existentia and 'existence' is ecstatic dwelling in the nearness of Being" (ibid., p. 222).

11. A modern theologian who best expresses this view is Karl Barth, for whom "nothingness has no existence and cannot be known except as the object of God's activity as always a holy activity." As has been said, nothingness is not possible in the same way that possible tables and possible virtues are possible: "It 'is', not as God and his creation are, but only in its improper way, as inherent contradiction, as impossible possibility" (op. cit., ss. 50, p. 351). Though nothingness is "impossible", it is nevertheless a fact, whose "existence can only be explained by reference to man who, by some mysterious transition, makes himself the "agent" of nothingness: [Nothingness] has the essence only of non-essence; and only as such can it exist. Yet the sin of man also confirms the real existence of nothingness. Nothingness is a factor so real that the creature of God, and among His creatures man especially in whom the purpose of creation is revealed, is not only confronted by it and becomes its victim, but makes himself its agent" (ibid., p. 352). Because there is no capacity for nothingness in the created self, there is also no freedom in choosing this nothingness. As has been said, nothingness is taken into the self by an act, or by sin, but also in virtue of a freedom which, impossibly, makes man a slave: "There is no capacity for nothingness in human nature and therefore in God's creation, nor is there any freedom in this direction as willed, ordained and instituted by God. When man sinned, he performed the impossible, not acting as a free agent but as a prisoner" (ibid., p. 356).

Kierkegaard refuses to explain sin "rationally" because he wishes to preserve, as Barth does, the idea that sin and nothingness are impossibilities, and man's participation in them a mystery. This prevents the tendency, present in both Leibniz and Hegel, to reduce the metaphysical imperfection of man into something merely natural to man, and therefore "possible". As in Leibniz, evil becomes, not merely opposite to good, or better a privation of good, but, according to Barth, "a particular form of good, not opposing, disrupting or threatening it, but rendering it an

indispensable service, contributing to it the necessary vacuum which permits its fuller expansion, the indispensable darkness which it needs to shine forth as light" (ibid., p. 318). The effort to rationalize the relationship between God and nothingness, for Barth and Kierkegaard, inevitably results in pantheism.

12. Reidar Thomte has chosen to render the Danish Arvesynd with the literal translation "hereditary sin", rather than traditional "original sin". This translation is intended to highlight the paradoxical meaning of hereditary sin which is of great importance to Kierkegaard. It stresses that sin is inherited (not a product of the individual will) and yet still a sin (a product of human action, for which the individual is "guilty"). See JP 2, 1530; Pap X<sup>2</sup> A 481. I will use "original sin" and "hereditary sin" interchangeably.

13. Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 57.

14. Ibid., p. 54.

15. See the "Introduction" to this dissertation, pp. 5-7, on the nature of striving in Kierkegaard's thought. The temporal side of the self is always trying to actualize the eternal side of the self, and therefore is continually striving. In Hegel the conflict between the eternal and the temporal, the ethical universal and the particular individual is reconciled by the necessary and circular development of the eternal in time. The love of knowledge is transformed into actual knowledge. Cf. above Chapter one, pp. 8-11. In Anxiety, man is both himself (individual) and the race (implicitly universal). It is the "contradiction" between these two elements which constitutes the "historical" side of man's being: "At every moment, the individual is both himself and the race. This is man's perfection viewed as a state. It is also a contradiction, but a contradiction is always the expression of a task, and a task is movement, but a movement [toward the same thing as a task, that was given as the same thing] is an historical movement. Hence the individual has a history" (KW 8, 28-29; SV 4, 301). For the historical, "becoming" side of the self to have any motion at all, there must be a simultaneous participation of the self in that which does not become: the eternal: "The unmoved is therefore a constituent of the motion as its measure and end" (CUP, p. 277; SV 7, 267-68). Human existence is not purely or primarily historical, but is historical by virtue of being in a contradictory relation to the eternal, the perfection of which is not to have a history.

16. The individual consciousness treated in Chapters three and four of Anxiety is therefore no longer innocent. In the third chapter the individual is in sin, but the consciousness of it, and therefore the anxiety concerning it, is suppressed. This suppression is characteristic of the Greek culture, Judaism and the spiritless religion of modernity. But because this sin is suppressed without success, these forms of life are always verging on the awareness of sin and are therefore anxious (Cf. KW 8, pp. 93-110; SV 4, 363-78). The fourth chapter describes the particular individual who is in sin and conscious of sin, but is

unable to overcome it, or to accept that God can overcome it (See Chapter four in Anxiety [111-54; 379-420]). This order of development is mirrored in the description of despair in The Sickness unto Death. Here the individual who is unaware of sin, yet in sin, is described as having "despair that is ignorant of being despair." As for the individual who is aware of despair, there are two forms which he can manifest. The one form of individual is too weak to be himself, while the other is too willful or defiant to be himself. The despairing self who is conscious of his despair either "in despair does not will to be himself" or "in despair wills to be himself." This corresponds in Anxiety to the distinction between the bondage of sin and the demonic (see 118-19; 386-87. Cf. KW 19, 42-74; SV 11, 154-85).

17. For Kant it is man's ability to will rationally according to and for the sake of universal law which guarantees that he is free and self-determining. Freedom is the ability to choose without regard to alien causes which threaten to violate the purity of practical reason: "Will is a kind of causality belonging to living beings so far as they are rational. Freedom would then be the property this causality has of being able to work independently of determination by alien causes; just as natural necessity is a property characterizing the causality of all non-rational beings -- the property of being determined to activity by the influence of alien causes" (Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, trans. H.J. Paton [New York: Harper & Row, 1964], p. 114). Choice is therefore free when its form is rational. For Sartre, man's freedom consists, as has been shown, in the fact that man has no given, rational essence according to which he must choose. It is because choice is undetermined by a reason that it is free. See above, pp. 59-60.

18. The word "dizziness" (Swimmelhed) indicates again that anxiety, unlike desire, does not have a definite object. Its object is infinite possibility or the "nothingness" of sin. It is because man stands, through sin, in relationship with nothingness that he experiences dizziness. But it is because nothingness is not part of his true self, that he is in dread of it and is unable to entirely give himself over to nothingness.

19. Because man and woman are related to spirit, they are equal in terms of this relation. Woman is more sensuous than man, but "the difference is not such that man and woman are not essentially alike despite the dissimilarity" (KW 8, 64; SV 4, 334).

20. For Hobbes man's original state, or rather his state of nature is a state of continual "warre of every man against every man." The distinction between the goodness and the badness of the passions is not intrinsic to them, but a distinction made possible by the establishment of a common Power, the State, which alone has the means to enforce such a distinction. Man's selfishness and violence are not the product of a fall, but constitute an original condition out of which man raises himself by his own calculative use of reason. Hobbes gives this description of the natural state of man before he so raises himself; "Where there is no common Power, there is no Law: where no Law no Injustice. Force, and

Fraud, are in warre the two Cardinal vertues. . . . It is consequent also to the same conditions that there be no Propriety, no Dominion, no Mine and Thine distinct; only that to be every mans, that he can get; and for so long as he can keep it. And thus much for the ill condition, which man by meer Nature is actually placed in; though with some possibility to come out of it, consisting partly in the Passions, partly in his Reason" (Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968], p. 188).

21. Hegel's acceptance of Hobbes estimation of the state of nature is apparent from the following passage: "What we find such a state of Nature to be in actual experience, answers exactly to the Idea of a merely natural condition. Freedom as the ideal of that which is original and natural, does not exist as original and natural. Rather must it be first sought out and won; and that by an incalculable medial discipline of the intellectual and moral powers. The state of Nature is, therefore, predominantly that of injustice and violence, untamed natural impulses, of inhuman deeds and feelings" (Hegel, Philosophy of History, pp. 40-41). Freedom is not an original condition of man but the historical product of his own activity. Hegel, as does Hobbes, draws the conclusion that "Society and the State are the very conditions in which Freedom is realized" (ibid., p. 40). Similar comments on man's original state of nature can be found in The Logic of Hegel, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 56: ". . . we must give up the setting of incident which represents original sin as consequent upon an accidental act of the first man. For the very notion of spirit is enough to show that man is evil by nature, and it is an error to imagine that he could ever be otherwise." Cf. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, trans. E.B. Speirs and J.B. Sanderson (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), Vol. 1, p. 276.

### CHAPTER THREE

1. See Chapter two of this dissertation, pp. 77-78, 81-82, 91, and Sec. III (iii).
2. See Chapter two of this dissertation, pp. 55-62.
3. Mark C. Taylor makes this argument. Taylor wants to deny, as I do, that Kierkegaard has an "existentialist" view of freedom. His interpretation of the next quotation in the dissertation is not, however, an adequate way to distinguish Kierkegaard from the existentialist view. Sartre, too, held that freedom is limited by historical givens. See Regin Prenter's excellent discussion of this matter in his article "Sartre's Concept of Freedom Considered in the Light of Kierkegaard's Thought", in: A Kierkegaard Critique, ed. Howard A. Johnson and Niels Thulstrup (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1962), 135-36 and passim. The necessary part of the self must mean more than the historical givenness of the self if Kierkegaard's idea of freedom is to be adequately determined. Cf. Taylor's interpretation in Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship, pp. 111-12. Cf. also his description of decision in ibid., pp. 185-97; and of decision in relation to the "Moment", ibid., p. 119.
4. Cf. St. Paul, Romans 7: 18: "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it" (in: Common Bible Toronto: Collins, 1973). Cf. also Saint Augustine, Confessions, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), Bk. 8, Ch. 9: "The mind orders itself to make an act of will [in submitting to God], and it would not give this order unless it willed to do so; yet it does not carry out its own command."
5. Cf. CUP, pp. 302-03; SV 7, 293: "[Actuality is not the external act, but an inwardness in which the individual does away with the possibility and identifies himself with that which is thought]." Freedom and actuality consist not in entertaining a multitude of possibilities but in the identification of the self with what is necessary. The true task of inwardness is to come to the point of excluding all possibilities but the true one: "[When I am deliberating, the trick is to consider every possibility; in the moment I have acted (in the inward sense), the change is that it is my task to guard against further deliberation, unless repentance requires that something be done over again]" (CUP, p. 304n.; SV 7, 295n.).
6. M.C. Taylor, Journeys to Selfhood, pp. 168-71. My analysis of Kierkegaard's passages concerning the self is largely dependent on Taylor's lucid analysis of them. Taylor, however, overemphasizes the otherness of God and the contingency of the choice by which one comes into relation to God. See the "Introduction" to this dissertation.
7. See ibid., p. 170.

8. See Chapter one of this dissertation, Sec. I (ii) and passim.

9. Hegel, The Logic of Hegel.

10. Phenomenology, para. 22.

11. As the argument later in this chapter and in the next chapter will show, the self can never fall completely out of relation to the real. The fall, to be consistent with the argument of this dissertation, must be a fall which occurs within a prior, and inviolable relation that subsists eternally between God and man.

12. Jann Holl gives an excellent argument concerning the relation between spirit, soul and body. This structure of the self is expressive of the fact that, for Kierkegaard, the self simultaneously possesses itself and must acquire itself at the same time. The immortality of the soul is therefore a certainty or a "possession", and yet the soul must still be "acquired" in action. The elements of the self are not "posited" by the self but are posited by God, who is a measure external to the self and yet related to it. See Holl, Kierkegaards Konzeption des Selbst, pp. 131-34.

13. The reader may find the use of the word "illumination" strange, since Kierkegaard uses this word neither in Anxiety nor in The Sickness unto Death. Kierkegaard's use of the word "power" (Magt) might suggest to some that one is "energized" rather than "illuminated" by relating oneself to this power. "Illumination" seems to suggest the passive intellectual illumination of Augustine and not the "power" which for Kierkegaard energizes the will and allows the self to will itself. But, as will be seen from the quotation following in the dissertation, Kierkegaard puts together the idea of willing oneself with the idea of the transparency (Gjennemsigtighet) of the self before God: "in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently [gjennemsigtigt] in the power that established it" (KW 19, 14; SV 11, 128). Transparency suggests illumination, and it is because one is transparently grounded in, or illuminated by God, that the striving of the self is possible at all: "What is strenuous is the infinite transparency before God" (JP 4, 4373; Pap X<sup>1</sup> A 452). Transparency implies the rest of illumination, while willing oneself implies the "strenuousness" of action. Kierkegaard is drawing attention to the paradoxical character of the relation between God and man: that it is both rest and striving. The self, to will itself, must be contemporary (samtidig) with himself, but to be contemporary with oneself is to be transparent to God: "To be contemporary with oneself (therefore neither in the future of fear or of expectation, nor in the past) is transparency in [rest], and this is possible only in the God-relationship, or it is the God-relationship" (JP 1, 1050; Pap VIII<sup>1</sup> A 320). Kierkegaard describes the fall from the eternal not as merely the loss of the power to will, but as a fall from the vision [Udsigt] afforded by the eternal (WL, p. 231; SV 9, 235). He also describes the love which God has for man as a kind of light [Lys] which is the source and spring of all temporal loves (WL, pp. 26-27; SV 9, 12-13). Cf. his putting together of the idea of willing one thing and the idea of transparency in PH, pp. 176-77; SV 8, 215.

14. The form of despair in which the individual despairingly wills to be himself Kierkegaard also names "defiance". Under this category fall the phenomena of demonism, a form of despair Kierkegaard thought was still a part of modern life. Though he analyses this demonism in the fourth chapter of Anxiety (118-54; 386-420), he also was concerned with its role in modern politics. Cf. JP 4, 4093; Pap II A 436 and Chapter four of this dissertation, Sec. III.

15. It is important here to recall Kierkegaard's distinction between ethical and religious inwardness. In the stage of ethical existence one is concerned with one's own reality. This stage of the ethical Kierkegaard calls the stage of self-assertion, or action. But in the stage of religious inwardness the individual is concerned with the reality of another: ". . . the believer differs from the ethicist in being infinitely interested in the reality of another (in the fact, for example, that God has existed in time)" (CUP, p. 288; SV 7, 279).

16. Cf. CD, pp. 236-37; SV 10, 230: "The difficulty with Christianity emerges whenever it is to be [made present], and whenever it is to be spoken as it is, or is to be spoken now, in this moment, in this definite moment of actuality, to those, precisely to those, who now live].

17. Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, trans. Arthur Mitchell (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1913), p. 335.

18. See Plato's Meno, trans. W.K.C. Guthrie, in: The Collected Dialogues of Plato, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 86a-b; and Phaedo, trans. Hugh Tredennick, in: ibid., 75c-76a; and Phaedrus, trans. R. Hackforth, in: ibid., 248c.

19. RP, pp. 3-4; SV 3, 173: "Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has been, is repeated backwards, whereas repetition properly so called is recollected forwards." Calvin O. Schrag opposes recollection and repetition in a way which contradicts this quotation. See his Existence and Freedom, pp. 133-34.

20. Passion is used in the sense of suffering, which is the sense in which Kierkegaard usually uses it. As will be seen in Chapter four of this dissertation (see Sec. I (iii), (iv)), the quality of suffering distinguishes the religious stage of existence from the ethical stage. The existing individual is related to God through love, and yet at the same time, as the result of sin, is unable to actualize this love in time. This simultaneous wealth and poverty of the soul is experienced as suffering. This is why Kierkegaard states that "the distinguishing mark of religious action is suffering" (CUP, p. 387; SV 7, 375). There is in Danish, unlike in English, a close etymological connection between passion (Lidenskab) and suffering (Lidelse).

21. T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, in: Collected Poems: 1909-1962 (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 192.

22. See Chapter one of this dissertation, pp. 25-28.
23. See Chapter one of this dissertation, pp. 35-38.
24. Kierkegaard borrows this argument from Adolf Trendelenburg, whose criticisms of Hegel Kierkegaard greatly admired. The best summary of these criticisms is given by Trendelenburg himself in "The Logical Question in Hegel's System," trans. T. Davidson, Journal of Speculative Philosophy 5 (1871), 349-59.
25. G.W.F. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, trans. E.S. Haldane and F.H. Simson (New York: The Humanities Press, 1974), Vol. 3, pp. 224-25. Hegel's identification of the absolute beginning with the doubt of everything (de omnibus dubitandum est) was the subject of much ridicule by Kierkegaard. See CUP, pp. 101-06; SV 7, 90-96.
26. See Chapter one of this dissertation, pp. 50-51.
27. Plato, Parmenides, trans. F.M. Cornford, in: The Collected Dialogues of Plato, 151e.
28. Ibid., 140e-141d.
29. Ibid., 152a.
30. Ibid., 151a.
31. Ibid., 152c-e.
32. See G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 294-95, for Zeno's arguments concerning the arrow.
33. Plato, Parmenides, 156c-d.
34. CUP, p. 274; SV 7, 265.
35. Aristotle makes a similar comparison of the "now" and the point. Just as the "now" is not a "part" of time, so is the point not a "part" of the line: "obviously the 'now' is no part of time, nor the section any part of the movement, any more than the points are parts of the line -- for it is two lines that are the parts of one line" (Aristotle, Physics 220a 18-20, quoted in: Martin Heidegger, Basic Problems of Phenomenology, trans. Albert Hotstädter [Bloomington: Indiana University Press], p. 250).
36. Quoted in: Plato and Parmenides: Parmenides' Way of Truth and Plato's Parmenides, trans., with an introduction and commentary by F.M. Cornford (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merril Co., Inc., n.d.), p. 54.

37. See above, pp. 115-17.

38. The problem of time which Kierkegaard is focussing on is essentially the same as that discussed by Augustine in the Confessions, where he asks: "how can we say that even the present is, when the reason why it is is that it is not to be?" (Bk. 11, Ch. 14). The "is" of the present moment in time cannot be associated with any particular duration of years, days or minutes (ibid., Bk. 11, Ch. 15). The only thing which can be the present is, like in Plato, an "instant" which is without duration and extension: "In fact the only time that can be called present is an instant, if we can conceive of such, that cannot be divided even into the most minute fractions, and a point of time as small as this passes so rapidly from the future to the past that its duration is without length. For if its duration were prolonged, it could be divided into past and future. When it is present it has no duration" (ibid.). But if this were true, it would be impossible for Augustine's instant, just like Plato's, to come into relation with time past and time future, or as Augustine himself says: "As for the present, if it were always present and never moved on to become the past, it would not be time but eternity" (ibid., Bk. 11, Ch. 14). In Augustine, as in Plato, the present "wavers" between meaning time and eternity. Augustine proceeds to show in the Confessions that, because time is not grounded in the movement of bodies, but is an extension of the mind, the connection between past, present and future is grounded in the memory, attention and expectation of the mind (Bk. 11, Ch. 27). For Kierkegaard, this connection is established by the intersection of time and eternity in the Moment.

39. Even if all the notes of a symphony were played at once, this would still not give a spatial character to it. The moment in which the symphony is played still requires duration which, however long or short, is still successive. Kierkegaard elaborates his view of music in Either/Or 1, where it is discussed what medium is appropriate to the artistic expression of the "sensuous genius". Because the sensuous genius exists in the "abstract moment" of vanishing time, the medium appropriate to the expression of this existence is music, which shares the quality of successiveness and abstractness: "The most abstract idea conceivable is sensuous genius. But in what medium is the idea expressible? Solely in music. It cannot be expressed in sculpture, for it is a sort of inner qualification of inwardness; nor in painting, for it cannot be apprehended in precise outlines; it is an energy, a storm, impatience, passion, and so on, in all their lyrical quality, yet so that it does not exist in one moment but in a succession of moments, for if it existed in a single moment, it could be modeled or painted. The fact that it exists in a succession of moments expresses its epic character, but still it is not epic in the stricter sense, for it has not yet advanced to words, but always moves in an immediacy. Hence it cannot be represented in poetry. The only medium which can express it is music" (EO 1, p. 55; SV 1, 40). Cf. also EO 1, pp. 63, 67, 94; SV 1, 47, 50-51, 76.

40. See above, note 35.

41. See E.H. Gombrich, The Story of Art (Oxford: Phaidon Press,

1950), plate 53, and commentary, pp. 58-59. Of course the sculpture is a convincing one because it gives the impression that the discus thrower is "just about" to throw the discus. As Gombrich points out, however, the sculpture does not resemble a "still" from a sports reel. The spatial disposition of the parts, the placidity of the facial features implies that there will be essentially nothing new in the throw. The same circles which eternally govern the movement of the body will always be there. The success of Myron's sculpture consists in its "reduction" of the body to the eternal circles which perpetually govern it.

42. Kierkegaard refers to the leap as elastic in KW 8, 85; SV 4, 354. See above, p. 39.

43. See Chapter two of this dissertation, Sec. II (ii).

44. On the basis of this passage it is often argued that Kierkegaard, unlike Plato and the Greeks, emphasized the primacy of the future in human existence. Those who defend such a position tend to ignore the fact that the future is clearly stated in the passage to be an "incognito" for the eternal. This is the case both with Calvin O. Schrag (Existence and Freedom, pp. 130-31) and Stephen Crites (In the Twilight of Christendom, pp. 79-80). But Kierkegaard clearly states that the appearance of the eternal as the future characterizes the "dreaming" spirit, or the individual who has not reached the stage of religious existence (KW 8, 91. 1. 2-5; SV 4, 361). Now in relation to his analysis of hope in the Works of Love, it appears to be true that, in hope, the eternal is related to the individual as future possibility. The touching of eternity upon time occurs not in the immediate moment, which is merely present, but in the future: "The eternal is, but when the eternal touches time or is in time, they do not meet each other in the present, for then the present would be the eternal. The present, the moment is so quickly past, that it really is not present. . . . Consequently if the eternal is in the temporal, it is in the future (for the present can not get hold of it, and the past is indeed past) or in possibility. The past is actuality; the future is possibility. Eternally the eternal is the eternal; in time the eternal is possibility, the future" (WL, pp. 233-34; SV 9, 238). The eternal touches time in this way for the one who exists in hope and expectation. Such passages must be balanced with those passages in which the existence of the individual in the present is emphasized. This present, of course, is not the immediate present, but the presence of the eternal, or the presence in which the self is transparently grounded in God. The self contemporary with itself in such a moment contrasts with the self which simply hopes for or expects the future: "To be contemporary with oneself (therefore neither in the future of fear nor in the past) is transparency in [rest], and this is possible only in the God-relationship" (JP 1, 1050; Pap VIII A 320). See above, note 13. Cf. also CD, p. 76; SV 10, 77: "When by the help of eternity a man lives absorbed in today he turns his back to the next day. The more he is eternally absorbed in today, the more decisively does he turn his back to the next day so that he does not see it at all." The future is not the focus of attention, but the present. Kierkegaard understands hope as a "work of love", but also as a work which is imperfect when it is not "perfected" by love (WL, p. 213; SV 9, 216).

The future time of hope must be fused into the present time by love. If the self were perpetually expectant of the eternal and not in possession of it, it would be inexplicable how the self could be "contemporaneous" with itself and therefore "transparent" before God at the same time. The problem of man's relation to the eternal, the fact that man, divided between past and future, must relate himself to a God who is eternal, is not new with Kierkegaard. Cf. Augustine: "You, my Father, are eternal. But I am divided between time gone by and time to come, and its course is a mystery to me. My thoughts, the intimate life of my soul, are torn this way and that in the havoc of change. And so it will be until I am purified and melted by the fire of your love and fused into one with you" (Confessions, Bk. 11, Ch. 29). In Kierkegaard, too, it is love which effects the "understanding" between the qualitative opposites God and man (PF, pp. 30-31; SV 4, 194). It is correct to say that man, limited to temporality, regards the eternal as a matter of hope and expectation until such time as the eternal is "made present" or "actualized" by love. If one claims that the eternal cannot be actualized in the present in principle, one is saying something more than what Kierkegaard is saying.

45. Those interpretations, mentioned in note 44, which define the eternal as the future, seem to interpret the moment as a discrimen, a mere dividing point between past and future. For Schrag (op. cit., p. 137), "the ethical significance of the moment is that it binds together the existential future and the existential past." The only significance of the present is that it is the point stretched between past and future. Crites claims that "when Kierkegaard says that the future is the whole . . . he means that we appropriate the past as a decisive act, i.e. in the projection of the self into the future" (op. cit., p. 81). If the eternal can only be present as a future possibility, then the present is the mere dividing point (discrimen) between past actuality and future possibility. Rather than the future being the "incognito" of the eternal, it becomes identical with the eternal. Crites' interpretation depends greatly on his assumption that man's relation to God, according to Kierkegaard is at the same time a relation to "infinite possibility" which is the future (ibid., pp. 78-80). But Kierkegaard does not understand this possibility as infinite in the numerical sense. The possibility of the eternal is the possibility of the good ("the possibility of the good is the eternal" [WL, p. 234; SV 9, 238]), and not "manifold possibility" (WL, p. 234; SV 9, 239). The choice of infinite possibility is the choice of what is eternally necessary, and therefore of what is eternally present, or what Kierkegaard calls movement on the spot (KW 19, 36; SV 11, 149).

46. By the "Platonic notion of eternity" I mean that view according to which there is a realm of being untouched by change in time, and which nevertheless defines time. Cf. Plato's Timaeus, in: The Collected Dialogues of Plato, 37e-38a. The eternal is not "subject at all to any of those states which affect moving and sensible things," and which are the forms of time. Though qualitatively different from eternity, time nevertheless participates in eternity through the fact that time is an "imitation" of eternity. If the eternal does not possess this unmoving character, it would be impossible to explain why God's coming to be in time occurs by virtue of the absurd. If it were God's nature to come to be out of the

future, or to be an ever-moving god, then his appearance would cease to be paradoxical. I am in substantial agreement with Søren Holm on this question: "Om Guds Eksistens gaelder ganske simpelt det Platoniske, at han er, og det vil atter sige, at Gud er evig, ganske som de logiske Sandheder er det, og derfor er Gud saadan set ligesom Logiken inkommensurabel eller ikke-dialektisk for Bevaegelse, Tilblivelse og Vorden" (Soren Kierkegaards Historiefilosofi, p. 27).

47. See PVWA, pp. 5-7; SV 13, 517-18: "The contents of this little book affirm, then, what I truly am as an author, that I am and was a religious author, that the whole of my work as an author is related to Christianity, to the problem 'of becoming a Christian', with a direct or indirect polemic against the monstrous illusion we call Christendom, or against the illusion that in a land as ours all are Christians of a sort." Cf. PVWA, pp. 22-26; SV 13, 529-33.

48. This refers to Hegel's doctrine that the eternal is necessarily realizing itself in the process of history. Time is no longer an opposite of the eternal but is the manifestation of it -- time is the circular development of the eternal in time. In Kierkegaard's understanding the eternal and the temporal are related, not as "developmental stages with one and the same developing subject," but as contraries which are "simultaneous" by virtue of their relation in a synthesis to the spirit. To stress the fact that the self is a synthetic rather than a developmental self, he defined the self as a "tri-partite division . . . of man into spirit, soul and body" (CUP, 307; SV 7, 297). The assumption, common to Christendom in Kierkegaard's time, that modern Christianity was at the crest of a historical wave of the development of Christianity in the world, is also an object of Kierkegaard's displeasure. The assumption that the triumph of Christianity is an historical inevitability, that its development is successive and historical, relaxes the demand on the individual to actualize Christianity. The individual, according to Kierkegaard, must put himself in a relation of "simultaneity" or "contemporaneity" (Samtidighed) with the truth. When the eternal and the temporal are put in direct rather than in a successive, historical relation, ethical striving is brought into being, the striving to achieve simultaneity: "By positing as a task the scientific [developmental] process instead of the existential simultaneity, life is confused. Even where the succession is obvious, as in the case of the different ages in the individual's life, the task is to achieve simultaneity. . . . In the life of the individual the task is to achieve an ennoblement of the successive with the simultaneous" (CUP, p. 311; SV 7, 301-02). The error of both Hegel and Christendom was to assume that the striving of the individual between time and eternity was a transcended phase in human development.

49. See Oedipus' own account of how he came to murder his father and commit incest with his mother in Sophocles' Oedipus Rex (trans. Albert Cook, in: Ten Greek Plays, ed. L.R. Lind [Boston: Riverside Press, 1957]), 11. 771-833. After Oedipus describes the fate which, like an invisible machinery, reverses the intention he had of avoiding the terrible actions destined for him, he is led to question whether he was not "evil by birth": "What man now is wretcheder than I?/ What man is more cursed

by an evil fate?/ . . . and no-one but myself/ Brought down these curses upon my head./ The bed of the slain man I now defile/ With hands that killed him. Am I evil by birth?/ . . . Would not a man judge right to say of me/ That this was sent on me by some cruel spirit?" (11. 815-29).

50. The weird and abstract objectivity of the modern age is connected with an equally weird and abstract subjectivity. In the Postscript, for example, Kierkegaard criticizes the positiveness of historical knowledge, claiming that such knowledge corresponds to a fictitious "objective subject": "The positiveness of historical knowledge is illusory, since it is approximation-knowledge; the speculative result is a delusion. For all this positive knowledge fails to express the situation of the knowing subject in existence. It concerns rather a fictitious objective subject, and to confuse oneself with such a subject is to be duped" (CUP, p. 75; SV 7, 62). Therefore, while there is an increase in abstract certainty in the modern age, fewer and fewer individuals in it actually possess certainty: ". . . he who has observed the present generation can hardly deny that the discrepancy in it and the reason for its anxiety and unrest is this, that in one direction truth increases in scope and in quantity, and partly also in clarity, while in the opposite direction constantly declines" (KW 8, 139; SV 4, 405).

51. See note 49 above.

52. Hannah Arendt draws attention to this distinction in The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 222-23. She derives this distinction from Plato's use of these two words in Plato's Statesman 305 (cited in ibid.).

53. The innumerable failures and dead ends which make up the course of human history, for Hegel, are part and parcel of the Spirit's return to itself through and by means of history. The particular fruit of a particular people must inevitably become "a poison draught" to that same people, in order that the fruit may become a universal possession, and therefore a manifestation of spirit. The deaths and failures of individuals and peoples are reversed into the living victory of Spirit. Nevertheless, for the individual actors on the broad stage of the Spirit, the "commencement and the result" of their actions are inevitably divided (Hegel, Philosophy of History, p. 78). Cf. Hegel's explanation of the cunning of reason, which achieves its own aim by means of the particular passions of particular men. These particular actors end up fulfilling unconsciously the general idea which reason determines for them (ibid., pp. 32-33).

54. Erich Frank, Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 124-25.

55. See above, p. 175.

56. For Kierkegaard faith does not consist in simply rejecting this world. In Fear and Trembling faith is described as that which

unifies the infinite resignation of the self with the finite self which, at first, seems to have been rejected in the infinite resignation. Though Abraham obeys the command to kill Isaac, he also believes, "by virtue of the absurd," that he will receive Isaac back again. Because Abraham is infinitely resigned, he is capable of giving up his love of Isaac for his love of God, but, by virtue of the absurd, he believes that these two loves will again be reconciled. Through his rejection of Isaac he receives Isaac back again, and possesses him, not immediately, but by means of the "double-movement" of faith: "All the time [Abraham] believed -- he believed that God would not require Isaac of him, whereas he was willing nevertheless to sacrifice him if it was required. He believed by virtue of the absurd; for there could be no question of human calculation, and it was indeed the absurd that God who required it of him should the next instant recall the requirement. He climbed the mountain, even at the instant when the knife glittered he believed . . . that God would not require Isaac. He was indeed astonished at the outcome but by a double-movement he had reached his first position [loving Isaac], and therefore he received Isaac more gladly than the first time" (FT, p. 46; SV 3, 87). Abraham's faith did not consist in his "resigning" from his love of Isaac, since "for the act of resignation faith is not required" (FT, p. 59; SV 3, 98). Resignation is a "purely philosophical movement" which "I am able to make if it is required" (ibid.). Faith is the experience of the unity of the "infinite" act of resignation (the love for God) with finitude (the love for particular people). This faith is identical with the "repetition" in which one returns "to him himself, whole in every respect" (ibid.).

## CHAPTER FOUR

1. St. Paul, Romans 7: 18-19, in: The Holy Bible, King James Version (London and New York: Collins, 1949), p. 148.

2. For Kierkegaard the fact that one is immortal need not be a matter of debate: "There must be no question about immortality, as to whether it is; but the question must be whether I live as my immortality requires me to live. There must be no talk about immortality, as to whether it is, but about what my immortality requires of me, about my immense responsibility in being immortal" (CD, p. 213; SV 10, 206).

3. Kierkegaard passes judgement on the Seducer in the following way. The first part of Either/Or "represents an existential possibility which cannot win through to existence" and "is an imagination-existence in aesthetic passion, and therefore paradoxical, colliding with time; it is in its maximum despair; it is therefore not existence; but an existential possibility tending toward existence. . ." (CUP, p. 226; SV 7, 213). The aesthetic man in fact has no present in which he truly "is". He has only a tendency toward being.

4. Underlying the ecstasy of the aesthetic man is a basic melancholy concerning his perpetual dividedness from the object of his desire. Because he never actualizes any particular desire, time is experienced as a constant absence of what he desires. The constant dividedness of himself from his desire is also a constant dividedness of himself from himself. Cf. this selection from the "Diapsalmata" of Either/Or 1: "Time flows, life is a stream, people say and so on. I do not notice it. Time stands still and I with it. All the plans I make fly right back upon myself, when I would spit, I even spit into my own face (EO, p. 25; SV 1, 10). The aesthetic man suffers from the constant, unexorcized presence of death: "There are well-known insects which die in the moment of fecundation. So it is with all joy; life's supreme and richest moment of pleasure is coupled with death" (EO 1, p. 20; SV 1, 4).

5. Chapter three, Sec. I (ii).

6. Man can be conceived in two senses, one in which his self is determinable by the causality of freedom, and the other in which his self is determinable by the law of necessity which governs appearances. It is necessary to conceive of man as an appearance, then, as "subject to certain laws of which [he] is independent as a thing or being in itself" (Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, p. 125). Reason would pass beyond its limits if it were to try to explain how the freedom of the "proper self" can be combined with the necessity to which the phenomenal self is subject (ibid., p. 127).

7. Cf. Kant's "fundamental law of pure practical reason": "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle establishing universal law" (Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, trans. Lewis White Beck [Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1958], p. 30). There is therefore a difference between the will considered as determinable by universal law and the empirical world in which it is actualized: "The will is thought of as independent of empirical conditions and consequently as pure will, determined by the mere form of the law, and this ground of determination is regarded as the supreme condition of all maxims" (ibid., p. 31). While Kierkegaard's ethical man derives the universality of duty from the concrete public life in which he is involved, and therefore in a sense from experience, for Kant "the a priori thought of the possibility of giving universal law . . . is unconditionally commanded without borrowing anything from experience . . ." (ibid.).

8. The central claim of Judge William in Either/Or 2 is that erotic love is preserved and transfigured in married love: "So you see what a task I have undertaken in endeavouring to show that romantic love can be united with and persist in marriage, yea, that marriage is the true transfiguration of romantic love" (EO 2, p. 31; SV 2, 29). There is no question of a will imposing itself externally on recalcitrant inclinations. The function of the will is to lead love to its proper end and object.

9. For Kant "the moral law is the sole determining ground of the pure will" (Critique of Practical Reason, p. 113). Because happiness always depends on empirical conditions for its reality, it can never serve as an adequate motive for moral action. Though virtue, which is connected with the inclinations, together make up the highest good which is the "object" of pure will, this same highest ground can never be the "determining ground of the pure will" (ibid.).

10. Kant calls it "the thesis of the moral destiny of our nature, viz. that it is only in an infinite progress toward complete fitness to the moral law" (ibid., p. 127). It is necessary to assume, however, that this progress is completed, because the pursuit of the moral life would become meaningless. He is therefore led to the "postulate" that man is immortal, and therefore possessed of that "infinitely enduring existence" which enables him to pursue an infinite progress toward the good (ibid., pp. 126-28).

11. Ibid., pp. 128-36.

12. See above, note 10.

13. See CUP, pp. 497-98; SV 7, 489: "The edifying element in the sphere of the religiousness A is essentially that of immanence, it is the annihilation by which the individual puts himself out of the way in order to find God, since precisely the individual himself is the hindrance. . . . Aesthetically, the holy resting place of edification is outside the individual, who accordingly seeks the place; in the

ethico-religious sphere the individual himself is the place, when he has annihilated himself."

14. See CUP, p. 496; SV 7, 488: ". . . of religiousness A one may say that, even if it has not been exemplified in paganism, it could have been because it has only human nature in general as its assumption. . . ." See also CUP, p. 495; SV 7, 486.

15. Cf. TC, p. 67; SV 12, 60: "For in relation to the absolute there is only one time : the present. For him who is not contemporary with the absolute -- for him it has no existence. And as Christ is the absolute, it is easy to see that with respect to Him there is only one situation: that of contemporaneousness." It should be noted that the Danish language uses one word, Samtidighed, to indicate both contemporaneity and simultaneity.

16. See Chapter three of this dissertation, pp. 136-140.

17. Michael Wyschogorod is unique among North American commentators in asserting that Kierkegaard's idea of the paradoxical moment presupposes the classical ontological dualism of being and becoming. Existence, according to Kierkegaard, is not mere temporality, nor a kind of pure tendency toward an end it will never reach, but is a "synthesis" of eternity and time. Wyschogorod conceives this synthesis in his terms as a "mixture" of "pure Being" and temporality: "The philosophical construct of existence as it emerges in Kierkegaard is based on an ontology of pure Being. Existence is very much less and very much more than pure Being. It is less than pure Being because existence implies a situation in which there is a factor operating that is the opposite of pure Being: the temporal. Existence is also more than pure Being because the unique mixture of pure Being and the temporal produces human categories that are foreign to pure Being as such. These existential categories can be understood in their tension only on the basis of being the meeting points of two ontologically separate constructs: pure Being and temporality. Without granting that the moment is a paradox because it realizes the eternal in the temporal, it would be no paradox at all because there is nothing paradoxical in the moment, as a point in time, accomplishing something that is basically temporal. But if the moment succeeds in some way in capturing the eternal, then the impossibility of such a success becomes apparent" (M. Wyschogorod, Kierkegaard and Heidegger: The Ontology of Existence [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1954], p. 123). Cf. CUP, pp. 186-87; SV 7, 174-75: "[The paradox appears when the eternal truth and existing are put together]," and, "by virtue of the relationship subsisting between the eternal truth and the existing individual, the paradox came into being." The "absurd" for Kierkegaard does not mean the "meaninglessness" of rolling a rock uphill only to watch it return again to the bottom. Rather than this Sysphusean absurd, "the absurd is -- that the eternal truth has come into being in time, that God has come into being . . ." (CUP, p. 188; SV 7, 176). The absurd "involves the contradiction that something which can become historical only in direct opposition to all human reason, has become historical" (CUP, p. 189; SV 7, 177-78).

18. See above, note 17.

19. Cf. CD, p. 227; SV 10, 220-21: "The Apostle does not say that we come nearer to our salvation, but that salvation comes nearer to us. And about this too it might be necessary to talk so as to remind the believer that he is not to be in a hurry, not to think that he is to acquire what essentially is bestowed."

20. That eternity is above time means also that time and eternity are opposites: "For eternity is the opposite; it is not the opposite to a single instant (this is meaningless), it is the opposite to the temporal as a whole . . ." (CD, pp. 103-04; SV 10, 104). The eternal, by means of the incarnation, relates itself to the individual in time. The individual "in time . . . comes into relation with the eternal in time" (CUP, p. 506; SV 7, 497). But in order to preserve the sense of the wording "'in' time", it must be assumed that the eternal is, by virtue of its essence, beyond time at the same time.

21. See CD, p. 142; SV 10, 141: "Because man has in him something eternal, therefore he can lose the eternal, but this is not to lose, it is to be lost; if there were nothing eternal in man, he could not be lost."

22. Kierkegaard's use of the word "soul" (Sjel) is confusing here because he is using it in the same way he used "self" in The Sickness unto Death (KW 19, 13; SV 11, 127). The self in this work is the synthesis of soul and body. The "soul" is equivalent here to the eternal part of the self, while in the passage quoted above the soul is the synthesis or the contradiction of the eternal and the temporal. For a careful analysis of this problem see Jann Holl, Kierkegaards Konzeption des Selbst, pp. 132-34.

23. J. Preston Cole gives an apt description of the difference between the bondage of sin and the demonic: "When an individual has his consistency in the good, he lives in dread of the evil; he has an unfree relation to the evil. And, conversely, when an individual's consistency lies in the evil, he lives in dread of the good; he has an unfree relation to the good. The former is the bondage of sin, the latter is the demonical. The former manifests itself in a compulsive moralism, the latter in a compulsive fatalism" (J.P. Cole, The Problematic Self in Kierkegaard and Freud [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971], pp. 88-89).

24. See KW 8, 119; SV 4, 387: "The demonic therefore manifests itself clearly only when it is in contact with the good, which comes to its boundary from the outside. For this reason, it is noteworthy that the demonic in the New Testament first appears when it is approached by Christ. Whether the demon is legion (cf. Matthew 8: 28-34; Mark 5: 1-20; Luke 8: 26-39) or is dumb (cf. Luke 11: 14), the phenomenon is the same, namely, anxiety about the good, for anxiety can just as well express itself by muteness as by a scream. The good, of course, signifies the restoration of freedom, redemption, salvation, or whatever one would call it."

25. See Chapter three of this dissertation, Sec. III (ii).
26. See M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 48.
27. See Euripides, Hippolytus, trans. David Grene, in: Greek Tragedies, ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), Vol 1, ll. 176-249.
28. See Jann Holl, Kierkegaards Konzeption des Selbst, pp. 121-24, for a discussion of Kierkegaard's notion of the body and its difference from that of Fichte.
29. See ibid., p. 116, where this point is made in relation to the possibility of despair.
30. The true discourse, for Kierkegaard does not engage in attempts to prove immortality, but, by "assuming immortality as a thing most certain" the discourse "comes out bluntly with the consequences which follow from it." For Kierkegaard the true discourse says to the individual: "'Nothing is more certain than immortality; thou shalt not be concerned about it, not waste thy time upon it, nor seek evasions by wanting to prove it, or wishing it proved -- fear it, it is all-too-certain, do not doubt whether thou art immortal, but tremble, for thou art immortal'" (CD, p. 211; SV 10, 204). Cf. CUP, pp. 152-58; SV 7, 141-47.
31. For Kierkegaard's criticism of the Cartesian idea of subjectivity, see CUP, p. 281; SV 7, 272, where he states: "The [actual subjectivity] is not the cognitive [subjectivity], since in knowing he moves in the sphere of the possible; [the actual subjectivity] is the ethically existing [subjectivity]." To say that the existing subject can have no cognitive certainty is not to say that certainty is not possible at all. The only thing which is certain is the eternal or the infinite: ". . . certainty can only be had in the infinite, where [the individual] cannot as an existing subject remain, but only repeatedly arrive" (CUP, p. 75; SV 7, 63). According to Kierkegaard, "nothing historical can become infinitely certain," but rather, "the infinite and the eternal is the only certainty" (ibid.). The individual can achieve certainty only in his paradoxical relation to the certainty of the eternal. Cf. CD, pp. 139-40; SV 10, 138-39. See Hermann Diem's comparison of Descartes' notion of the I with Kierkegaard's "existing" I, in: Philosophie und Christentum bei Søren Kierkegaard (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1929), pp. 20-22.
32. This is the theme of Kierkegaard's profound meditation entitled: "Man's Need of God constitutes his Highest Perfection" (ED 4, pp. 7-47; SV 5, 81-105). Man's realization that of himself he can do nothing, i.e. his experience of suffering, "is man's annihilation, and this annihilation is his truth. . . . To achieve an understanding of this annihilation is the highest task for every human being. To brood over this understanding, as over a treasure intrusted to him by God Himself as the secret of the truth, is man's highest and most difficult achievement" (ED 4, p. 25; SV 5, 91).

33. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, para. 5.

34. See CUP, p. 85; SV 7, 73 and the "Introduction" to this dissertation, pp. 6-7.

35. "Just as the expert archer's arrow leaves the bowstring and has no rest before it reaches the target, so the human being is created by God with God as his aim and cannot find rest before he finds rest in God" (JP 1, 65; Pap VIII<sup>1</sup> A 601). Cf. this passage from St. Augustine in which he is addressing God: "The thought of you stirs [man] so deeply that he cannot be content unless he praises you, because you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you" (Confessions, Bk. I, Ch. 1). Human desire is therefore not evil by nature, but simply perverted from the true aim which lies embedded in it. Human desire is not evil, but becomes evil by virtue of a fall. This argument is crucial for my general claim that man, even in the state of sin and alienation from God, has an inner relation to, and therefore an "understanding", of God.

36. Kierkegaard makes this prophecy in ED 4, p. 25; SV 5, 91, where he speaks of the annihilation of a man in the knowledge that, of himself, he can do nothing: "To achieve an understanding of this annihilation is the highest task for every human being. . . . This is the highest and most difficult task that a human being can perform -- but what do I say, not even this is in his power. Man can at the most will to understand that this [dry fire only burns until the fire of God's love lights the flames in what the dry fire was not able to consume]." The moment in which the fire of man's true self catches fire is the Moment in which time and eternity touch by virtue of God's love.

37. CI, pp. 289-335; SV 13, 344-87.

## CONCLUSION

1. M.C. Taylor, Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship, p. 125.
2. See the "Introduction" to this dissertation.
3. M.C. Taylor, loc. cit.
4. See the "Introduction" to this dissertation.

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