Kierkegaard's Postscript in Light of Fear and Trembling:
Eschatological Faith

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ABSTRACT: There is a single unified conception of religious faith in Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling and Concluding Unscientific Postscript: existential faith is absolute trust in an eschatological promise, i.e., a miraculous realization of ethical ideals that is beyond all human power to accomplish or even predict. Faith in this sense has the peculiarity of "infinite resignation," which is a purified state of ethical willing in which the agent accepts his or her own inability to actualize the ethical, instead of or instead of, this condition is explored extensively by Climacus in this discussion of "existential paths," which shows why the resigned agent has to trust in an absolute source of eschatological possibility to guarantee the ultimate materialization of higher ethical striving. The distinction between Climacogens A and B, along with different notions of "the absurd" and "the absolute Paradise," can all be explained in terms of different kinds of eschatological possibilities.

KEY WORDS: Absurd; Abraham; Absurdum; Absurdity; Anxiety; Climacus; Eschatological event; Eschatology; Eternal; Ethical Stage; Ethics; Existential faith; Faith; Incarnation; Fear-writings; Fear and Trembling; Heaven; Paradox; Paradoxes; Religious; Religion; Religious experience; Religious stage; Resignation; Stages of life.

BEGINNING: Second, the author of this book, has in his unique concept of religious presence, that is, the Teine and Tremere and Postscript Concluding and On the Christian Era. Kierkegaard's concept is based on the idea that faith is a concept of knowing what is beyond the power of human reason. The idea is not that the agent accepts his or her own inability to actualize the ethical, but that the agent accepts the fact that the ethical is beyond human power.

This condition is explored extensively by Climacus in this discussion of "existential paths," which shows why the resigned agent has to trust in an absolute source of eschatological possibility to guarantee the ultimate materialization of higher ethical striving. The distinction between Climacogens A and B, along with different notions of "the absurd" and "the absolute Paradise," can all be explained in terms of different kinds of eschatological possibilities.

The author dedicates this article to Merlot Wainwright, his colleague at Purdue University, and to "the many wonderful graduate students who I have met through him."
Thus, although the Postscript has a special relation to the Fragment, since both are attributed to Cláudio and the Postscript explicitly develops the central problem of the Fragment, Kierkegaard wrote the Postscript to serve as the decision conclusion to all his earlier pseudonymous works. In the Postscript, their development was to be joined with the oldifying dignities of the signed discourses that he published alongside Either/Or, Fear and Trembling, Reformation (The Concept of Absence), and Stages on Life’s Way. This is one reason why Kierkegaard includes in the Postscript an ironic commentary (titled “A Salute to a Contemporary Effort to Danish Literature”) surveying most of the preceding pseudonymous books and some of the discourses; it is also why he ends with a declaration that he is the author of the three “authors” and indirectly of their works (p. 625-626). This declaration shows that the Postscript is the decisive pseudonymous work. Yet, among the other works that are pseudonyms, Kierkegaard knew that Fear and Trembling would be “the most just and influential” (p. 357; Pp. 7: 15), and this prediction has come true.

Thus the story of the stages in the Postscript has to agree in a deep level with the story in Fear and Trembling if the former is to provide the comprehensive perspective for all the earlier works, as Kierkegaard intended. He could hardly write one book to make his conception of the religious famous, and not to provide his conclusive account of the religious, yet make them largely disjointed or even inconsistent. Rather, he intends these works to cohere with each other in a mutually supporting fashion. This is evident when, in discussing Læsning, Cláudio tells us that he read Fear and Trembling and “in that book I had perceived how the leap... as decision... becomes specifically decisive for what is Christian... All Christianity is rooted in the paradox, according to Fear and Trembling—yes, it is rooted in fear and trembling...” (p. 625). The “determination” of Abraham’s faith must have something essentially in common with the modes of religious faith described in the Postscript (p. 626).

Yet apart from a lot of very insightful scholarship on the Postscript in the last three decades, how Abraham’s faith as described by Johannes de Silentio relates to the two kinds of religious life-ways or existential attitudes distinguished by Johannes Cláudio in the Postscript remains quite unclear. We remain unsure whether Abraham’s faith should be classified as a species of religiousness A, or between A and B, or something else (which even this is “far easier to explain than Abraham...” — p. 112). More profoundly, the two books seem to approach their targets in radically different ways: the first uses a notoriously difficult Biblical story to distinguish faith from the ethical will that is...
faith's precondition; while the second uses the idea of an individually 'infinite interest in his own eternal happiness' as the only one that can be given (cf. 163) to distinguish authentic religiousness in general from speculative claims to know objective religious truth (cf. 21) and goes on to distinguish Christian faith in an eternal happiness despite sin (44) from a more general trust in an eternal happiness as an objective uncertainty that remains possible after death (4).

We might say that these two features are even consistent with each other, let alone mutually reinforcing. For rival accounts of Fear and Trembling interpret Kierkegaard's Abraham as unlimitedly interested in God's commands above all, as a social ethicist willing to do a great 'neces- et vendetta of the absurd.' But otherwise, way, Abraham hardly seems focused on his own eternal happiness, or even on eternal happiness at all (since his faith is for this life) - at 38). By contrast, the Postscript's point of departure sounds remarkably classical, like Plato or Aquinas describing our soul's deep-seated yearning for its own infinite, perfect, or total happiness as the final aim of human life. This is why Levinas thinks Kierkegaardian 'hyster for substitution' starts from the same erotic picture of human motivation as Hegel's idealism. 5 But if the Postscript is just an existential version of the 'Treatise on Happiness' legitimizing subjective appropriation of goods that lie beyond the boundaries of natural knowledge, then what can its vision of beatitude in union with the divine have to do with the lucid, terriblecss of Abraham on Mount Moriah? The problem for Kierkegaard appears to be serious indeed.

Yet there are many intriguing hints of a deep connection between these apparently divergent texts. First, in the Postscript, there is extensive reference to 'resignation' in connection with infinite paths in the first section on the issue in the Fragments (Ch. 4, Div. 24). In Fear and Trembling, faith cannot even be an issue for a person who lacks infinite passion (43, 42 note), and 'infinite resignation' is the last stage before faith (43), whereas faith involves a 'teleological suspension of the ethical' in which the knight of faith stands in 'an absurd relation to the absolute' (63). Second, while the Postscript rarely refers to the 'teleological suspension,' except in Clasmonic's brief commentary on Fear and Trembling (cf. 266-267), it develops the closely related concept of 'absolute will' and argues that any religious life-view requires one 'to remain in the finite and immanentially to relate oneself absolutely to the absolute.' 6 And, relatively to absolute ends' (cf. 422). This is closely related to the causal formula for faith described in the second Problems of Fear and Trembling; namely that the single individual relates 'absolutely to the absolute' and to the ethical through the absolute (70).

Third, these texts are related through the Fragments, 7 in which Clasmonic explains what it would mean (contra Socrates) for a 'moment in time' to be essential to one's eternal happiness (13) because it is the 'teacher' provides the necessary condition for relation to that happiness - a condition that is missing from the human agent. 8 Such a moment is 'unique,' or irreplaceable; it should be called 'the fullness of time' (18). In Fear and Trembling, the very same phrase is used in the Eulogy on Abraham for the moment when God's promise to Abraham and Sarah begins to be fulfilled (cf. 15, i.e. the moment when Isaac is born. 9 Here the 'moment' of fullness is the religious analog of the aesthetic 'category of the turning point' (83), for it refers to a decisive change in which a divine promise is fulfilled beyond any rational hope. But in the New Testament, 'the fullness of time' refers to the incarnation when 'God sent forth his son' (Galatians 34). Clasmonic uses the phrase this way in the Postscript, both for the time when the world was ripe for Christianity to enter it (cf. 598) and for the moment when a person really becomes a Christian "... if one becomes that" (cf. 591). We will return to the implications of this theme in the Fragments.

Fourth, and perhaps most significantly, these three works are limited by the concept of religious paradox. Fragments introduces the famous term abs- "paradise for that which human thought reaches towards, but cannot think" (57), i.e. the divine eschaton from which we are "absolutely different" in sin (47). Although "offence" rejects this because it is "absurd" (52). The Postscript goes out (perhaps the only!) concrete historical instantiation

of this abstract formulation of the paradox. "The thesis that God has willed in human form, was born, grew up, etc., a certain type of paradox, such as, "the absolute paradox," which is absolute precisely because God becomes human despite "the absolute difference" between human existence and the divine nature (p. 217). Fear and Trembling also employs the term "paradox" repeatedly in relation to faith: "Silentio cannot think himself into Abraham, as he can with ethical heroes, because "what is refused me is a paradox" (p. 53) which is specified later as a proviso that the maker of evil is a folly and God-demanding act, a paradox that gives birth to Abraham again, which no one can grasp, because God begins precisely where thought stops (p. 53).

It looks at first like there are two distinct paradoxes here, and a third is soon added: "Faith is the paradox that the single individual is higher than the universe... after having been in the universe he as the single individual goes beyond the universe" (p. 55). An adequate account would have to explain the underlying unity of these three characteristics of the paradox in Fear and Trembling, and connect them with the absolute paradox in Climactic's series.

Fifth and finally, a similar interdependence is suggested if we compare Fear and Trembling directly to the project of the Fragment, against which the Nietzschean developed. In both cases, the central analyses employ the hypothetico-logical, regressive approach: Fear and Trembling considers what it could mean for faith to be "higher" than the ethical-universal, as it must be if Abraham is a religious hero: Philosophical Fragments asks what our relation to eternal truth (the lived intention for salvation or Steadfastness) would have to be for Nascites to be wrong that eternal truth can be learned, or that the condition for it is latent in the learner and can be brought out by encounters that remain mere occasions insufficient to the learner's (re)acquisition of this saving truth. The result again looks like a contradictory deduction of Christian categories, though Kierkegaard did not really think that revealed concepts like sin, redemption by faith, and God, etc., could be discovered suppositionally by simple negation of a theory of natural knowledge analogous innate access to eternal truth. But given the regressive approach in both texts, Silentio clearly anticipates Climacus when he says that if the ethical or "social morality" is the higher, "then no categories as needed other than what is implicit in the concept of religious doctrine."

This thesis is that if there is no life-view or existential attitude higher than the ethical, then Greek categories for heroes are inadequate for human fulfillment, by contraposition, we get parallel conditions:

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If so, then categories for knowledge of eternal truth (or eternal happiness) are inadequate; this thesis can be a remnant that in the fullest sense is a relation to innately revealed truth as revealed; a teacher who is more than an ascetic, etc.

Given the similarity of the two antecedents in these parallel conditions, there should also be important connections between the two concepts that an adequate reading of both texts would reveal. For example, what is the relation between the theological speculation of the ethical and the concept of fullness in time?

These five points of connection suggest that the right understanding of the paradox and related concepts in Fear and Trembling would provide a key to the Paradox; in other words, an adequate explanation of the absurd, the fullness of time, infinite resignation, the ethical, the ethical to which the ethical is suspended, and Abraham's "faith" would shed new light on the hard ideas in the Paradox; such as the distinction between Religiosities a and b. An interpretation of Fear and Trembling that had this result would be reflective and "equilibrium" be confirmed because it revealed the deep harmony we should expect between the two texts. In turn, no reading of the Paradox can be adequate unless it shows how Climacus' account of the religious stage is in line with the distinctive qualifications of faith developed in Silentio's interpretation of the story of Abraham and Isaac. Fortunately, that little happens that we have a new interpretation of Fear and Trembling to which this exceptional text can be applied: I turn to now.

2. The "Abused" as Ecstatically Possible: Fear and Trembling and the Fragments

In a recent essay, I offer a consideration as "ecstaticological" reading of Fear and Trembling that purports to resolve the most famous problems in this text by focusing on the second of the three "paradoxes" identified above. This is the paradox that Abraham resists Isaac back again (p. 53), which fulfills the faith in God's promise that Isaac will survive to foretell a great revelation. This "marvel" is central to understanding faith in Kierkegaard sense, because this kind of event is precisely the "abnormal" that is beyond all human power to bring about. This does not mean that faith is identical with the occurrence of the miraculous event. Abraham has faith, but because faith exceeds in his miracle: even in forming the intention to sacrifice Isaac (and in starting to do it before
the angel stops him), Abraham has faith "that God would not require Isaac" (v 36). Thus,
Abraham makes two movements: he makes the movement of total dedication and gives
up Isaac; but nevertheless, at every moment, he makes the movement of faith. This is his
contradiction: in other words, he is saying that Isaac's death will not happen, or if it
does, the Lord will give me a new Isaac, that is, by statute of the absurd (v 115).
Abraham cannot say this to others, however; or "speak" about the content of his
faith in a way that would be "understandable" (v 115), because this miraculous possibility of
Isaac's return transcends all natural understanding of what is possible by human prediction and human agency. We understand
states of affairs as "possible" in different synthetic modal terms - such as epis-
temic possibility, ontological possibility, moral possibility (or permissibility), and social possibility - by relating to articulated conditions or regularities, such as a theory of knowledge, a set of natural laws, a set of moral laws, or the norms of a given culture. But there is no such condition for understanding
the "possibility" of Isaac's living to father a great nation, as God has promised, despite the requirement that he also be sacrificed. The ethical role for the
sake of which various tragic heroes have sacrificed dear to them can be articulated or made understandable, but if they added
- the little phrase: but it will not happen anyway - who could understand them? If they went on to another phrase: but then he will die - who would understand them any better; for who would readily understand that it will be absurd, but who would
then understand that one could believe it? (v 85).
Still, to say that the return of Isaac, and the fulfillment of God's original promise, is "absurd" is not to say that it is just contradictory or conceptually
impossible, nor that it is metaphysically impossible. As Kierkegaard makes clear in an unpublished reply to a reviewer, "When I believe, then assuredly
neither faith nor the content of faith is absurd... but for the person who does not have faith, faith and the content of faith are absurd" (v 262; or V, 68, 75). Thus "the absurd" is the name that Kierkegaard's leading pseudonyms use for the centre of faith, as it appears from the outside, i.e. a perspective in which only its responses to human reason is salient.13

13. The topic of Parables in In Fear and Trembling, which I do not address in detail in Faith as Resistance to Trust... This discussion extends the analysis in that earlier essay.

14. This seems to be a logical possibility that someone could live although they are sacrificed, or could return from death. But such a logical possibility is not sufficient for "understanding" in Sartrean sense. God's transcendent and paradoxical command ensures that Isaac will not exist by itself; it is the difference that will bring news of the one true God in the whole world, then it cannot be by human accomplishment (e.g. by the most loving parental effort); yet such human predication make such an outcome plausible in any other way. Thus it cannot be "understood" in the relevant sense.

15. Of course this is usually the property of the skeptic or unbeliever, but faithful persons can also look at this light or consider this prime face absurd aspect of what they trust in.

In summary form, my reading of Fear and Trembling explains "faith" in this existential sense as a willed commitment of absolute trust in a promised
good that is possible only by divine power. This promise is revealed and faith in it is thus a direct response to a personal God. The paradoxical content of
Abraham's faith shares the same fundamental structuring as the salvation after
death promised in other religions. This content is defined by two conditions: (a) The future state, outcome, or final Heavens is a victory of the good, an actualiza-
tion of the ethical ideal in some state of being. (In the strict or narrowest sense, it is an actualization of the infinite ethical ideal in this finite, created world in the
present, temporal existence transformed to it with eternal essence, i.e. what ethically ought to be); (b) The human agent involved can see no way for this victory to result from natural processes, or any way of bringing it about by their own means. Access to it is blocked by some obstacle, which human reason can see no way to overcome. It is therefore possible only in some incalculable way by divine power, by 'miracle.'

Condition (a) explains the precise sense in which this state involves yet transcends the ethical, for it is a realization of some kind of ethical ideal in an actual state of affairs (for Abraham, in the time of this life); and as we all know, ethical ideals are not self-actualizing. Condition (b) explains the sense in which trusting in this future state can appear absurd, since it cannot be rationally justified as having even a low probability according to human knowledge; so a person can stake his ethical identity on it only if he is fully resigned to his own inability to bring about this state or to predict it on
natural grounds. As Kierkegaard says of the analogy with the poor young lad and
the princess in Fear and Trembling, "¡Mendes de Silencio proceeds on the assumption... he, humbly speaking, is incapable for the lover to get the princess" (v 264; 2fa, 68, 76).

I call a narrative outcome or dénouement meeting these two conditions (a) and (b) an eucological event, and the propositional attitude of a human agent who trusts in such an event I call existential faith. Such an event cannot become the intentional object of faith without revelation as a source, for it transcends natural sense and reason. Thus, trusting that the very idea of such a transforming event has a divine source is inseparable from trusting that it has a divine truth-maker; the eucological possibility of such an event can only be grounded in the miraculous agency of God as a free fulfiller of covenants. Hence existential faith involves an absolute or singularity relations to God as Thou (v 77), rather than simply to God in the ground of the universal-ethical, or as the metaphysical principle of being.

The other "paradoxes" in Fear and Trembling are explained by the idea that
Abraham has existential faith, as defined here. In Problem III, because the
God-relationship consists in existential faith, and such faith is the human
agent's trusting appropriated of eschatological possibility, which cannot be explained or contemplated in a "post-human" God's relationship to the world. "God's" in this sense is a being whose existence can only be "verified" eschatologically.3 In Problem 7, existential faith is an absolute relation to the "Absolute," now understood as a project toward the creation of theophany. The self-reflective manner of eschatological promises and eschatological possibilities, rather than an elemental being of natural theology. "God" in this sense is a being whose existence can only be "verified" eschatologically.4 In Problem 7, existential faith is an absolute relation to the "Absolute," now understood as a project toward the creation of theophany. The self-reflective manner of eschatological promises and eschatological possibilities, rather than an elemental being of natural theology. "God" in this sense is a being whose existence can only be "verified" eschatologically.5

On this reading, Abraham's promise is a promise in that for him, the obstacle is God's command itself, which seems to contradict the promise of Isaac's birth and destiny in which Abraham and Sarah were earlier promised to beget a son. Thus, as Kierkegaard wrote in the margin of one of his journals, Abraham's case is "not a collision between God's command and man's command but between God's command and God's command" (p. 248, 1968). This is a passage that has never been explained by readings of Fear and Trembling as a defense of absolute divine voluntarism or a divine command understanding of the ethical. This suggests that faith consists not in blindly obeying God's command, but rather in trusting in the irreligious possibility of the promised good despite the obstacle that in this case, is created by God himself to test Abraham.

Hence the main purpose of Fear and Trembling is not that Abraham's absolute duty to God is higher than that of human laws, or that divine commandments trump Stifthaltung; although Stifter's account certainly introduces these ideas as hypotheses incongruous with Hegel's philosophy, the primary theme of this text is not our duty to God but to existential faith in God's promise of ultimate salvation. And this promise is the absolute realization of the ethical, not its violation or surpassing in a higher allegiance to divine fate. This divine duty to have faith in God's promise transcends all ethical principles (including


universal norms of natural law and even higher agapeic ideals that in turn transcended more cultural Stiftlichkeit because it looks towards an "event revealing an absolute creative power that is not measured by the idiocy of any ethical framework in itself. A pure ethical intention cannot be presumed on any certainty of success because the normative force of righteousness does not actualize itself in temporal existence. But divine power may make the two coincide, in the end, when we cannot. Discharging our absolute duty to God means trusting absolutely (or staking everything on) God's ultimate fulfillment of universal ethical ideals, rather than their alteration. In the intentional object of existential faith, then, "ethical" is in its highest agapeic forms audacious in the eschatological miracle: because of its faith, Abraham "gained everything and kept Isaac" (p. 22).

When Fear and Trembling is understood this way, its continuity with the Fragments and Postscript finally becomes clear. For although Cláuisom makes a specifically Christian type of existential faith, it consists in trust in a specific "eschatological possibility" in the broad sense defined above: this is precisely what distinguishes the religious from the ethical in Cláuisom's works. For example, in the Fragment, "the Absolute Paradox" is described in terms of the distance between the human and the divine marked by sin (p. 47), which functions in my formula as the obstacle to human fulfillment of ethical obligations and ideals. Thus Cláuisom describes sin as a more radical "theological suspension" of the ethical: the ethical is present at every moment, but the individual is not capable of fulfilling it (p. 36). Cláuisom describes this state as being "heterogeneous with the ethical" despite still being bound by it. In this case, the obstacle is external to the agent's will, rather than external as in Abraham's case: he was able to fulfill the ethical "fact was prevented by something higher" (p. 257), while the sinful individual has voluntarily made it additionally impossible for himself to will the ethical, whereas, as we to fulfill his moral obligations. Because of this heterogeneity, "the god" cannot provide the essential condition to this individual, and such a divine act is a miraculous restoration - a work that only the god can do (p. 42).

Thus the "god" who makes possible this transformation that annuls the "absoluteness difference" (p. 47) cannot be an irrational principle or "concept" (like that derived from Aristotle's ontological argument) rather he must be a personal agent designated by "god" as a proper name (p. 41); note the commentator's reference to p. 90). Hence the state is a group that makes possible a transformation to an eschatological possibility: it is like Abraham's faith that Isaac will endure in Fear and Trembling. The similarity is not immediately apparent only because the Fragments looks at the human-divine relation more abstractly: when it discusses the perspective of the human agent, it focuses negatively on
3. From the Fragments to the Postscript: The "Issue" is Eschatological

The Postscript gives us both sides of this human-divine relation. It is similar to the Fragments in evaluating the limits of historical and metaphysical understanding: roughly half of the text (before Part II, sec. 2, ch. 10) is mostly devoted to explaining the difference between truth as subjectively appropriated in the will and truth as objectively knowable in subjectively neutral or detached consciousness (or even as timeless form). As Merold Westphal has rightly noted, this distinction cuts across the existential stages or "existence-spheres" as Claramunt calls them, because both ethical and religious truth must be appropriated or personally taken to heart, while aesthetic attitudes are compatible with objective distance from any deep engagement or voluntarist risk. In the ethical and religious categories, the adversarial mode or "how" affects the intentional object or "what". The practical aspect of their content is distorted or obscured if it is not apprehended with volitional passion, in the sense of an earnest interest in the worth of one's own agency, life-purposes, and fate. Thus Kierkegaard agrees with Kant's doctrine of the primacy of practical attitude: while speculative and metaphysical knowledge are compatible with an aesthetic life-view or disengaged voluntarist orientation, ethical and religious existential attitudes do not depend on "knowledge" in the objective sense. Careful critical analysis has successfully explained these themes in the Postscript.15


There is a question, highlighted in Jaromir Kantorowicz's work on Kierkegaard, concerning whether these points about personal appropriation can themselves be directly communicated. After all, Claramunt criticizes the "hearsay" of sinners who try to preach with fundamentals "not and emotion" (p. 77-78). It appears to me that at the heart of the Kierkegaardian notion of the Fatherly reception of the Father's Eucharistic reception of the Father's Philosophical Anecdote (Nov. 29, 1849). But this is because it is the "true cries" of suffering humans (human's better expression) made by the suffering individual, rather than talking to those who are experiencing them, by their own will, can only be possible directly to first and second order audiences. The first order audience are the people themselves, and this can be valuable as long as one can see how this second-order assent reflects talking to those who are suffering. This is why one who is eating and one who is "eating the relationship of the individual human being is "in the main point" (p. 77). Such a man would prefer to be misunderstood rather than to make the truth visible by getting his point across his highest goal. We second-order statements about such matters, which can be evaluated philosophically because of their distance, remain valuable if we employ this way: that Claramunt is not considering himself in forming direct

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But the Postscript differs from the Fragments in two crucial ways. First, in this work, Claramunt recognizes a vital distinction between (Socratic) religiously a (and Christian) religiously b that is obscured by the Fragment's simple dichotomy between Platonic reliance on the learner's immanent resources and absolute dependence as "the God." Second, while the Fragments emphasize our powerlessness because "the knowledge of the knowledge or insight necessary for eternal happiness, making it seem at times as if the god does everything for us while we remain utterly passive, the Postscript is much more 'Arminian' for it describes religion a and the development towards it in terms of the existing human agent's passionate interest in the highest good, and his or her experience in striving towards this transcendent (and hence indefini-

able) good through ethically informed willing. Thus, unlike the Fragments, the Postscript portrays us as capable in principle of willing the infinite good, even if in practice we always fail to balance this with finite interest in worldly goods.16 As John Glenn says while the Fragments seems to focus on "the objective conditions for eternal happiness" (which explains this work's direct form as a transcendental dedication),17 in the Postscript, 'Claramunt deals with the subjective conditions for the reception' of eternal happiness.18 In this respect, its perspective is much closer to Fear and Trembling, for the second half of the Postscript focuses on a typical human agent's route into the "eternalist" view, whereby earthly harmony is dealt with, while Claramunt's indirect mode presents certain strains in understanding and acceptance. Likewise, the responsible commentator may frame their attitude to Claramunt, although Claramunt reveals any final authority to assert them directly (p. 64) in keeping with his thesis (stated explicitly) that when no one God and the apes have their authority to communicate religious ideas (see page 74). Finally, such thesis may tend to be "attainable" in Kierkegaard himself when the balance of evidence warns, as long as we remember that what matters most is how to respond to our acts, not the (necessarily less historical/specific) question of what one 19th-century Danish man happened to think.19

16 On this theme, we see commentary in Schleiermacher's treatise: "My Schleiermacher's Lectures and a Personal Kierkegaardian Reflection." In Religious Humanism, 13 (2003), 2-3, pp. 15-23.

17 As I have said, the Postscript really believes that Christian categories can be decontextualized to the hypotheses that the learner has to the immanent conditions for saving knowledge. Rather, the apparent transcendent/deduction in the Fragments is illusion, and its direct form as an epistemological injury is misleading, although Claramund does not intend to say why any speculative philosophy that stems from the Platonic principle of imman-

cent truth seems similar Christian categories.


19 Claramunt states this difficulty by noting that only Part One of the Postscript on the "Objective Sense of the Truth of Christianity" is the proposed postscript to the Fragments that concentrates on objective questions in terms of whether we can know that Christianity is true, whereas Part Two or the "Subjective Sense" of the individual can sustain faith "is really more than the presumed hope" (p. 15).
pathos" that is religiousness, and the obstacles that may ultimately bring her to the threshold of a. Here the positive effort of well might the negative break or thwart of which it be a virtue of the absurd. By considering a and b as two types religious feminism with the same basic structure the Altschulters this phenomenon shows that they differ primarily according to the kind of exochological possibility in which the hero pursues his absolute truth. The two different exochological contents require different levels of existential paths for their development. The apparent hole in the account of truth as subjectivity given in the first half of the Postscript.

If it seems strange to call all these intentional objects of existential faith "exochological possible," it is probably because in first principles based on biblical teachings, the term "exochology" traditionally refers to doctrines about the end of time, or the final fate of souls, or the renewal of the physical cosmos (or some combination of these, depending on the religion). But if we try to understand what unites such doctrines and the kind of promised "end" that they concern, we find that the final state of the temporal world, or of free human spirits, or even the divine being itself according to exochological doctrines is always an instantiation of conditions (a) and (b) above, i.e., a miraculous alteration of actual states of affairs by a personal creator, which brings about goods that it is beyond the power of the relevant human agents to achieve. This holds for familiar exochological ideas, including beatiuic union with God, or hell as a self-destructing spiritual state of the evil will, or a new "kingdom" as a transformation of nature that eliminates all natural evil, or even the famous image of a last battle ending with a new life in God's direct presence. What distinguishes these familiar exochological motifs from "happy endings" like Abraham becoming, back, or Job getting his family back, is simply that the traditional exochological events are pictured as absolutely ultimate divine actualizations of the Good, or maximal victories of the Right, which means that they have no eliminable moral or natural evil standing. Thus they have an apocalyptic (time-concluding) and cosmic (all-encompassing) scope, relative to which the local miracles of narratives like the Ahluwah and similar "turning points in human time" seem only like anticipations, or mere forebearings, of a far greater "return to come." 30

Exochology in this narrow or traditional sense, which also includes the kind of blessed state after death implied in Plato's exochological analogy, is encompassed in the idea of an "eternal happiness" discussed in the Fragments and Postscript. Note that this is not obvious merely from the use of the phrase "eternal happiness," because this term is sometimes used for an immortal state of beatitude allegedly deduced from natural reason, or for a state of bliss into which one enters by mystical transport through spiritual exercises. As my conceptual definitions emphasize, too, a state of affairs it is to be conceived as a person as an exochological possibility requires that it is not thought by to be inferable from natural sources without revelation, nor to be reachable in accord with the account of truth as subjectivity given in the first half of the Postscript.

On a first reading, this text may seem to be about how to solve the paradox of the learner, or about whether there is any innate knowledge. But Cletus takes up these themes only as means to answering his primary question: namely, what is required for an "eternal consciousness" on which an "eternal happiness" can be built (11, title page). This phrase implies a good that is complete in the sense of being total and irreversible. If such a good fulfills ethical ideals yet is not within reach of our power or knowledge, and is accessible only through divine agency, it counts as an exochological possibility in the broader sense defined by conditions (a) and (b) above. In the Fragments, "the god" is defined as the source of such a possibility: he is the teacher who provides the condition that makes the eternal possible for us. Such a teacher is really a "sovereign," and if the learner met him again in another life, he could demand an accounting of the learner who had received such a decisive condition. Thus the god is more than a teacher: he is a "judge" (es. viii). This allusion to the Last Judgment is no accident, for the "eternal happiness" at issue in the Fragments is a state of spiritual salvation, and its opposite is a state of eternal damnation. 30

This narrow dual-possibility of opposite final states is the real "issue" which the Postscript is supposed to "clothe... in historical costume," in fulfillment of a parting promise in the Fragments (xv 10). This is not immediately apparent when that issue is stated objectively.


31 See Kierkegaard's lecture entitled "The Unconditional Good," which is included in his Small Exochology and Judge For Busi- ness. Ph. Walter Loomis. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1974. In his own terms, Kierkegaard writes that God's will for us is absolutely impossible, and so we must be judged according to it: "This thought is striking, all fear and separating" (221). The God to whom we have to render a final account is essentially exochological. He does not keep a reckoning, but rather "He is Himself the reckoning" (227).
Can a historical point of departure be given for an eternal consciousness; how can such a point of departure be of more than historical interest; can an eternal happiness be built as historical foundation" (264, p. 15).

In the Fragments, these three questions open an investigation of what would follow if Christianity were true, but as noted earlier, the Passioetr is in substantial agreement with the question of what it is for a given individual to relate herself in the requisite way to this promise of an eternal happiness (265). Clamarus makes us that everything is in the unconditional passion for this "highest good, called an eternal happiness" (Ibid.): It follows that it is impossible for someone who lacks such an intense interest ever to come into the promised good. As John Glen rightly emphasizes, this suggests that the "highest good" at issue is "not a satisfaction, even a complete satisfaction, of the subject's given desires, but a state of spiritual fulfillment requiring a deepening of oneself and transforming of one's desires." Clamarus explains this idea by way of the biblical image of the "beautiful virgin," who "gets the infinite passion of eternity" (the same term used for Abraham's trust) and did not keep their lamps burning for the bridegroom's arrival. When the bridegroom finally came, he declared to them, "I do not know you" (267). This story is a familiar allegory for the loss of faith in God (the bridegroom), whose arrival is analogous to the Last Judgment.

This figure is appropriate because the issue of the Fragments when subjectively interpreted concerns how, as existing moral agents, we relate to an eschatological promise that includes not only "eternal happiness" but also its opposite (damnation) for these two possibilities are dialectically inseparable. After rejecting the historical and speculative approaches to Christianity, which prevent the proper attitude to such a dual-possibility, Clamarus returns to this idea...

...the true dialectical relation is that whatever we can think the other, in the sense of thought of the other - if he has thought the one. Here I have in mind the qua-de ego of every thing in the sense mentioned in the Fragments is this: How can something historical be decisive for eternal happiness? When "decisive" is predicated in a conditional statement, it is decided, eternal damnation is also decided, whether as possible or excluded (264).

With the introduction of the term "decisive," the "issue" now appears in its fully eschatological form: can relation to something historical be decisive for the difference between salvation and damnation? Philosophical teleology from...

Socrates through Hegel posits only a single telos for our nature, whose "opposite" is merely lack, deficiency, or failure to realize it. Such a telos is impossible in its opposite, or latent throughout the process that tends naturally towards it. This is what Clamarus means in saying that, for the eudaimonist philosophical tradition, the individual "always has his eternal happiness behind him," and mediates its opposite away (265). By contrast, "Now Christianity enters and postes the disjunction: either eternal happiness or an eternal unhappiness, and a decision within time" (Ibid.). Thus the true issue in the Passioetr is an absolute either-or, even more unmediatable than the first either-or between the aesthetic and ethical life-views.

To make the passage in the "Truth in Subjectivity" chapter in which Clamarus contrasts Christianity understood objectively as a "term of terms" with Christianity as the manner that challenges the individual to the ultimate subjective concern clearly, the author reminds us that can be for the existing person in the invention of existence by placing his decisively, more decisively than other judge can place the accused, between time and eternity in time, between heaven and hell in the time of salvation (265).

The emphasis is again on our encounter with the paradox as an eschatologically decisive situation the upshot of which is not determined by our species being. If the eschatological promise in true, then the individual who is in the process of "conceiving" toward one end or the other has an existence in which this dual-possibility is constantly present until the moment of death. The existential anxiety of being-towards-death is thus properly understood as an eschatological anxiety.

This point is emphasized again in the first division of the long ch 4 on "The Issue in Fragments," where Clamarus argues in §2 that we need "Preliminary Agreement about What Christianity is" before we can adjudicate Hegelian claims about its mediation in speculative logic (369). The Hegelian assumes that Christianity is a positive doctrine and focuses on judging in truth (271), whereas in fact Christianity is a call to a subjective (i.e., volitional) relation; "it is the miraculous, the absurd, with its requirement that the individual is to exist in it" (278). In this sense, Christianity is not a set of factual claims, but rather the (infinite) task of relating oneself to its promise (377). We might say that Clamars's issue is Christianity in the...
4. Ethical Striving and Inclusive Resignation as Preconditions for Faith in the Postscript

Here is a likely objection my interpretation thus far: this way of understanding the "issue" may seem to risk reducing the Postscript's theme to enshrining a purely egocentric fear for one's soul. Indeed, as I noted above, that is exactly what Levinas understands it. I agree with John Glenn that this is not Clinacius's intention in focusing on concerns for one's "eternal happiness." For Glenn points out, Clinacius critiques "eudemonism" at several points, and he does not concede our infinite interest in our highest good as "an attempt to earn or merit it." This point is rather to focus on a good that transcends even finite value that we can help bring about, or that can make sense to intend as a goal of our actions. Clinacius calls this our "absolute value" (cpr 387), the same term used in Fear and Trembling to refer to that towards which the ethical is "suspended," which implies that in some sense we make it our purpose to seek this value (a question to which I return below). But it is clearly not an absolute ends that we can intelligibly will as final (cpr 391), and to regard it this way "converts an eternal happiness into a prize on a Christmas tree," or "an unusually fat liebhaber" (cpr 392). Thus Glenn is right that Clinacius's view is "close to that of Kant, who argues that conviction of the existence of God, for rewards of virtue and punishment for vice, can, and properly should, only follow moral commitment, not be its basis" or goal. In other words, our own eternal good is not our aim in an ordinary sense.

Similarly, Chris Arroyo argues that in Works of Love, "when Kierkegaard speaks of the hope of the lover for the eternal, . . . should not be seen as a motivation for the self's actions, but rather as an unintended consequence to participating in the authentic love relationship." 28 still, the good that is the object of faith is not merely a side-effect; it is intimately connected with the meaning of moral value. Our hope for the transcendental good that cannot be described in any aesthetic terms (precisely because it is ekaological) is not a motive, but it is an infinite trust in a final贯彻 of the ethical, a proof that our ethical striving has an ultimate meaning that we cannot give it. Thus the "final fulfillment" or "ultimate occasion" in which the religious agent trusts is not conceived as a private boon, but rather as the perfect success of all ethical ideality, the absolute vindication of goodness, the state in which amor vincenti estatis. Kierkegaard might have made this clearer by calling this outcome "eternal meaningfulness" rather than using more ekaological terminology.

My argument for this interpretation is that, like Silencio in Fear and Trembling, Clinacius regards a pure moral will to the good for its own sake as the precondition for any faith-relation to the paradoxes of ekaological possibility. This theme is taken up at several different points in the Postscript, but first in a discussion of becoming-wards-death. In commenting on Lessing, Clinacius notes that "existence relation to the truth" requires a negative recognition that "trust in life" has no certain finite basis, since "the possibility of death is present at every moment" (cpr 82). In terms of my formula for existential faith, our mortality constitutes a standing obstacle to our power to realize the good even when we can and do will it. Keeping freedom in mind that constitutes the maximal form of infinite resignation, saving me from the illusion that I have the power to guarantee any actual results in the world by my own effort. The ethical will purify this kind of resignation regarding right intention and motive, not the actual outcome, as the measure of its worth (cpr 136) -- as in Kant's conception of the good will (compare Grundwerk 394). Thus Iy the ethical enthusiasm consists in willing to the utmost of one's capability, but also, elevated by divine jest, in never thinking whether or not one thereby achieves something (cpr 135). For "ethical striving in itself" is not guaranteed to achieve anything in the temporal world, so success always involves an additional element of luck or "Governance" (depending on your life-view). Hence the pure moral agent's "earnestness is his own inner life,"
which is independent of the result (cfr 139). As Celerinus comments later, the "enthymematic" ethical infinite passion breaks with all "sagacities of patriness" or consequentialists (cfr 569).

The relation between such an ethical will and religiousness is made clearest in the second division of ch. 4 in Claramus's discussion of the three "expressions of exist universal path." Before examining a few key passages, it will help to have a structural outline of this complex part of the text. Division two begins with the final expression of the "essence." Followed by the distinction of two components with: (a) the individual relation to the promise of an eternal happiness depending on the historical-absolute. This is Claramus's way of distinguishing the features of Christian faith that is common to the structure of all authentic religiousness (element a) and the feature that is unique to Christian faith (element b). Thus all authentic faith is absolute paths towards an eternal happiness (e.g. Socrate's seeking ecstasy on an uncertain immortality), but only Christian faith conceives this eternal happiness as depending on the eternal-in-time, or absolute paradox. Here is an outline listing the topics of the main subsections under each part:

Division 2

A. Existential Paths as trust in an eternal happiness (transcending all finite ends)

1. The Initial Expression: the paths of resignation as the first step in relating absolutely to the absolute ethics.

2. The Initial Expression: existential paths as suffering in the religious sense of doing to oneself (which is a continuation of resignation).

3. The Initial Expression: existential paths as recognizing infinite or categorial-ethical, i.e., the totality of our failure to fulfill ethical obligations in the world of time (and yielding paths of resignation).

The intermediate clause between A and B summarizes religiousness as distinguished from aesthetic categories such as the "mansion" (cfr 578).

B. The clause becomes "based..." becomes the most absolute to the promised eternal happiness in relation in time to something that is historical in such a way that its comprehension includes that which according to its nature cannot become historical and consequently must become truth by virtue of the absurd (cfr 103).

1. Faith in eternal happiness is not directly, but conditional on a relation to some existing non-external.

2. Faith in eternal happiness based on faith in something historical or temporally existing.

3. Faiths in eternal happiness based on faith in the absolute, the eternal, the God-Man (or Incarnation).

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20 I am indebted to Gilbert Holm for pointing out the significance of these passages to me in a paper that he delivered at Fordham University during the fall semester, 2004.

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Appendix A lists the discussion back to the fragment by relating God-in-time as the condition to:

a. The consciousness of sin,
b. The possibility of offense,
c. The pain of sympathy (which relates to the eschatic claims of orthodox Christianity).

This outline summarizes over two hundred pages (cfr 385-586). The Intermediate Clause is helpful in confirming interpretative elements of this outline. In particular, that everything in the three expressions of existential paths relates to "Religiousness A" rather than to "the specifically Christian religiousness" (cfr 553): that these three expressions are "resignation-suffering, the totality of guilt-consciousness" (cfr 599); that Religiousness A is "the relation to an eternal happiness that is not conditioned" by anything outside the individual's inner attitude towards this possibility (cfr 586); and finally that "Religiousness A" is the precondition of b (cfr 531). It follows that any conditions of a are also conditions of b or "faith" in the narrower Christian sense. As described in the "Initial Expression," one of these conditions of a is ethical willing for the religious "has passed through the ethical and has it in itself" (cfr 586), meaning that religious attitudes still include ethical surviving, choices, or "the moment of taking responsibility" (cfr 389, note 44).

At its extreme, ethical inclination leads an individual to give up everything great or aesthetically valuable if necessary to save himself from wrongdoing (cfr 391). This purity of will is also part of the absoluteness of the highest ethics, which means "absolutely transforms his existence" in the sense that he would be willing to give up every other finite good for it (cfr 390). Thus, part of the reason why Claramus says that "the highest ethics must be willed for its own sake" (cfr 391), as if it were a tangleable goal, is that the ethical care be willed for its own sake purely without our moral motivation being conditioned on outward success or results in temporal actuality (and we can form a higher-order intentions to achieve this purity). Such a motivational resolve is not enveloped in the "outcome" (cfr 391). In Pain and Suffering, infinite resignations are the test of such purity, for it requires that ethical willing continue even without any aesthetic hope of success. Relating absolutely to the absolute ethics involves the same condition.

The individual can thus easily examine how he relates himself to an eternal happiness or whether he relates himself to it. He needs only to allow himself to inspect his inner immediacy with all its desires etc. If he finds a single fixed point, an obscurity, it is not relating himself to an eternal happiness (cfr 394, note 44).

21 Similarly, Anti-Claramus tells us that the most common form of "Logos over the earth" does not mean strict resignation, "the real break with immediacy," because the agent lacks "real self-reflection on ethical reflections for that." G. Kaufmann, S. F. Strohm (After Death, 7); Howard V. Hong and Lily L. Hong, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 35.
which is independent of the result (cf. 199). As Clough comments here: the "emotional" object's influence passes breaks with all "aesthetic pattern" or consequence (cup 599).

The relation between such an ethical will and religiosity is made clearest in the second division of 6. 4 in Clough's discussion of the three "expressions of existential paths." Before examining a few key passages, it will help to have a structural outline of this complex part of the text. The division begins with the final restatement of the "face," followed by the distinction of two components within it: (a) the individual's relation to the promise of an eternal happiness per se, and (b) this relation depending on the historical absurd. This is Clough's way of distinguishing the feature of Christian faith that structures the confused religiosity (element A) and the feature that is unique to Christian faith (element B). Thus all authentic faith is absolute paths towards an eternal happiness (e.g. Socrates's seeking everything on an uncertain immortality), but only Christian faith conceives this eternal happiness as depending on the eternal-in-time, or absolute, paradox. Here is an outline listing the topics of the main subsections under each part.

**Division 2**

A. Existential Paths as trust in an eternal happiness (transcending all finite end).

1. The Existential Expression: The path of renunciation as the first step in relating absolutely to the absolute, Way.
2. The Emotional Expression: Existential paths as suffering as the religious sense of giving up (which is a continuation of. renunciation).
3. The Decision Expression: Existential paths as searching for or central goal, i.e. the totality of our future to ethical or moral, the ultimate expression of our existence. Religiosity (cup 39).

B. The theme becomes "absolutely," because relation to the proper existential happiness depends on relation to the thing that is "historical" in such a way that its composition includes that which according to its nature cannot be historical and consequently must become that by nature of the absurd (cup 383).

1. Faith in eternal happiness is not directly, but consistent with a relation to something non-eternal.
2. Faith in eternal happiness based on faith in something historical or temporally existing.
3. Faith in eternal happiness based on faith in the absolute paradox, the eternal life, the God Man (cup 349).

If I am misled, I am other Belros for pointing out the significance of these passages as in a paper that is available at Foundation University during the fall semester, 2004.

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Appendix A. It cites the discussion back to the Protagoras by relating God, in-time as the condition in:

a. The consciousness of sin.

b. The possibility of efficacy.

c. The pain of sympathy (which relates to the existential claims of Aristotle and Christianity).

This outline summarizes over two hundred pages (cup 385-586). The Intermediate Clause is helpful in confirming interpretative elements of this outline: in particular that everything in the three expressions of existential paths refers to "Religiousness x" rather than to "the specifically religiously" (cup 558); that the value expressions are "renunciation - suffering - the totality of guilt consciousness" (cup 599), that Religiousness x is "the relation to eternal happiness that is unconditioned" by anything outside the individual's toward attitude towards this possibility (cup 556); and finally that "Religiousness x" is the precondition of all (cup 556). It follows that any conditions of x are also conditions of x or faith in the narrowest Christian sense. As described in the "Initial Expression," one of these conditions of x is ethical-volitional; for the religious has passed through the ethical and has it in itself (cup 388), meaning that religious attitudes still include ethical striving, chosen, or "the moment of taking responsibility" (cup 389, note **). At its extreme, ethical striving leads an individual to give up everything great or aesthetically valuable if necessary to save himself from wrongdoing (cup 391). This purity of will is also part of the absoluteness of the highest ethical, which must "absolutely transform his existence" in the sense that he would be willing to give up every other final for it (cup 393). Thus, part of the reason why Clough says that "the highest ethical will be willing for its own sake" (cup 393), as if it were a targetable goal, is that ethical can be willing for its own sake purely without our moral worth being conditioned on outward success or results to temporal satisfaction (and we can form a higher order intention to achieve this purity). Such a volitional resolve is not embodied in the "outcomes" (cup 398). In Fear and Trembling, infinite resigna-
tion is the test of each purity, for it waterfronts that ethical striving continues even without any aesthetic hope of success. Relating absolutely to the ethical, involves the same condition.

The individual can only examine how he relates himself to an eternal happiness or whether he relates himself to it. He needs only to allow sympathetic to inspect his entire examination with its desires, it if he finds a single moral point, are obscurity; he is no relation to himself to an eternal happiness (cup 394, my index).

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Similarly, Clough comments on the three common cause of "depth" (cup 395) where the steps not only extinguish renunciation, "the moral with immediate" because the agent lack- "the self-reflection or ethical reflection for that," U.S. Kierkegaard, B. - Science and Ethics, 1949, p. 18. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Home, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 55.
Moreover, this resignation must be continual (civ 330), and it is a voluntary movement "of collecting oneself, of choice" (civ 400). This corresponds to Seneca's description of the resigned will as nullified in its purpose.

Yet in the fragments "of the whole, if the resignee is clearly the last stage before death, whereas relating absolutely to the absolute will is part of the 'ethical-religious' stage or resignations. There is no inconsistency here, though because divine resignation is the highest state of an ethical will is not a definite stopping-point. In Kierkegaard's view, the human person in this state really needs ethical-religious hope. Thus, according to Clai-mer, this individual would say that "I have transformed my existence in such a way that, if I hoped for this life alone, I would be the most wretched of all people" (civ 389, note 134). So, while he describes it naturally ascribes to the individual agent towards the religious. Resignation has made the individual free or has seen to it. He faces toward an eternal happiness as the absolute will (civ 400), which is a religious response to the same event for Kierkegaard's view, in the human person through the religious resignation. Religion has made the individual agent. And the individual agent's "how" is the world. "He lives in the finite, but he does not have life in it. He is a stranger in the world of finitude," through the outward distinction of its fundamental character (civ 410). This idea of ethical resignation in Kierkegaard's view is developed in the "Essential Expression," where, it becomes religious "suffering" because the individual recognises that resignation itself is an inherent task that he can never perfectly perform (civ 423). Yet he wills this suffering as essential to maintaining his absolute relation to the absolute (civ 423). In the "Definic Expression," we also see that our ethical will always fails to meet the infinite demands of the ethical. At this limit, the human agent is infinitely resigned not just about the impossibility of guaranteeing outward results by her own power, but also about her own capacity to sustain a good well according to (civ 533). It is clear here that resignation in this form, as the totality of guilt-consciousness that cannot be directly expressed and for which no adequate compensation can be made (civ 538-539), is the absolute limit of ethical consciousness, for it requires infinite obligations or perfectionist ideals that surpass any "comparative, conventional, extrinsic, and bourgeois concepts of the ethical" (civ 546). This supports my claim that Kierkegaard's religious adds something to the highest form of ethical consciousness (i.e., eschelae). The total on guilt-consciousness is beyond mere "Sichheit", yet still resigning in it. It is not faith, though it does propose the existing individual towards faith, for now the absolutely best, has become for him absolutely the only comfort," yet the residual probability of attaining eternal happiness is reduced to its minimum (civ 569) (though it is not yet blocked by this, which adds a further level of tension).

119 This is a point in which the absolute relation can require the renunciation of all finite goals (civ 400).

120 This agrees with Mortal's own argument that Clai-mer does not mean that his death is not voluntary should be 'definite at all times' as the object of each new individual, but
S. 3. and 4. The Absolute Paradox as the Most Radical Kind of Eschatological Possibility

Thus infinite resignation, whose highest form is the totality of guilt, remains the transition-point from the ethical into the religious in the Poet-

istry. As Anti-Climacus says, the idea that "with God, everything is possible" cannot be properly appreciated "until a person is brought to his extremity, when human power is utterly exhausted." The difference from Fear

and Trembling is only this: in the Postscript, Climacus recognizes that the consolation that mere resignation first takes the form of an eternal good outside of time, or beyond the life. Given the patient resignation that can transcend the temporal world and all earthly goods, it seems that the individual and eternal happiness cannot be "seen in" (cf. 589). Thus faith takes the form we see in Socrates: absolute trust in the eschatological possibility that death leads to an immortality beyond time (cf. 201), held fast as an "objective uncertainty" (cf. 203). This existence remains "abandoned" in the generic sense that I defined earlier, since it is a realization of the good in some order of being that is possible only by divine power beyond our knowledge.

But Climacus introduces an important refinement to the model found in Fear and Trembling: the eternal life in trust of which Socrates risks all is "not at all paradoxical in itself, but only by being related to an existing person" (cf. 203). Thus it is the fact that a religiously finite tem-

poral agent, I trust in an absolute reformation for the good for which I have no rational grounds: by the fact of my eternal ethical knowledge and volitional capacities, is still possible in principle for me to will freely from now on. This is what Climacus means by his enigmatic expression: "even the decisive category of guilt-consciousness is still within immanence." (cf. 570) And that religiously a retains the possible escape of "withdrawing into the eternal behind it" (cf. 572: also see 582).

Kierkegaard's Postscript in Light of Fear and Trembling

phrase "eternity behind" is meant to indicate a relation between the concept of eschatological hope and the ethical-universal. Although eternal life after death requires a divine power that is not essential to the "eternal" in the sense of universal ethical ideals, they share the quality of transcendent time, and so they are assimilated in Socratic religiousness. Otherwise put, in religiousness, a, immortality is not an eternity above time is conceived as a return to an eternity that was already innately accessible in one's essence (or immanently "behind" one, accessible to recollection). Relatedly, in religiosity, a, the transitional is only temporarily suspended towards the absolute trinity of immortal life and they never become fully homogenous or disconnected. Religiosity a thus has no preconditions beyond the immanent ethical knowledge and volitional powers that make possible infinite resignation. This is what Climacus means in the Intermediate Choice in saying that Religiosity a could have insisted in paganism because it "has only universal human nature as its presupposition." (cf. 359)

By contrast, sin-consciousness is the key to religiousness a, because sin is a more radical teleological suspension of the ethical (cf. 267), going beyond the totality of guilt (which is a de facto universal condition) to a particular offshoot in time that makes our individual moral of ethical purity absolutely inaccessible to us (cf. 532). Consciousness of sin is the "break" that prevents "immersion by way of recollection through regeneration into the eternal" (cf. 583), i.e., the eternal as immanent that lies behind or above. In sin, I have placed myself outside the ethical to time (cf. 267), for "the individual is not a sinner from eternity" (cf. 583) (reflecting how he as eternal-as-origin behind me). Due to this choice in the time of my own life, my immediate return after death to the eternal "behind" me is no longer an objectively uncertain eschatological possibility: it is spiritually impossible, since sin is an eternally change in time by which "the back door of recollection is forever closed" (cf. 208).

In another enigmatic phrase, Climacus describes this state as one in which "eternity has been accentuated a second time" (cf. 224) which means that in addition to the general metaphysical difference between any finite existing agent and the eternal, there is now a specific opposition between this individual and the source of eschatological possibilities, a volitional opposition chosen in the particular agent's life. So it is now doubtlessly superlative that she could enter into an eschatologically perfect state. To overcome this radical heterogeneity, the divine cannot be merely an airimoral source of eschatological possibilities.
that converges with the eternal goal of universal norms. It must enter into itself to restore the agent's ability to ethically realize, resigning entirely, and trust in the eternal purpose of the eternal horizons.

This explains why Climacus sometimes describes the break in terms of the term of divinity of which it is capable to overcome: "If a break is to establish itself, the eternal itself must define itself as something, as in time, as historical, whereby the existing person and the eternal in time have eternity between them." One of the miracles and the corresponding absolute absurdity of its overcoming is why the "absolute paradox" has to take the form that it does: only God coming into time can avoid the "absolute difference" of the eternal.5 Thus, the "absolute paradox" is also specifically identified with the Incarnation in a few passages, but it is crucial to see that Kierkegaard does not just assume the Christian teaching of the Incarnation and define faith as belief in this teaching. Rather, he starts from sin as a revealed ontological difference arising within time, and from this derives the need for God to come. Christ is a specific token of this type, and the term "absolute paradox" stands for the type.6

Thus the term "absolute paradox" has two senses that are more foundational than the immediate Christ. First, it stands for that which can make possible doubly-paradoxical eschatological events, such as the salvation of a sinner. Second, it stands for a state of affairs that does not merely appear to be "absurd" because of our finite understanding, or relative to the human agent (as immortality is uncertain for Socrates, and maximally uncertain in the total judgment of guilt). Rather, this possible state appears to be paradoxical in itself as well (and thus doubly absurd),7 because it involves the God-in-time; this seems to be a metaphysical paradox, since the divine is by nature eternal and unchanging (see 770). The absurdity in the strict sense (limited to a) is used in the same way to describe the quasi-fact that the eternal truth has come into existence in time, that God has come into existence, has been born, grown up, etc. (cfr 210). The salvation of the sinner is absolutely paradoxical in both these senses because it is possible only given "the power to annul the past" and this in turn is "bound up with God having existed in time" (cfr 224).

5 For in that case, as Climacus says, one does not "have the relation to an eternal happiness" upon any event in time; "but has the relation to an eternal happiness as such for the transformation of existence" (cfr 574). Such an understands must be accessible to the agent, but this is what one does not.

6 At this point, a parenthetical note indicates that this is the Absolute Paradox described earlier.

7 On the reading, then, it is consistent with Kierkegaardian analysis that there could be other tokens of this type besides the alleged feats of the Man-God approximately 2006 years ago. But I do not pursue this question.

8 This is what Climacus means in saying that "inward of objective uncertainty, there is here the certainty, that, viewed objectively, it is the absurd" (cfr 210).
Thus the context of the absolute paradox can be restated in terms of the model used in explaining Fear and Trembling. In situ, the obstacle to the ethical ideal to be realized through the creative power of God is of a special kind:

(i) it makes the ethical good temporally impossible until the obstacle itself is removed in time;

(ii) the obstacle can be removed in time only if the divine power that makes eschatological goods possible itself enters into created time, synthesizing time and eternity into a new order of being.

Notice that (i) is not only the Incarnation, but also the idea of heaven as a hereafter existing not outside of time, but in a new temporal order after the end of time as we know it.

Several passages in the final sections of the long chap. iv suggest that Kierkegaard had precisely this in mind. In particular, the first section of it is titled: "The Dialectical Contradiction That Consists in the Break: To Expect an Eternal Happiness in Time, Through a Relation to Something Else in Time." Thus the absolute paradox is not simply that our eternal happiness depends on faith in an incarnate divinity: it is also a recognition of the highest triad as coming "in Time." What this means is indicated by Clasmus’s subsequent description of "the distinction between here and hereafter" as the "paradoxical accentuation of existence." In other words, salvation does not occur as a purely spiritual state outside time, but in a hereafter that is both spiritual and physical/temporal. The image in Christian doctrine that best corresponds to this absolutely paradoxical kind of eschatological state would be resurrection of the body. However, such a hereafter is located some finite distance off in the simple future: it is a new order of time beginning out of an already-temporal existence—a new state that is doubly temporal or stamped a second time with existence, as Clasmus says. Heaven in this sense is not a new eternity in front of us, rather than behind us: thus instead of returning to the godly innermost, in the individual in faith type is "now moves forward in order to become eternal in time through the relation to the god in-time" (CP 383-84).

Earlier in the text, the absolute paradox is described the same way: although the subject is prevented from sin by returning from his own power to his original nature, "now the eternal, essential truth is not behind him but has come in front of him by existing itself," so that he has to relate himself to it as historical (CP 209). The implication is that the ethical itself becomes more than it was: or, progressive in the eschatological state to come: "with regard to the conception of God, this means that he himself is moved, changed" (CP 433, note **). The Christian symbol for this idea would be the Kingdom of God on Earth, i.e., the "New Jerusalem." 47

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47 I have explored this radical idea in my essay "Eschatology and the Best Possible Hereafter." In: Literature and Abortion, 23 (2003), pp. 16-32.

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In sum, Kierkegaard’s conception of the Incarnation as absolutely paradoxical is meant to bring out its eschatological implications, in particular the idea of the hereafter as a sacred state in which the life of this world is unified with the being of God. This is the real meaning of the "second immediacy" or higher aesthetic that follows ethical resignation. As Westphal notes, although Clasmus gives us no graven images of the highest good, his text implies that "it will involve transformation into a new immediacy to which one will not need to die..." Thus the context of the eschatological possibility in which the faithful person stands in relation to Abraham in and to the person trusts in the inalienable and improvable possibility of an immortal blessedness outside time, but in it, the person trusts in an intrinsically paradoxical possibility of an eschatological perfection that still occurs in time—time redoubled beyond the apocalypse— which appears absolutely absurd to human reason; 48-faith is "a relation to an eternal happiness that is not conditioned" by any historical particularity, whereas in 8-faith, it is conditioned by "a definite something that qualifies the eternal happiness more specifically... not by qualifying more specifically the individual’s appropriation of it but by qualifying more specifically the eternal happiness" (CP 516). Thus the nature of the eternal happiness itself, and not just our faith relation to it, has altered in relativism. 49

Thus the formula for existential faith in Fear and Trembling turns out to apply best to Religiosus x, which is in an absolute actualization of the cosmic good in time despite the maximum obstacle. Three key conclusions should be drawn from this finding. First, there is one unified conception of religious faith in Kierkegaard’s pseudo-philosophical works, although it covers absolute trust in two different kinds of eschatological possibility, one of which is more radical than the other. Second, the only divine command essential to the "absolute paradox" of the Pantomime is the command to have faith in its revelation. Since we have shown that the paradox of the absurd in Fear and Trembling shares the same general structure as the absolute paradox, it follows that the only divine command essential to the theological suspension of the ethical is the command to have existential faith, i.e. to make eschatological possibility one’s absolute triad; pursuing the ethical in the light of eschatological hope.

Third, Abraham’s faith anticipates Christology in a way that is neither merely symbolic nor arithematic. Although Abraham’s particular obstacle is peculiar to this case, it is even more mysterious than xio, Abraham’s faith is in a good that will be miraculously fulfilled in time. It now seems likely

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48 Given previous passages in which Clasmus clearly means that "eternal happiness itself is temporally qualified due to the divine command of God in time," but he says this remains without explanation (ibid., loc. cit. 209). Although Clasmus’s meaning is unclear, I hope to explore it here.

that Kierkegaard chose the example of the Akedah because the content of Abraham's faith resembles the content of the absolute paradox in its temporality. The difference is that Abraham's faith is in the fulfillment of a specific promise for his lifetime, rather than in the ultimate or all-embracing actualization of the Good that we used to call the Apocalypse. Kierkegaard's portrayal of Religiousness B in the Postscript suggests that the eternal happiness that Christianity promises is similarly connected with the temporal world. It should not be imagined as a disembodied Platonic heaven, but as a hallowing of time itself in a perfected state of the created cosmos, whose ultimate reality we can imagine only through a glass darkly. That is a possibility for which we might risk everything, a hope worth embracing with absolute pathos.

Kierkegaard and the Phenomenality of Desire:
Existential Phenomenology in the First Edifying Discourse

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ABSTRACT: Against expectations, Kierkegaard turns out to have sometimes been a phenomenologist. Specifically in his "Edifying Discourses," though perhaps elsewhere, one finds a style of thinking and interpretive rigor both close to some features of Husserlian and Heideggerian thought, and more capable of handling religious phenomena. Where is a matter of purity of heart and willing one thing, it is of course a matter of desire. One may read the first of the "Edifying Discourses" as a phenomenological approach to various modalities of Christian life - the paradoxical, the enigmatic, and the oblique - by which what cannot be contained solely within being and appearing nonetheless enters there and taps its conventions. But to pass from Husserl and Heidegger to Kierkegaard is to arrive at a perspective from which the security of the starting point is no longer evident.

KEY WORDS: Desire; Heidegger, Martin (1889-1976); Husserl, Edmund (1859-1938); Kierkegaard, Soren (1813-1855); Phenomenology; Purity of Heart; Religion.

RESUMO: Ao contrário daquilo que normalmente se espera, Kierkegaard revela-se frequentemente um verdadeiro fenomenólogo. Particularmente nos seus "Discursos Edificantes", ainda que raramente nos outros lugares também, podemos encontrar um estilo de pensar e o rigor interpretativo próximos de algumas características do pensamento que de Husserl quer de Heidegger, e capaz de falar com fenômenos de índole religiosa. Ora onde quer que se trate da pureza do coração e de querer apenas uma coisa, o assunto tem a ver com desejo. Nesse sentido, o autor do artigo sugere uma leitura do primeiro dos "Discursos Edificantes" como sendo uma abordagem fenomenológica a diversas modalidades da vida cristã - o paradoxal, o enigmático, e o oblíquo - mediante as quais aquilo que não pode ser contido apenas dentro de ser e de aparecer, contudo, aí aparece e subleva as suas convenções. Mas passar de Husserl e Heidegger para Kierkegaard, diz o autor, e chegar a uma perspectiva a partir da qual a segurança do ponto de partida não é mais evidente.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Desejo; Fenomenologia; Heidegger, Martin (1889-1976); Husserl, Edmund (1859-1938); Kierkegaard, Soren (1813-1855); Pura de Coração; Religião.

* Boston College (Chesnut Hill, Mass. - USA). The main reference of this article is the following: KIERKEGAARD, Soren - Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing. Trans. D. Steele. New York: Harper, 1948.