A selected glance at how Kierkegaard stages the problem of what it is to become a Christian in his initial aesthetic authorship.

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A SELECTED GLANCE AT HOW KIERKEGAARD STAGES THE
PROBLEM OF WHAT IT IS TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN
IN HIS INITIAL AESTHETIC AUTHORSHIP

by

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The purpose of this paper is to dispel the opinion that Kierkegaard as a religious genius is unreadable, and point out what Kierkegaard is attempting to do. So often, Kierkegaard is regarded the father (in wedlock or out) of existentialism and as such considered to be fantastically difficult. I am now convinced that the truth of the matter rests rather in the fact that Christianity is so non-existent in our culture that any Christian would be difficult to understand.

Admittedly, Kierkegaard as a Christian felt it necessary to point out, with all the subjective manipulations necessary, the weaknesses of any logical system of living that precludes the infinite. But this is simply for those who need such an investigation in order to be indirectly confronted with the possibility of religion. The pseudonymous authors demand as much tedious reading as one can endure; until one is finally exhausted outside the category of the infinite. The simplicity of the Edifying Discourses does not, however, demand such subjective endurance.

My intention is to let both the Kierkegaard of the pseudonymous literature and the Kierkegaard of the Edifying Discourses stand side by side, and be recognized in that relationship intended by the author.
The resulting insights of this paper could be summarized in these sentences:

1. Kierkegaard is from beginning to end a religious author.

2. A proper rendering of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous means of communication demands an understanding of Socratic irony.

3. The secret of understanding Kierkegaard's aesthetic authorship lies in the comparison of the pseudonymous literature and the Edifying Discourses.

4. For Kierkegaard the passion of the believer is concerned not with time, place or state of being but with the infinite. Time, place and state of being serve to strengthen the inner man.

5. The believer has overcome the future, the non-believer is its slave.

6. If repetition is not possible religion is simply an adjunct to philosophy.

7. The reality of conversion for Kierkegaard consists of orthodox Christianity which is the only real substitute for modern doubt.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Principally I will to thank God for this essay. Secondly I thank Michele who for love and friendship makes writing a joy. I thank Søren Kierkegaard and Tim Suttor who are quite capable of turning momentary MA theses into divine comedies. And I thank Gene Malley who understands that the nature of friendship keeps both hope in the present and food on the table.
The nature of Kierkegaard's authorship demands special care. To quote the author of the *Edifying Discourses* and then to quote one of the pseudonymous authors as if there is no distinction is to destroy the delicate balance and earnest purpose of Kierkegaard's overall genius. In order to respect the entire production, I have chosen to distinguish the various writers within Kierkegaard's authorship. When the name Kierkegaard is used, I will be referring to that man who is the author of an MA thesis, the author of several pseudonymous works, and the author of the *Edifying Discourses*. When the name Søren Kierkegaard is used I will be referring to that man of faith who is the author of the *Edifying Discourses*. When I use the title Magister Kierkegaard I will be referring to the writer of the MA thesis entitled *The Concept of Irony*. And when a particular pseudonymous name is used, I will be referring to that specific pseudonymous personality. If no such distinction is made a critical appraisal is impossible and the sharpness of Kierkegaard's genius is melted down into the ambiguity of mediocre generality.

In one way, the entire purpose of this paper is to let the authorship of Kierkegaard be what it is. The confusion

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1 The works are: *Either/Or*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Repetition* and *Johannes Climacus or, De Omnibus Dubitantibus Est*.,
surrounding Kierkegaard's appeal and the tiresome adjective of existential attributed so often to him makes it evident that some distinction must be made somewhere. Kierkegaard himself witnessed a radical distinction in his own division of authorship. Specifying this division as a means of revealing Kierkegaard's purpose is my intention. Once the apologetic nature of Kierkegaard's task is made central, undue concern for Kierkegaard's duplicity of authorship is set by the wayside and Kierkegaard can get on with his God-given task of re-introducing Christianity into Christendom.
Part I
An Initial Look at Kierkegaard's Poetic Structure
Chapter 1. Hermeneutics

Either/Or: A Fragment of Life edited by Victor Eremita in two volumes was published February 20, 1843. Less than three months later on May 16, 1843 Two Edifying Discourses signed Søren Kierkegaard was published. Repetition: An Essay in Experimental Psychology written by Constantine Constantius and Fear and Trembling: A Dialectical Lyric written by Johannes de Silentio were published on October 16, 1843. On that same day in 1843 Three Edifying Discourses signed Søren Kierkegaard was published.

Comparing this duplicity of publication, in order to discern Kierkegaard's authentication of the problem "how one is to become a Christian" constitutes the matter of this essay. Or, in other words, the question being asked here is: "In what sense does there exist an apologetic in Kierkegaard's initial aesthetic authorship?" The precise interest of the undertaking arises from the fact that Kierkegaard considered himself to be, from beginning to end, a religious author. By its very definition within Kierkegaard's vocabulary, religion refers to something other than philosophy, psychology, sociology, poetry, history, music, ethics or humanism. Understanding religion in

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this manner, Kierkegaard is open to the possibility of traditional apologetics.¹

Kierkegaard's genius is directed toward a single goal, though it expresses itself in two distinct ways. This is made evident by the split publications of the pseudonymous literature and the Edifying Discourses. Each word used by the pseudonymous surrogates is understood in relation to German culture. The same word used by Søren Kierkegaard is understood in the context of Christian tradition which receives its wisdom from God and not the nearest culture, be it grand or insignificant.

Translation of these words from the Danish into English (or any other language) has the responsibility of first of all being understood in the context of the Danish word itself. If the Danish word is to be interpreted solely within the framework of German culture (Hegel and Goethe) then it loses the context of Kierkegaard's poetic. Kierkegaard's Danish vocabulary like that of Dante's Italian is at work establishing Christianity within a linguistic framework. (This is the job of apologetics.) Kierkegaard states that he is witnessing the reintroduction of Christianity into Christendom. He does this by abandoning all German-Romantic overtones in vocabulary and by re-establishing the meanings of words in strict accord to the one Christian tradition. For Kierkegaard Christianity is only one thing and

¹ Traditional apologetics is understood in the words of Peter and John: "So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge: for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.'" Acts 4:18-20.
not something else. If the words used by a culture destroy this one meaning of Christianity they must be overcome (this again, is the precise job of apologetics), not by mediating them back into Christianity as if such a process is possible but by totally rejecting their initial assumptions. It is one thing to mediate and mediate and mediate the dialectics of a system of logic with the impossible hope of establishing a proper place for religion (which is anything more than logical) and another thing to edify within a Christian apologetic in hope of witnessing an already existent Christian Tradition. For a Christian apologetics to be possible a one-ness with Christian Tradition is demanded. Otherwise the apologetics does not find its meaning and strength in the heart of Christianity but somewhere else. (Such as in religious customs, new churches, national identities, humanism, agnosticism, pluralism, or personal feelings.)

Kierkegaard accomplishes a Christian apologetic positively in the Edifying Discourses where he establishes contemporary words in their relationship to Christian Tradition; and when he coins new words which have their basis in something other than historical German Romanticism. (One such word is "repetition.") In the pseudonymous literature he accomplishes this negatively by showing the interesting weaknesses of the finite-bound Germanic vocabulary, left floating about in the subjective

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2 As if the breeding of 10,000 chickens would finally produce a German short-hair pointer. I have known some people who think such a process is possible because the pointer happened to like chickens.
ambiguity of a "Christendom."

The apologetic nature of Kierkegaard's initial authorship is not concerned with leading one by argument directly into Christianity. Nor is it concerned with rejecting all serious use of language for religious expression. It is neither an authoritarian mandate, nor a holier-than-thou nominalism.

What James Collins says about Kierkegaard's aesthetic stage of authorship is partially true:

But it must be remembered that this religious reason behind the use of the pseudonym neither dominant nor incisive, when the aesthetic project was started.

Yet Kierkegaard's insights unfold in such comprehensive and dialectical flashes that to say that the "religious reason was neither dominant nor incisive" is to put an order into Kierkegaard's authorship which is itself neither dominant nor incisive at this stage in the authorship. A proper rendering of the aesthetic stage of Kierkegaard's writing requires neither an ordering nor a re-ordering but rather an aesthetical testimony.

Several categorical determinants have been imposed on Kierkegaard's authorship in order to better understand it. Few help. Plot is absent and the criss-cross of dialectics does not respond to the facile hand of form criticism. It is precisely

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4 In a similar fashion you would not be witnessing the intended aesthetical beauty of D Vinci's "Last Supper" if you subjected your analysis simply to its mathematical exactness.
the matter of form that Kierkegaard is seeking to put back into its place. Or as editor Victor Eremita puts it:

These papers (of authors A and B) have afforded me an insight into the lives of two men, which has confirmed my hunch that the external is not the internal.

Taking the cue from Kierkegaard, Collins presents the four stages in Kierkegaard's thought as: aesthetical, ethical, religion A (Immanent), and religion B (Transcendent). These stages were derived from Kierkegaard himself, but of themselves they could impose an overly-philosophical and misleading process of development on his authorship. Taken as a whole I am not convinced that Collins, at this point, escapes his own philosophical tendency to restructure or structure improperly the legitimate aesthetic present in Kierkegaard's poetic productivity.

Kierkegaard sums up the whole of his aesthetic work in five statements:

1. That "Christendom" is a prodigious illusion.
2. That if real success is to attend the effort to bring man to a definite position, one must first of all take pains to find Him where he is and begin there.
3. The illusion that religion and Christianity are something one first has recourse to when one grows older.
4. That even if a man will not follow where one endeavours to lead him, one thing it is still possible to do for him—compel him to take notice.
5. That the whole of the aesthetic work, viewed in relation to the work as a whole is a deception—understanding this word, however in a

5 Søren Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Volume I, Translated by David F. Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson with revisions and a foreword by Howard A. Johnson (Garden City, 1953), p.4.
special sense. (...One can deceive a person for the truth's sake, and, to recall old Socrates, one can deceive a person into the truth.)

These later observations\(^7\) of Kierkegaard are helpful in retrospect and make it evident that Kierkegaard has a decisive purpose in his aesthetic authorship. They should not, however, distract the reader from the diverse and dialectical character of his writings which took by storm the cultured Hegelians.

The means of communication employed by Kierkegaard in the pseudonymous half of the aesthetic composition is indirect. Just as Socrates uses indirect communication in a situation where vain conceit has first to be disposed of, Kierkegaard uses indirect communication in a situation where the vain conceit of Christendom had to be disposed of before one was able to talk of Christianity.

For Socrates the proper job of philosophy was to strip away all idle words and let the truth stand as it is. Often, to reach the heart of an argument, it was necessary for Socrates to blow into full scale the deceit which others held as the truth. It was not until those deceived finally saw to what their assumptions led that they were willing to admit of their confusion. This cutting away of all straw thought led Socrates to the absolute negative, which was, moreover, that with which


\(^7\) *The Point of View of My Work as an Author* was written by Kierkegaard in 1846 and not published until four years after his death.
he started. For Kierkegaard, Socrates' weakness was that he could get no further than the absolute negative or irony. And yet, this was also his strength, in that it enabled him to see clearly where the problem did not lie. This much of Socrates Kierkegaard regarded as most enlightening and really superior to that category of negativity in Hegel which was regarded as a result and so as having some type of logical necessity. Kierkegaard was convinced that by means of irony Socrates had held at bay the ready wolf of idealism. Hegel was far less fortunate.

The pseudonymous authors parallel Socrates' agitators. The author of the Edifying Discourses states Socrates' reply. Just as in the plays of Plato, the agitators of Socrates are generally self-defeating, so with the pseudonymous writers. Of themselves these multifarious protégés only expose their growing weaknesses.

The power of the pseudonymous combatants consists in their ironic use of the Hegelian framework. Whereas Hegel used the dialectic to mediate further, the pseudonymous personalities use irony to allow the dialectic to destroy itself. By using the absolute negative, which is the meaning of Socratic irony, the pseudonymous writers attempt to come to grips with life. The intriguing method of Kierkegaard finds him granting the pseudonymous muses just enough Socratic irony to make Hegelian philosophy appear ridiculous and yet not so much as to suggest that Socratic irony is in any positive way sufficient for man to break through to existence. This is the reason that
so often the reader of *Either/Or* finds Authors A and B so enlightening in destroying the shallow beauty of romanticism and yet so distracting in leaving the reader nothing else.

The *Edifying Discourses* can be read apart from any consideration of the pseudonymous literature. (Just as, in a way, monasticism can stand as a witness of God quite apart from the rest of the Middle Age society.) The pseudonymous literature on the other hand has no real independent existence, and of itself, leaves the reader juggling immediacy and reflection. Once the direct communication of the *Edifying Discourses* is revealed the ironic lack of positive expression found in the pseudonymous literature is radically overcome.

There remains one important difference in comparing Socrates and the author of the *Edifying Discourses*. Socrates used irony to keep reality open to the possibility of understanding by means of absolute negativity. Søren Kierkegaard used irony to enable reality to be understood by means of the "religious." This is the precise moment of Kierkegaard's apologetic. Had Kierkegaard only produced the pseudonymous literature, only negatively would he have witnessed religion or the spirit of Christianity. With the publication of the *Edifying Discourses* the absolute nothingness of Socratic irony is radically overcome from without. 8 Religion positively introduced into the world by Christianity provided both a question and an answer that the

8 "Of myself I can do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me." John 5:30
Greeks on their own could not have appropriated.

To begin with, Kierkegaard respected the thought of Socrates for its openness to the possibility of the infinite, and therefore to religion and more specifically, Christianity. Nevertheless, Greek thought was quite unable to complete itself due to its lack of the "principle of spirit" which was introduced into the world with Christianity. In Kierkegaard's thought this negative possibility of religion present in Socrates was quite a different thing than the systematic mediated religion present in the philosophy of Hegel. This later made religion and therefore Christianity an impossibility. How Hegelian philosophy ruled out the possibility of Christianity is a constant theme in Kierkegaard's authorship. Since Hegel regarded religion as something mediated within his system, the mystery of God lost its infinity and became the un-mysterious subject of finite investigation.

Søren Kierkegaard's effort was directed at leaving a door open to the infinite. The exhaustive categories of Hegel were splendid skeletons for a systematizing of the idea, but nowhere in this system of thought was there room for anything but the logical. Bound to the finite, as a logical necessity, freedom was impossible for the individual. With freedom an

9 Author A discusses this "principle of spirit" introduced by Christianity in Vol. 1 of Either/Or: "As principle, as power, as a self-contained system, sensuousness was first posited by Christianity; to add still another qualification, which will, perhaps, show more emphatically what I mean: as a determinant of spirit, sensuousness was first posited by Christianity. This is quite natural, for Christianity is spirit, and spirit is the positive principle which Christianity has brought into the world." (Either/Or, Vol. 1, pp.59-50)
impossibility, religion cannot exist. Either the individual in light of the crowd can side with the system and so be chained by the logical necessity of thought or the individual can, in light of the eternal, side with existence which in its natural depth is open to the infinite. There can be no compromising alternative. Any mediation of these two positions simply is a restatement of the first.

The whole aesthetic literature is more at pains to show why the German romantic conceptualizations of reality are unable to ask the religious question (or to get even as far as Socrates) than offer a Christian answer. Kierkegaard's task at this stage is to point man back to reality. If Kierkegaard was to accept either the Hegelian system of thought or a local variety of Hegelianized Christianity, he knew that historical Christianity would be impossible. Using the Hegelian vocabulary, Kierkegaard edifies his readers by re-establishing this vocabulary within historical Christianity. He accomplishes this on the one hand by allowing the pseudonymous high priests to present the romantic personality as dialectically mediated, and on the other by allowing the author of the Edifying Discourses to edify the believer. The pseudonymous muses write for the cultural sieves who refuse to listen to anything which does not rest busily within the meshes of its own thinking.

The method of Kierkegaard's authorship takes the ideas of Hegelian philosophy, turns them into personalities, and lets them be what they can. As consistent characters reflected through experimental psychology and as immediate dispositions
thought of categorically, these pseudonymous appurtenances were to be initially and finally self-destructive. The pseudonymous authors cannot break through to existence. Bound from beginning to end to the static poll of idealism and romanticism these writers are closed to the possibility of religion. As temperaments sealed off to the religious, and so from the infinite, these characterizations are to be developed (later in Kierkegaard's authorship) into the categories of despair and sin.

Although religion and Christianity are spoken of explicitly within the aesthetic literature, it is obvious that the pseudonymous authors are unable to assert anything edifying about either.

My personality is a presupposition psychologically necessary to force him out (the young man in Repetition) while my personality will never be able to get to the point he has reached, for the primitive power by which he advances is a new and different factor.\(^{10}\)

...but I admit also that I have not the courage for it, (namely the movement of faith) and that I renounce gladly any prospect of getting further— if only it were possible that in any way, however late, I might get so far.

The very choice of Kierkegaard to use the various pseudonyms is an indication of the seriousness of his apologetic. One could not be a Christian-of-sorts and be a Christian absolutely in the same breath!

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\(^{11}\) Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* and *Sickness unto Death*, Translated with Introductions and Notes by Walter Lowrie (Garden City, 1954), p. 124.
In order to edify, the author of the **Edifying Discourses** must find man where he is. The precise location of man assumed in the pseudonymous writings is within the Hegel-Goethian framework. In this ideally historical location man is not open to the possibility of religion and the hope of edification is absurd. How then is Kierkegaard to speak edifyingly to his readers? First he clears the way with the pseudonymous authorship by showing precisely what is not, and cannot be, edifying. The location of the pseudonymous authorship as prior to the **Edifying Discourses** is in the public's notion only. In fact, the pseudonymous and those signed Søren Kierkegaard were published simultaneously. The underlying purpose of the entire aesthetic authorship is to enable the individual to be edified. Thus the edifying works are first in order of importance. The **Edifying Discourses** of themselves do not need the Hegelian vocabulary. Rather contemporary man needs the Hegelian vocabulary in order to be found where he is. In fact, from the beginning many readers of Kierkegaard are much more pleased with the pseudonymous authors and as a rule probably are not familiar at all with his **Edifying Discourses**. Socrates let every man use the words he found to be meaningful in order to state his case. Yet when the discussion was over the words used by the opponents of Socrates were found to mean nothing. Kierkegaard lets man speak in the finitude of his own words (the pseudonymous authorship)\(^{12}\) and then turns around and allows the

\[12\] O man, how long shall my honour suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? *Psalms 4:2*
the possibility of the infinite to edify. In the *Edifying Discourses* nevertheless it cannot be assumed that Søren Kierkegaard's apologetic is concerned more with the specifically "Christian" than with the possibility of religion in general. (Or in a sense natural religion.) The aesthetic literature taken in its entirety is an attempt to illuminate the problem of "what it is to become a Christian" and in no direct way answers it. To assume any of the authors involved to be "Christian" is to destroy the intricate balance of Kierkegaard's authorship. This also includes Søren Kierkegaard himself (author of the *Edifying Discourses*) at this stage in his life. Kierkegaard was presenting Christianity as he witnessed it in himself. He was convinced that when it came to Christianity, Christendom could do nothing but remain silent. His overall presentation of the religious in its relation to Christianity was a gradual and serious task. One didn't just busy himself within Christendom and then pick up Christianity as one does a best-selling novel. First one must see the religious for what it is, and then begin to see what Christianity is in relation to a religious openness to the infinite. The entire task of seeing through the deceits of Christendom was most difficult. Kierkegaard's idea of one being-a-Christian was filled with suffering, obedience and inwardness. He had had moments of "indescribable joy" in his life as a Christian before 1843 but he regarded a Christian life more as an eternal and absolute duty than periodic flashes of salvation.

13 Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. Eph. 4:29.
The difference between Author A, Author B, Victor Eremita, Constantine Constantius, Johannes de Silentio and Søren Kierkegaard is that in Søren Kierkegaard's *Edifying Discourses* the possibility of religion and Christianity is not viewed negatively (*in absentia*) before it has been experienced. (In fact, it is continuously exalted.) In the pseudonymous writings a personal option for a religious comprehension of the personality is particularly avoided. The "religious"\(^{14}\) is defined in the pseudonymous literature, but usually in the second-hand vocabulary of the interested non-believer.

Understanding the "religious" within Kierkegaard's collective authorship demands an *entente cordiale* of the *Edifying Discourses*. Whereas the pseudonymous writers neutralize the reader, Søren Kierkegaard edifies him. A part-time Christian, a pagan, a romanticist, an Hegelian, a rationalist, an aesthetic and a judge could read the pseudonymous works and, in sympathy with their own various levels of interpretation, find therein a swarm of momentary subjective satisfactions or discontentments. In no direct sense would one find there any expression of certitude or faith. The *Edifying Discourses* on the other hand are written in light of the believer who begins with Divine Wisdom. There can be no holding on to both at once. The pseudonymous literature

\(^{14}\) The meaning of the word "religious" has become so engrossed in a vocabulary which invariably subjects the mystery of Christianity to some system of explanation, be it reason, feeling, or humanism, that people like Bonhoeffer have suggested a religionless Christianity. It is not Christianity's fault that it lost the word "religion" rather man sacrificed it on the human altar of subjectivism.
is not completed by the Edifying Discourses.\textsuperscript{15} The Kierkegaardian apologetic was concerned with enabling the non-Christian (or so-called Christian) to view both the pseudonymous tractates and the Edifying Discourses and to choose one or the other.

The duplicity in the deeper sense, that is, in the sense of the authorship as a whole, is not at all what was a subject of comment in its time, viz. the contrast between the two parts of Either/Or. No, the duplicity is discovered by comparing Either/Or and the Two Edifying Discourses.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15} The relationship of the Edifying Discourses to the pseudonymous literature is not a "both/and," but a "either/or."

\textsuperscript{16} Point of View, pp. 22-39.
Chapter 2. The Relation of the Pseudonymous Literature to the Edifying Discourses

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 17

Volume I and Volume II of Either/Or constitute a whole. Repetition and Fear and Trembling take up specific issues which are introduced in Either/Or but left incomplete. The secret of both pseudonymous series however, can only be understood in light of the Edifying Discourses. Left to themselves the pseudonymous authors present "an indirect polemic against speculative philosophy which is indifferent to the existential." 18 Kierkegaard was aware that the world would grasp this relationship of the pseudonymous literature to the Edifying Discourses only with great difficulty:

I held out Either/Or to the world in my left hand, and in my right the Two Edifying Discourses; but all, or as good as all, grasped with their right hand what I held in my left. 19

To discover whether as writer behind the pseudonymous muses

17 Matt. 6:24
19 Point of View, p. 20. The situation today would be somewhat different in that much modern theology is convinced that there is no difference between the right and left hand and, if one can simply write enough about it the left hand will become right and the right left. To do justice to all, one should not forget those who come forth with no hand but simply pen, ink and tongue.
Kierkegaard is captivated by the aesthetical, the ethical, or any other pseudonymous category is to begin at the wrong place. Lowrie makes the observation:

If a reader should carelessly fail to observe that Either/Or presents an either/or—either the aesthetic or the ethical life—and should happen to be unaware that the author had already chosen decisively the second alternative... his praise of the book or his condemnation would be alike futile.20

Victor Eremita is closer to Kierkegaard's purpose when he mentions that he had not yet been able to relinquish the idea that one man could be the author of both parts and that he who says A must also say B.21

The decisive importance of Either/Or is revealed in the distinction between the aesthetic and the ethical, and the impossibility of mediating these two into a third category—the religious. Repetition begins by attempting to solve the problem of human freedom in relation to repetition. It ends by discovering that the matter properly belongs to the sphere of religion. All that Constantius can say is that he is unable to discuss the problem at that level. At least he admits a distinction between experimental psychology and faith. Johannes de Silentio in Fear and Trembling also makes it clear that the fear and trembling of faith is something to which he is unable to assent. He admits that it is more passionate than a dialectical lyric, but poetry


is as far as he can go.

Gradually the pseudonymous authors move from a position indifferent to religion, to a position which is recognized in its opposition to faith. Kierkegaard's apologetics does not seek to have the pseudonymous authors Pelegianize their way into Christianity as if such was possible. Faith remains a gift, something to be given and something to be willed. It will never be attained from non-faithful considerations. The non-believer must first admit of his non-belief (his despair). As long as the non-Christian member of Christendom fails to admit of his lack of faith, he will never know "what God asks." He will only know despair, even though he will continually ask himself why his faith is so uncertain, passionless, busy and unhappy.

The purpose of the pseudonymous authorship is to free Kierkegaard, the man of faith, from the quasi-Christian ambiguities of Christendom. The concern of the pseudonymous personalities is of importance to the man of faith only in so far as religion stands apart as a testimony to their inadequacies. The believer deals with the world out of the strength of his faith. He has overcome the ambiguity of the pseudonymous meanderings by refusing to accept them to begin with. The man of faith accepts the world, not in the hope that it will give him faith, but in the Wisdom of God which has Itself made the world worthy of acceptance. It is clear in the Edifying Discourses that all aesthetic utterances of man and all submissions to the dictates of ethics will not give man faith. For Søren Kierkegaard aesthetics and ethics are of one cloth, faith is something else.
In Kierkegaard's authorship there is no attempt to mediate the *Edifying Discourses* and the pseudonymous writing. The apologetics of Søren Kierkegaard does not continue where Author E or Johannes de Silentio leave off. Rather, in the *Edifying Discourses* Søren Kierkegaard begins at a totally different starting place. The difference between the various pseudonymous investigations is relative, the difference between these and the religious language of the *Edifying Discourses* is absolute.

The awesome size and complexity of the pseudonymous authorship (especially *Either/Or*) makes a comparison with the *Edifying Discourses* difficult. Yet the very disproportion indicates the simplicity of the religious as compared to the labyrinth of the pseudonymous ambiguity. To be a man of faith the intrigues of modern philosophy are not necessary. If faith demanded doubt as a necessary prerequisite then faith is merely an adjunct to and a product of a system of philosophy, and as such should find its strength primarily in relation to this system. Likewise, if faith demanded this doubtful interpretation of faith, faith should be abandoned or gone beyond in favor of a more totally human investigation of the aesthetic, ethical and temporal nature of man.

To the writer of the *Edifying Discourses* any such idea of going beyond faith, of living in a more conducive time in relation to faith, of being more psychologically at ease to receive faith, of having the necessary good fortune to understand faith, of being more mature in regard to faith, or of being in relation to Christ any different than those who lived around Him, is totally foreign.

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It is true that he who expects something in particular, may be disappointed; but this does not happen to the believer. When the world begins its sharp testing, when the storms of life snap the vigorous expectation of youth, when existence, which seems so loving and so gentle, transforms itself into a merciless proprietor who demands everything back, everything which he gave so that he could take it back; then the believer looks with sadness and pain at himself and at life, but he still says: "There is an expectation which all the world can not take from me; it is the expectation of faith, and this is victory. I am not deceived; for what the world seemed to promise me, that promise I still did not believe that it would keep; my expectation was not in the world, but in God.\textsuperscript{22}

When doubt begins to fill the modern soul, it is not simply mediated into a higher state by Søren Kierkegaard, rather it is completely overturned by being shown in relation to faith. Doubt in the \textit{Edifying Discourses} is seen as despair and not as a necessary increment to faith.

Then you humbly acknowledged before God that God tempts no man, but that everyone is tempted when he is seduced and drawn away by his own desires, just as you were tempted by proud and arrogant and defiant thoughts...

Then you acknowledged, humble and ashamed, that it was well that you, in your despair, should not have found an explanation of life's dark saying which anyone would be able to insist upon.\textsuperscript{23}

In the third \textit{Edifying Discourse} entitled "love covers a multitude of sins" Søren Kierkegaard makes it clear that it is one thing to start with "love covers a multitude of sins" and another to start with "sin discovers a multitude of sins." One

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Søren Kierkegaard, \textit{Edifying Discourses}, Volume I, Translated by David F. Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson (Minneapolis, 1962), p. 43.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 59.
\end{itemize}
either begins with sin or with faithful love. There is no radi-
ating sin into love. A person can start with doubt or sin, but
no amount of doubting will give one faith. It is not until one
recognizes the futility of doubtful investigations that he can
will to believe. The entire display of the pseudonymous meander-
gings cannot make sense of the Edifying Discourses. Rather, the
concern of Søren Kierkegaard is for the believer. Every human
investigation is bondage until it is overcome faithfully in the
love of God. Once this love has conquered man can return to
human activity, but not as a humanist, psychologist, philosopher
or theologian but as a Christian. Søren Kierkegaard has overcome
the world in faith and returned to it with God's help. For the
author of the Edifying Discourses man is not alone, but God is
with the man who again accepts the world.

24 In the sense commonly accepted around schools of
higher learning.
Chapter 3. The Edifying

But he who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, for they have been performed in God.25

With the words of a Jutland pastor, "For only the truth which edifies is truth for you,"26 Either/Or closes. The reader is left wondering, "what is the truth which edifies?" It is apparent that neither Author A nor Author B are capable of importing to the reader anything concerning the truth which edifies. It is not until the reader takes notice of the Edifying Discourses27 that he or she is able to meet the truth which edifies.

To begin with Kierkegaard chooses the word "edifying" as a calculated assault on Hegelian philosophy.

It is curious what a hate Hegel has for the edifying as is everywhere apparent. The edifying is not an opiate that lulls to sleep, however, it is the finite spirit's Amen and one side of knowledge that ought not be overlooked.28

Instead of the edifying, Hegel chose to endorse the concept of

25 John 3:21

26 Søren Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Volume II, Translated by Walter Lowrie with revisions and a forward by Howard A. Johnson (Garden City, 1959), p. 356.

27 Throughout the entire stage of his aesthetic writing Kierkegaard accompanied every pseudonymous work with an Edifying Discourse. According to Kierkegaard's own count there were eighteen Discourses published along with the several pseudonymous works.

mediation. Mediation in Kierkegaard's mind was simply a process proper to a system of logic. It is important to distinguish here between the ironic beginnings (absolute negativity) of Socratic philosophy and the "nothingness" with which Hegelian philosophy began. Whereas the absolute nothingness of Socrates was not closed to the possibility of edifying, the nothingness of Hegel was simply the uncriticized foundation for more and more mediations. As usual, Kierkegaard finds Hegelian assumptions arrested at the hands of Socratic irony.

Kierkegaard says of mediation: "Give that up, and there is no speculation; if you admit it there is no absolute choice, no either/or."

The matter can be summarized in this fashion: Hegelian mediation is destroyed by a serious regard for "either/or." That is, Socratic irony is quite capable of letting the mediation of the System expose itself to self-destruction. But then man is left with the question, how can one come to grips with the religious category if he remains ambiguously in the category of either/or? Can a man who has become an either/or get beyond the absolute negative of Socrates? Kierkegaard believes he can. It is not however as if a man goes from mediation to either/or and

29 In so far as he (Socrates) emancipates mankind from the fear of death, he gives them in exchange the anxious representation of an inevitable something of which one knows nothing. Accordingly, one must be accustomed to being edified by the reassurance residing in nothingness in order to find repose in this. Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Lee W. Capel (Bloomington, 1968), p. 118.

then on to edification. Mediation is reality regarded as thought. "Either/or" is reality as it finds itself to be, but in relationship to the absolute negative. Edification is reality as it finds itself to be, but now regarded as something given. There does exist a relationship between the eternal witnessed by its absence and natural religion. There is no relation, however, between mediation and either/or, between mediation and edifying, or between existence regarded as doubtful and existence regarded as wonder.

Whereas Kierkegaard's use of either/or points out what is not religious and not open to the infinite, his use of the edifying witnesses the possibility of the religious or better, witnesses the reality of natural religion.

The fact that modern man has lost sight of this situation and taken under his own supervision what previously has been 'given' by God under the name of natural religion, has led man to mediate and mediate and mediate unto the point where no one can understand another unless he too agrees to undertake the same systematic mediation. The problem always remains the same. From where does one begin to mediate and when can one stop?

Hence, in our age as the order of the day we have the disgusting sight of young men who are able to mediate Christianity and paganism, are able to play with the titanic forces of history, and are unable to tell a plain man what he has to do in life, and

31 In the words of John the Baptist, "No one can receive anything unless it is given to him from heaven." John 3:27
who do not know any better what they themselves have to do.\textsuperscript{32}

The edifying also has the ability to come to grips with the future, something which mediation can do only by recalling the past.

Philosophy turns towards the past, towards the whole enacted history of the world, it shows how the discrete factors are fused in a higher unity, it mediates and mediates.\textsuperscript{33}

For the future can be overcome only through eternity. And concern with the eternal is the precise interest of the edifying. Edifying, like every word signed Søren Kierkegaard, finds its beginning in the religious category of Faith. The hope of Søren Kierkegaard is that the Edifying Discourses will finally meet

that individual whom with joy and gratitude I call my reader, that individual whom it seeks, toward whom, as it were, it stretches out its arms; that individual who is benevolent enough to let himself be found, benevolent enough to receive it, whether in the moment of meeting it found him happy and confident, or melancholy and thoughtful.\textsuperscript{34}

The Edifying Discourses were written for the believer. "Edifying" is a positive religious category. It is not the logically necessary category of Hegelian mediation. If it were

\textsuperscript{32} Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 175. These are the words of Author B, though not edifying, they at least call a spade a spade. It seems much of contemporary theology likes to call a spade a heart when actually it only considers "clubs."

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 174.

\textsuperscript{34} Edifying Discourses, Vol. I, Preface, p. 21.
included within the Hegelian framework it could not edify in any sense, but simply keep one busy. Related to mediation, edification would become more like the word superego, and as such it would be strictly a hypothetical construct with which one must work to carry on the business of finding another and possibly a more inclusive hypothetical construct. For Søren Kierkegaard, only concerns of faith edify.

Edification, moreover, was not a negative religious category. Although concern for the infinite (or religion) within the language of Socratic irony was not absent, it was negative. That is, it was witnessed only in its absence, much like the absent God of Bergman's movies. Religion taken in this sense was the concern of the pseudonymous authors and not that of Søren Kierkegaard. Whereas Søren Kierkegaard edified in his discourses, the pseudonymous writers could at best point out that such edification was possible, but it was not the concern of non-believers such as Johannes de Silentio to deal with it positively.
Part II

Some Specific Aesthetic Insights
Relating to Time, Place and State of Be-ing

Chapter I. The Moment and the Instant

We shall all indeed rise, but we shall not all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

The initial context of the moment is taken from the Greek notion of "the sudden" (τὸ ἐκβιβασμένον) as found in Plato's Parmenides.² This notion of the moment is especially clear in Magister Kierkegaard's MA Thesis, The Concept of Irony.

Its (irony's) relation to the world is not such that this relation is a moment in the content of personality. Its relation to the world is never at any moment to be in relation to the world, its relation is such that at the moment this is about to commence, it draws itself back with a sceptical closedness. (ἐνοχή) But this reserve is the reflex of personality into itself that is clearly abstract and void of content. The ironical personality is therefore merely the outline of a personality. Hence

1 I Cor. 15:52.

2 The word 'instant' appears to mean something such that from it a thing passes to one or other of the two conditions. There is no transition from a state of rest so long as the thing is still at rest, nor from motion so long as it is still in motion, but 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 of being in motion, takes place to and from the instant. Accordingly, the one, since it both is at rest and is in motion, must pass from the one condition to the other—only so can it do both things—and when it passes, it makes the transition instantaneously; it occupies no time in making it and at that moment it cannot be either in motion or at rest. (The Collected Dialogues of Plato, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns [New York, 1961], p. 947.)
one sees that there is an absolute dissimilarity between Socrates and Christ; for in Christ dwelt the immediate fullness of the godhead, and his relation to the world is an absolutely real relationship, so that the Church is conscious of itself as the members of its body.3

This Socratic concept of the moment is then related to Hegel's mediated use of the moment. The outcome of this relationship between the dialectical moment of Hegel and the ironic moment of Socrates is expressed in the words of Author A:

There are many who think that they live thus, because after having done the one or the other, they combine or mediate the opposites. But this is misunderstanding; for the true eternity does not lie behind either/or, but before it. Hence, their eternity will be a painful succession of temporal moments, for they will be consumed by a twofold regret.4

The negative moment of Socrates is far more hopeful than Hegel's mediated use of the term. It becomes obvious that in the mouth of Author A the prodigiously interesting moment as understood by Hegel is left to a dialectical self-destruction. When finished with some of the dialectic intrigues of Author A5 the reader would be glad to go back to the "outline of a personality" offered by Socrates rather than stay suspended within the despairing grasp of mediation.6

3 Concept of Irony, p. 242. (This work was completed Sept. 16, 1841)


5 Hang yourself, you will regret it; do not hang yourself, and you will also regret that; hang yourself or do not hang yourself, you will regret both; whether you hang yourself or do not hang yourself, you will regret both. This gentlemen, is the sum and substance of all philosophy. (Either/Or, Vol. I, p. 37.)

6 Mediation as such is not opposed to Christianity, in fact it is frequently found in Scripture:

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry which is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant
Once the ironic use of the moment begins to develop in Kierkegaard's authorship the interest of the concept switches from a relation to either/or and takes up residence mainly within the more developed concepts of repetition and fear and trembling.\(^7\) In this later development the moment acquires a more important meaning,\(^8\) so much so in fact that there is a noticeable change found in Kierkegaard's vocabulary (especially the pseudonymous literature) from the term "moment" to the word "instant." The moment however, is not absent from the *Edifying Discourses* and is as forcefully present in the fifth as in the first.

The relationship of the moment to the Infinite and how the new term repetition\(^9\) goes beyond the finite shrewdness of mediation and the negativity of either/or makes it clear that either a new meaning must be given to "the moment" or a new word must be chosen to replace it. Wishing not to destroy the time-bound implications of "the moment" Kierkegaard willed to initiate a new word, "the instant."

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\(^6\) cont.

He mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. (Heb. 8:6)

The distinction is based not on the rejection of a word, but on the interpretation of its meaning. In the Letter to the Hebrews mediation draws its strength from the promise of God. Where does Hegelian mediation draw its strength?

\(^7\) Here dread could also be mentioned but a more particular interest in this term does not come until Kierkegaard's pseudonymous muse Vigilius Haufniensis writes a book by that name in 1844.

\(^8\) Just as, in a way, one could say that the New Testament is more important than the Old Testament.

\(^9\) See Part III, Chapter 2.
Croxall defines the two Danish words as:

Moment means the temporal passing moment, in which the aesthetic as such (in his selfishness) lives.
Øiblik means the decisive instant (an atom of eternity) when Eternity impinges upon Time and makes its eternal demands upon us—demands of duty and surrender.10

As Kierkegaard's authorship grew and the pseudonymous investigations began to take up the religious problem in greater detail (even though as un-believing observers) a more specifically religious vocabulary was needed. In Authors A and B, mention of religion was usually nebulously similar to the ethical or referred to in a distinctly other-person sort of way as if religion had an impact on culture but was now a thing of the past. The pressing task of the pseudonymous muse was to get on with the aesthetical preoccupations. The one outstanding exception in Either/Or falls at the end of Vol. II where a sermon of a Jutland pastor is recorded by Author B so that Author A could read it and think of himself. It was entitled: "The Edification Implied In the Thought that as Against God We Are Always in the Wrong." In its very organization and style a similarity to the Edifying Discourses can be discerned. Such words as: the wish, the future, doubt, the instant, duty and inward point out a close affinity between it and the Edifying Discourses. The sermon ends with these words, "for only the truth which edifies is truth for you." It seems that for the sake of those not yet convinced of his purpose Kierkegaard left one final calling card.

Returning to an investigation of the concept of the moment, it like the occasion,\textsuperscript{11} receives its more prodigiously interesting definition at the hands of the pseudonymous muses. Whereas its religious understanding is found in the entirely different domain of the \textit{Edifying Discourses}, that niche where Søren Kierkegaard avoids the poetic coteries of the pseudonymous flaneurs by beginning with the "expectation of faith!"

\begin{quote}
...for if there were no future (expectation of faith), neither would there have been a past, and if there were neither past nor future, then would man be enslaved like the beasts, his head bent toward the earth, his soul ensnared in the service of the moment.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

Man determined within the category of the moment is no different than the animal, except that man is able to create a system which adroitly orders these moments as if they were complete in themselves. (That is, subjected to the category of the moment man begins to think that he can construct existence.) Wouldn't it be momentarily satisfying in solving life's problem if one could simply wish his consciousness to vanish and then study himself as a non-rational animal? The author of the \textit{Edifying Discourses} regards momentary satisfaction as a shrewd form of despair.

In Authors A and B the moment is concerned with the finite exhaustion of reality under the sole category of time. Taken finitely every moment is its own limit. There is to be no unity of moments except in the mind of man. Author A however, makes

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} See Part II, Chapter 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} \textit{Edifying Discourses}, Vol. I, p. 34.
\end{itemize}
some sense of the moment when he related it to the sensual erotic which finds its true home in the musical.

Only in this manner (Mozart's Don Juan) can Don Juan become epic, in that he constantly finishes, and constantly begins again from the beginning, for his life is the sum of repellent moments which have no coherence, his life as moment is the sum of moments, as the sum of moments is the moment.¹³

Residing in this unreflective category of immediacy the moment is freed from the linguistic mediation of Hegel. Such a relation of the moment to immediacy, however, seems to self-destruct as soon as it is born. As soon as it becomes something in relation to anything else it no longer has immediacy as its nature. Thus as soon as the immediate sensuous erotic, defined musically, is grasped, it is gone. One is left wondering if it would be possible to live existentially in the immediate sensuous erotic which sounds so passionately throughout Mozart's Don Juan? Yet it seems that even though immediate existence is closer to the passion of fear and trembling found in Constantius' Knight of Faith than the reflective relationship of Author B's ethical personality to the universal, immediate existence is still not the life of faith. Just as Author B attempts to set the occasion straight for Author A by ushering in the universal "calling," present to all men, Author B attempts to destroy the power of the immediate by ordering life in accord with the universality of duty. In either case the understanding of man is ordered up

solely in terms of the finite. Author A chooses the garment of the immediate. Author B chooses the garment of the universal. And again the words of editor Victor Eremita come to mind, "that he who says A must also say B".14

Most men in our age find themselves in the anxious position of regarding the moment in its completely finite character as somehow Infinite. They wish to find this life as lived moment by moment to be of eternal significance in their own terms regardless of any God, Eternity or Infinitude. By a sleight of their own hand men find themselves in the embarrassingly shallow position of wishing the finite to be Infinite. Such a metamorphosis demands more than man's wish!15 Man has become lost in the present moment and not willing to admit his mistake, he has hoped to overcome the confusion by making the resulting confusion itself God.

Without knowing how it comes about, they are in the midst of the life movement, a link in the chain which connects a future with a past. Unconcerned about how


15 The writer of the Edifying Discourses treats the wish differently: "...that is the way a man should speak; for the wish profits nothing." Then would he quietly review his inner emotions; and every time his soul allowed itself to rest on a wish, he called it to him and said: "You know you must not wish"; and in so doing he made progress. When his soul became fearful he called it to him and said: "If you are anxious, it is because you are wishing; for fear is a form of wishing, and you know you must not wish"—and so he went on. (Edifying Discourses, Vol. I, p. 28.)
it happened they are borne along on the wave of the present.\textsuperscript{16}

Whether the moment finds man in pleasure for-a-time, or whether it finds man shrewdly satisfied with a "rotation method"\textsuperscript{17} of cautiously arranged moments, all of this does not concern the author of the Edifying Discourses.

How could one who steers toward perfection under the full sail of hope, have many moments to spend on merely human possibilities?\textsuperscript{16}

Any contact with Pelegian diminutives was avoided by Søren Kierkegaard as a temptation which reduced man-the-individual to the momentary, curious and freedom-less category of the mob. If freedom is to exist in man, how is man to stand in relation to the moment? Is human activity simply a necessary succession of moments in which freedom is lost, determined in its relation to the past? Is human activity free only in the immediacy of the present, thus making any connection with the past or future impossible, and therefore, condemning man like a non-rational animal to the present moment? Or is human activity to seek its freedom in relation to the future, in its hope and universality, thereby condemning man to a hope which as such does not exist except in relation to that which is not?

Freedom as found in the Edifying Discourses escapes these never-ending questions by beginning in an entirely different

\textsuperscript{16} Edifying Discourses, Vol. I, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{17} Chapter Eight of Either/Or, Vol. I.
\textsuperscript{18} Edifying Discourses, Vol. I, p. 89.
place. For man to be free he must define his personality in relation to the Infinite. No series of finite mediations will bring this about. Again the secret of Søren Kierkegaard's Edifying Discourses lies in his starting point. There can be no question of mediating our way to the Infinite. The reader cannot be forced to choose, but can only be shown the difference between beginning with worldly desires, pleasure, and despair and beginning with the Infinite where is found the expectation of faith, the giver of every good and every perfect gift; the one who covers a multitude of sins; and the one who strengthens in the inner man.

Only he who abandoned his soul to worldly desires, he who chose the glamorous thraldom of pleasure and was not able to free himself from its thoughtless or melancholy fear, only he is content to let creation bear witness so that he can shrewdly and cleverly use it in the service of the moment.  

In the fifth Edifying Discourse Søren Kierkegaard compares the moment to the eternal which is truly the concern of the moment.

Through every deeper reflection, which makes a man older than the moment, and lets him grasp the eternal, he assures himself that he has an actual relation to the world, and that consequently this relationship cannot consist merely in a knowledge about this world and about himself as a part of it, since such a knowledge is not a relationship, precisely because in this knowledge he himself is indifferent to this world, and this world is indifferent to his knowledge about it. Not until concern awakens in his soul as to what the world signifies to him and he to the world, what everything in him through which he belongs to the world, signifies to him, and he through it to the world, in that moment does the inner man proclaim itself in this concern.  

20 Ibid., pp. 110-111.

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Thus as man becomes "older than the moment" he begins to define himself in relation to the Eternal in such a way that the ataraxy of the moment gives way to the passion of faith. The moment no longer is a temporal category, it is ablaze in the passionate conflict that finds the finite face to face with the Infinite. The moment has vanished, the instant is born! The possibility of the instant, however, does not destroy the moment but only sets the human personality in relation to freedom. At any moment the temporality of despair can return. Repetition of the momentary life is possible but it is not the occasion of human freedom. Rather, it is a return to the despair of determinism in the past. With repetition of the instant, however, man has willed to receive the gift of the Infinite and as such is not determined in the past, present, or future, but has overcome time and made it his servant by repeating the Eternal.

In Fear and Trembling the Knight of Infinite Resignation takes the moment as far as it can go by totally renouncing the world. He stands on the threshold of the instant. Only the Knight of Faith can put the instant to use. By the teleological suspension of the ethical, Abraham (as a Knight of Faith) rejects both the immediate and the universal categories of the moment and takes the absurd step in faith. The very absurdity (non-understandability) of the choice indicates its total departure from the moment. As Abraham witnessed the absolute call of God he was defined in relation to the instant. Every category of time was overcome, the instant was born and Abraham stood individual, alone, and absurd (in the temporal eyes of man).
before God.

Johannes de Silentio though himself unable to make the movement of faith—to realize the instant—presents faith with an integrity which at least gives faith its proper place and does not define it in Hegelian categories.

In our time nobody is content to stop with faith but wants to go further. It would perhaps be rash to ask where these people are going, but it is surely a sign of breeding and culture for me to assume that everybody has faith, for otherwise it would be queer for them to be...going further.21

It is supposed to be difficult to understand Hegel, but to understand Abraham is a trifle.22

With the use of the instant the pseudonymous writers, Constantine and Johannes, one delivering an essay in experimental psychology and the other a dialectical lyric, are proclaiming the necessary independence of the religious from the psychological and the poetic. The once-removed discussion of the religious faith by the pseudonymous muses gradually makes it clear that any relation of the religious with the aesthetical must be carried out in terms of the religious and not vice versa. Any mediation of this distinction immediately offers religion up to the system of Hegelian philosophy.

The instant then destroys mediation’s hold on religion as a premise contained solely in the natural order. And, on the other hand, it dispels the ironic relationship of the moment

21 Fear and Trembling, p. 23.
22 Ibid., p. 43.
to absolute negativity by establishing it in relation to the positive principle of the Infinite. Whereas Socratic ignorance is founded in Infinite resignation the faith of Abraham requires everything anew in terms of the absurd which puts Abraham in an absolute relation to the absolute.²⁴

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²³ Fear and Trembling, p. 79.
²⁴ Ibid., p. 72.
Chapter 2. The Occasion

So if thy right eye is an occasion of sin to thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee...25

The first Edifying Discourse is entitled "The Expectation of Faith." It is written as a commentary on Gal. 3:28-29 to be delivered on New Year's Day. For Søren Kierkegaard the proper use of the term occasion receives its direction from the words of St. Paul:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

The celebration of aesthetical and ethical occasions have been radically reversed. No longer does the cultural, social or sexual occasion primarily determine man's existence. Faith in Christ Jesus now becomes the starting point within which man is to understand the occasion.27

The myth used by man to explain life does not determine man's faith.28 Rather the faith of man in God determines the

25 Matt. 5:29.
26 Gal. 3:28.
27 For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 8:38-39.
28 ...remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith. I Tim. 1:3-4.
"myth" wherein man conceptualizes his thanksgiving. Bultman's demythologizing of scripture is "new" not because he is operating like the writers of the scriptures who seek to conceptualize through faith, (to that extent all scripture is demythologizing in that it attempts to destroy all myths not founded in the belief of Jesus Christ) but because he finds an understanding of these myths outside a relationship to that same faith in God present to the writers of the sacred books.

From what occasion does Bultman draw his vision?

The principal investigation of the occasion found in the pseudonymous authorship falls in the aesthetical half of Either/Or.

Occasion is thus of the greatest importance in regard to every production; indeed, it is this which essentially decides the question regarding its true aesthetic value.\(^\text{29}\)

The aestheticist who adopts aesthetics as his profession, and in his profession sees the real occasion is eo ipso lost. This is by no means to say that he cannot perform his work skillfully; but the secret of all production he has not understood. He is too much a Pelagian autocrat to be able, in childish wonder, to rejoice over the curious fact that it is as if alien powers had produced that which a human being believes is his own: the inspiration, namely, and the occasion.\(^\text{30}\)

One personification of this Pelagian autocrat is found later in Fear and Trembling where a parson is presented who is "delighted with himself" and "at the earnest wrath which thundered


\textit{Ibid.}, p. 235.
down" his personal oratory concerning Abraham of the Old Testament.

He said to himself and to his wife, "I am an orator. What I lacked was the occasion. When I talked about Abraham on Sunday I did not feel moved in the least.'

Johannes de Silentio the author of Fear and Trembling though unwilling to become a Knight of Faith himself is pointing out the weakness of any so-called faith which of itself is dependent upon the occasion regarded as a lyric enhancement of words. The parson had confused the occasion with faith.

In the old days they said, "What a pity things don't go on in the world as the parson preaches"—perhaps the time is coming, especially with the help of philosophy, when they will say, "Fortunately things don't go on as the parson preaches; for after all there is some sense in life, but none at all in his preaching."32

Author A continues to discuss the occasion making it clear that left exhausted in the hands of the finite the occasion can do nothing but self-destruct.

The occasion is a category of the finite, and it is impossible for immanent thinking to lay hold of it; for that it is too paradoxical. This can also be seen from the fact that that which comes out of the occasion is something quite different from the occasion itself, which is an absurdity for all immanent thought.33

The occasion is, then, in itself nothing, and only something in relation to that which it gives rise to, and in relation to this it is

31 Fear and Trembling, p. 40.
32 Ibid.
exactly nothing. For as soon as the occasion becomes something other than nothing, then it would stand in relatively immanent relation to that which it produces, and would then be either ground or cause. Unless one holds on to this firmly, everything again becomes confused.34

For Author A the occasion reduced to its simplest expression cannot be self explanatory. In the last quote listed above the Hegelian categories of position, negation and mediation are used to cloth the occasion as it is offered up to the ready sword of Socratic irony.

To add a final touch to the ambiguity of Author A's discourse on the occasion he concludes:

What then is said here must be regarded as unnecessary, like a superfluous title page which is not included when the work is bound.35

In addition to the parson found in Fear and Trembling, the "Seducer" who records his "Diary" in the last section of Either/Or's aesthetical volume presents a classic study in the aesthetical manipulations of the occasion. The charm, wit, passion, insight, and endurance of the "Seducer" used to control the occasion is both finitely engrossing (so often found indiscriminately endorsed in today's Playboy ethic) and immediately self-consuming.

In the first instance the point was that he (the Seducer) enjoyed egoistically and personally what in part was reality's gift to him and in part was that with which he himself had

impregnated reality; in the second instance his personality was effaced, and he enjoyed this situation, and himself in the situation. In the first instance he constantly needed reality as occasion, as factor; in the poetic... Thus the poetic was constantly present in the ambiguity in which he passed his life.  

With these words, the life of the "Seducer" catches the eye as a restless movement between the scientific empiricist and the poet. The occasion has reality both in being-what-it-is and in being-what-it-is-considered-to-be. Somehow it must be both of these at once. This re-occurring theme of dialectical ambivilance initially and finally mitigates the character of the "Seducer" to a personality of hopeless despair.

For Author A the occasion is seen both in its immediacy, as was the senuous fruitlessness of Mozart's Don Juan and in its capacity of being controlled as is brought out in the Seducers shrewd use of the moment. How can one keep the immediacy of the occasion and yet shrewdly adjust it to ones own wish?

Author B has some reassuring advice for the aesthetic "Seducer." Whereas the "Seducer" must always be subject to the whimsical immediacy of yet another occasion, the ethical man has a calling.

In the first place a calling explains talent not as something accidental in existence but as the universal; in the second place, it exhibits the universal in its true beauty. For talent is beautiful only when it is transfigured as a call, and existence is beautiful only when everyone has a call... When a man has a calling he generally has a norm outside himself which,

without making him a slave, does nevertheless prescribe in a measure what he must do, ap­
portions for him the time, often gives him occasion to begin. If for once he does not make a success of his business, he hopes to do it better next time, and this next time is not too far distant.  

For the ethical author the immediacy of existence as witnes­sed by Author A can only be put-a-right in terms of the uni­
versal. This reveals two new problems to be taken up in Repetition and Fear and Trembling. If the universal is the savior of the aesthetic after all, "how is man to be free in relation to the universal?" (Why is man's freedom not lost in being determined in relation to the universal?) And second­ly, if, in relation to the universal is to be the proper way to conceive of human activity how is one to regard the religious personality?

Thus the occasion served a double purpose in the pseudony­mous literature. It was initially used in the mouth of Author A to point out the inevitable self destruction of any under­standing of life based on the experience of an immediate re­lationship to the finite. And on the other hand it forced the ethical author to confirm its relationship to the universal. It is precisely at that point when the ethical is seen as re­lated to the universal that the ethical is seen in its opposition to the religious. In fact, a dialectic lyric explicating


38 In the case of Abraham's personality, according to Johannes de Silentio, one encounters the teleological suspen­sion of the (universal) ethical.
the decisive difference between ethics and religion is the point of Johannes de Silentio's authorship of *Fear and Trembling*.

How then does Søren Kierkegaard religiously answer the problems investigated by the pseudonymous authors? In light of his ironic style of apologetics Søren Kierkegaard is not going to attempt an answer in terms of the pseudonymous questioners! Beginning at the wrong place in apologetics would make religious offerings appear exhaustively human.39 The pseudonymous authors could argue with great diversity up to the threshold of the religious but further than that they could not go. If it were possible to argue one into the sphere of religion, then religion would be just another aesthetic category. To break the hold of the never-ending aesthetical questions, (the state of being an either/or) Søren Kierkegaard sets the case of the religious in an entirely different discourse than is found in the pseudonymous literature. Without authority, Søren Kierkegaard chooses to edify the reader. The finite perplexities of Hegelian mediation could not be overcome from within the sphere of their own systematizing. Kierkegaard as thinker was convinced that he could not answer an improper question by accepting accidentally the premises of the questioner. With the publishing of the *Edifying Discourses* the infatuation with

39 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. 2 Cor. 5:16.
mediation was not questioned, rather it was radically denied as the necessary starting point. Religion as present in traditional Christianity and in Hegelian philosophy could not be mutually agreeable bed partners. For Kierkegaard it was simply one or the other! If a person is to allow philosophy to control religion then why not take the philosophy (as did Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and Marx) and do away with the accidental appendage called religion? Thus, to quote the pseudonymous muses as if they were speaking in the same way as Søren Kierkegaard in the Edifying Discourses is to reduce the difference between the vocabulary of a believer and a non-believer to something accidental. If the task of religious apologetics is to distinguish between accidentally diverse disciplines, Christ is seen, not as the Son of God, but as just another teacher among men. Surely there lived and will always live men who are considered better at distinguishing between disciplines than was Christ. Just as there will be in the world's terms better historians, sociologists, psychologists, preachers, ministers and humanitarians than Christ.

In Author A's discussion of the occasion he praises it as: "Essentially deciding the question regarding every production's true aesthetic value." The author of the Edifying Discourses finds existence to be just the opposite. For him aesthetic value depends upon a person's willing to believe (Faith):

Whether his forehead was flattened almost like a beast's or arched more proudly than the heavens;

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40 See page 40, footnote #29.
whether his arm was outstretched to rule over kingdoms and countries, or to gather up the necessary gifts which fell from the rich man's table; whether his gesture was obeyed by thousands, or there was not a soul who paid attention to him; whether eloquence blossomed on his lips or only unintelligible sounds passed over them; whether he was the powerful man who defied the storm, or the defenceless woman who only sought shelter against the storm—it has nothing to do with the matter, my hearer, absolutely nothing.41

For Søren Kierkegaard there is a real need for the occasion, but of itself the occasion does not create this need. The immediate occasion as reflected throughout the writing of Author A is determinate in so far as an activity accomplished is exhausted by the immediacy of finitude. The author of the Edifying Discourses discovers the significance of the occasion only when viewed in relation to the Infinite.

My soul is not insensible to the joy or pain of the individual, but, God be praised, it is not thus that the individual can prove or disprove the expectation of faith. God be praised! Nor can time prove it or disprove it; for faith expects an eternity.42

In the second Edifying Discourse entitled "Every Good and Every Perfect Gift is from Above" Søren Kierkegaard uses St. Paul's words to closely distinguish the religious from the aesthetic.

The apostle Paul says: "All of God's creation is good if it is received with thankfulness."
It is principally in order to warn against an earthly prudence which would enslave the believer in the service of ceremonial (the occasion) that

42 Ibid., p. 48.
the apostle says these words. 43

To begin with an exhaustively human understanding of the occasion is the enduring tendency of the aesthetic personality. Yet, cannot the initial assumptions of the aesthetic also come under examination? It seems to be a habit with the pseudonymous muses to question all but their own presuppositions.

The author of the Edifying Discourses points out that if the words of James: "every good gift and every perfect gift if from above" are to have meaning then the reader must be aware that faith is not determined by man's own understanding of the occasion of faith itself, but rather by God in whom there is "no variableness neither shadow of turning."

Whereas the occasion is used in one way by Author A and in another by Author B, Søren Kierkegaard escapes any ambiguity in expressing the occasion by casting it that meaning witnessed by the apostolic words: "Love covers a multitude of sins."

The multiplicity and cleverness of reason to shadow the one religious understanding of the occasion finds expression in the third Edifying Discourse:

Thus is it not true that the guilty may be the occasion for the destruction of the innocent? But is not the opposite equally true? Perhaps then the understanding lacked only the courage to believe this, and while it had sufficient distressing cleverness to discover the wretchedness of life, it did not have the courage to apprehend the power of love. Is this not true? For the reason still merely makes a man despondent and faint-hearted, but love gives courage freely, and because of this

every apostolic word is always confident.  

This passage attempts much. It denies to the rational beginnings of Hegelian and Kantian philosophy an opening to explain life as expressed in an apostolic word. It posits love as a power not totally determined by man's own effort, thus establishing the understanding of love not in the "overman" of Neitzsche but in the confident framework of an apostolic utterance. It abandons all Pelegian efforts, not into the business of corrective doubt but into the despairing guise of despondency and faint-heartedness. The reality of both the infinite and the finite is again witnessed in a testimony to their distinction. Apostolic love and romantic love are two occasions not relatively distinct but absolutely distinct.  

In the fifth Edifying Discourse entitled "Strengthened in the Inner Man" Søren Kierkegaard considers how the occasion is to be used in relation to the religious. Johannes de Silentio has described the movements of the Knight of Faith in two steps. The first step (as far as the Knight of Infinite Resignation goes) is to renounce the occasions of earthly concern. For the Knight of Faith another step must be taken, the entire human activity must be overcome and itself become the occasion for strengthening the inner man. Although Johannes de Silentio cannot yet make this step, in the fifth Edifying Discourse is found


45 Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with the idols? Cor. 6:15-16.
a highly favored man blessed with prosperity who nevertheless is a Knight of Faith and is described at the hour of death like this:

...but when in the stillness of the night the call comes: "Render an accounting for your stewardship," then he knows what this summons means; he knows how the account stands, and even if there is something lacking, he confidently quits the world of thought and action, which still had not possessed his soul; abandons the elaborately complex and extensive labor, which from day to day had furnished him the occasion for strengthening the inner man.46

Regarding the occasion in this fashion enables the understanding to witness life's movements not as if bound to explain the occasion in terms of its own exhaustive phenomenology (as if the occasion could exist in such a fashion except in despair), but rather to understand the occasion in terms of the Infinite apart from which there are only appearances.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.47

47 I Cor. 10:31.
Chapter 3. Either/Or.

So I make plans like a worldly man, ready to say yes and no at once.40

Kierkegaard's ironic use of either/or is taken from Socrates. The intensive use of this expression draws its strength from the quest for the infinite by means of the negative.

No, it is a Socrates who relishes the play of light and shadow entailed in a syllogistic aut-aut, when almost at the same instant appear the noontide of day and the pitch black of night, the infinitely real and infinite nothingness.49

There is a similarity of intensity in this concept as there was in the concept of the moment. The reason for incorporating such a term as either/or is to enable the conception of existence to escape becoming systematized and reduced to logical necessity. The passionate freedom existing within either/or far outweighs for Kierkegaard, the determined mediation of Hegel's system. By using either/or the reader is forced to choose between Socrates and Hegel. If speculative philosophy is possible in its mediation then either/or is insignificant. And if either/or is possible, speculation is ridiculous.

Either/or as a category of existence for Kierkegaard was absolutely opposed to mediation. And yet either/or was essential, if man was to be open to the possibility of religion. Understood in relation to mediation or speculative philosophy,

48 II Cor. 1:18.

49 Concept of Irony, p. 117.
either/or could be seen only in its absolute negativity. Even though disenchanted by Hegelian mediation either/or leaves a man starving like the hungry donkey between two hay stacks. The advantage of either/or over mediation resides in the fact that in the case of either/or at least the stacks of hay are real and the donkey is actually starving!

It is not the purpose of Authors A and B to win the reader either to accepting the aesthetic or the ethical, but rather to point out the negativity of the either/or stance. For as Kierkegaard illustrates, it is not he who chooses either this or that, but he who becomes an either/or that understands the meaning of Either/Or. If one simply chose an either/or that choice itself could be mediated forward. It was the purpose of Kierkegaard to show man precisely as he was. Only by becoming an either/or was man able to see clearly where religion did not lie. Otherwise, man would continue on with the business of Christendom regarding religion as he did the other words mediated within the system of speculative philosophy.

Similar to the word moment and its development into the concept of the instant Kierkegaard develops the term either/or into the concept of fear and trembling. Initially either/or is seen in its relation to Socratic irony. Once the negativity of either/or gives way to a positive expression the more important concept of fear and trembling is born. This is not to deny the place of either/or in Kierkegaard's authorship. Rather it points out that as Kierkegaard begins to confront the pseudonymous writers with the religious, something other than the
ironic expression of either/or is needed. When Johannes de Silentio studies Abraham it becomes obvious that something other than either/or is demanded.

As is the case throughout the aesthetic stage of Kierkegaard's authorship the understanding of pseudonymous vocabulary becomes plain in the Edifying Discourses. Having been exhausted by the irony of Author A and Author B, Søren Kierkegaard seeks to edify in his discourses. The entire mood has been changed, the absolute negativity of either/or and its constant motion from this vein to that is abruptly done away within the discourses where faith and not irony take command.

It is true that he who expects something in particular may be disappointed; but this does not happen to the believer...he still says: "There is an expectation which all the world can not take from me; it is the expectation of faith and this is victory...my expectation was not in the world but in God."51

The pseudonymous category of either/or has been radically overcome in the eternity of faith, that faith which edifies!

50 Some either of this or some of that, or even of having this either/or.

Chapter 4. Fear and Trembling

Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove!" 52

As a religious expression fear and trembling is a more traditionally understandable conception than either/or or repetition. In Johannes de Silentio's book of that same title fear and trembling is seen in relation to Abraham's act of faith.

I know now that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me. 53

In the hands of the non-Hegelian Johannes de Silentio fear and trembling is used to point out that true religious faith possesses a quality entirely different from any other human experience. The paradoxical fear and trembling of faith is absolutely distinct from the mediations of Hegelian philosophy, the poetic passion of Shakespere, the demands of the universal on the particular or the immediacy of aestheticism.

Johannes de Silentio is producing an entire book just to let the faithful conception of fear and trembling stand firm in its traditional usage. 54

52 Psalms 55:5-6.

53 Genesis 22:12.

54 And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. I Cor. 2:3-5.

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or philosophy will ever take fear and trembling from the act of faith. If a man ever arrives at that point where his faith is essentially different from that experienced by Abraham he will have allowed the paradoxical and passionate nature of faith to be replaced by something else. Reflecting on that faith which so far he has not chosen, Johannes de Silentio states that it is impossible to find anything more passionate than the act of faith, and that any talk of going beyond faith is simply another way of refusing to accept it for what it is.

In our time nobody is content to stop with faith but wants to go further. It would perhaps be rash to ask where these people are going, but it is surely a sign of breeding and culture for me to assume that everybody has faith, for otherwise it would be queer for them to be...going further.55

In choosing the sub-title "a dialectical lyric" to the book title Fear and Trembling Kierkegaard allows the interested, though yet unbelieving Johannes de Silentio to reflect on the religious conception of fear and trembling. It is obvious that fear and trembling could be the subject of a religiously edifying discourse, but such a book could not be written by the non-believing Johannes de Silentio. By placing Johannes de Silentio in a dialectically lyrical relationship to the fear and trembling of faith, Kierkegaard has taken the non-believer one step further along the way in showing him precisely where he is. For within the book Fear and Trembling the author sees clearly the difference between his lyrical regard for faith, and Abraham who in fear and trembling chose to believe. As an apologist Kierkegaard was aware that he

55 Fear and Trembling, p. 23.
could not force faith on to another, but rather only make clear the difference between believing and not believing. Johannes de Silentio can only be negatively interested in faith since he only regards it lyrically.

I am convinced that God is love, this thought has for me a primitive lyrical validity.56

The lyrical apprehension of faith, however, is not the same as giving up the possibility of faith or abandoning it to some necessary category within a logical system. Johannes de Silentio is better off than the Hegelian members of Christendom in that he is still able to will to believe since he has not ruled out the possibility beforehand. Yet Johannes is in despair to the degree that he wills to remain where he is. By putting this entire discussion in the hands of lyrical minded Johannes de Silentio Kierkegaard saves his apologetic from becoming pleased with its recognition of the fact that Abraham's fear and trembling is different than other human experience. As soon as the clarifying stage of apologetics becomes a substitute for faith itself, then apologetics destroys the possibility of faith and is no longer an apologetic but rather a negative force acting in despair against belief.

Whereas Hegelianized Christianity seeks to go beyond fear and trembling not realizing that by doing such it has become anti-Christian, Johannes de Silentio at least distinguishes between fear and trembling as a lyrical expression and as an essential increment of faith.

56 Fear and Trembling, p. 45.
But the highest passion in a man is faith, and here no generation begins at any other point than did the preceding generation, every generation begins all over again, the subsequent generation gets no further than the foregoing—in so far as this remained faithful to its task and did not leave it in the lurch.  

It is only when man goes beyond the either/or stance in relation to time and human activity that he stands in relation to fear and trembling. Fear and trembling is the faithful category that belongs to Abraham, either/or is the category of infinite resignation that belongs to Socrates. The advantage of becoming an either/or, however, does not positively destroy the possibility of fear and trembling but simply regards the passion of believing in an absolutely negative fashion. Only a man of faith experiences fear and trembling.

The words of the pseudonymous authors cannot in any positive manner edify the reader. Yet with the writing of Johannes de Silentio the fear and trembling of the believer stands apart from the other expressions of human activity. On the other hand, the writing of Søren Kierkegaard does edify because in his discourses it is assumed that the reader already is a believer and already has begun not with the wisdom of men but with the wisdom of God.

57 Fear and Trembling, p. 130.
58 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power." I Cor. 4:20.
59 But if you have bitter jealously and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish... But the wisdom from above is first pure then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity." James 3:14...17.
When either/or is converted into fear and trembling something other than the finite self becomes the measure of man. It is not until man escapes the despair of regarding all things in relation to himself only that he is able to define himself religiously. When a personality becomes an either/or it is so absorbed in the strife of self-identity that it never becomes more than a shadow of itself in motion. When fear and trembling enter the personality the constant dialectic of being either "this" or "that" is overcome. The negativity of either/or is abandoned as the personality in fear and trembling relates itself to the Infinite. The self-directed despair of becoming an either/or is left behind and replaced by the accepted willingness of a becoming in fear and trembling.
Part III

The Relationship of the Future
to the Possibility of Repetition

Chapter I. The Future

So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours.¹

The first Edifying Discourse, entitled "The Expectation of Faith" is written to be read on New Year's Day when everyone is thinking particularly about the inscrutable possibilities involved in the future.

As the number of those who expect something always constitutes the majority of the world, so too their expectations can be so various that it is very difficult to mention all of them. Yet all of them have one expectation in common, that they all expect some future.²

One wonders how various people come to regard the future. Is the future simply the past remembered forward? Does one find himself building the future on those joyful or sorrowful moments which have already taken place? On the other hand can one only be "enslaved like the beasts, his head bent toward the earth, his soul ensnared in the service of the moment?"³ If there is only the present, what is there of man that differentiates him

¹ I Cor. 3:21-22
³ Ibid.
from the other animals? The future then cannot be regarded as
the past put into the service of tomorrow. Nor can it be the
present. If the future were the present there could be no ex­
pectation. In the finite order of time one cannot expect what
one has.

The tendency of the Romantic poet to view the future as
the past, is well expressed by Author A in his introductory re­
frains:

An so it is with me: always before me an empty
space; what drives me forward is a consistency
which lies behind me. 4

These words reflect Kierkegaard's continual insistence that
German Romanticism never breaks the bonds of its own reflective
poetry. Author A begins and ends imprisoned within his own
poetic reflections. The Romanticist for Kierkegaard is incapable
of expressing the future, but simply echos again and again the
past. The reflective man could never say what Søren Kierkegaard
says initially in the first Edifying Discourse:

The past is completed; the present is not; only the
future is, which yet is not. 5

Compare this to Author A's consideration of hope:

I can describe hope so vividly that every hoping
individual will acknowledge my description; and
yet it is a deception, for while I picture hope,
I think of memory. 6

In "The Ancient Tragical Motif As Reflected in the Modern"\textsuperscript{7} Author A, after showing that the modern idea of the tragical is reflective anxiety and so is essentially different than the Greek\textsuperscript{8} concept of sorrow, says:

In addition, anxiety always involves a reflection upon time, for I cannot be anxious about the present, but only about the past or the future; but the past and the future so resisting one another that the present vanishes, are reflective determinations.\textsuperscript{9}

In so far as the future is regarded as a reflective category, it can only probe around about the future or posit the whole future in the present moment, yet so that the present moment instantly dissolves in succession. It is clear that Author A cannot break into the real, but again must return to his reflection of the past.

Author B reviews the case of Author A concerning the future with great passion:

You turn towards the future, for action is always futuristic. You say, "I can either do this or do that, but whichever of the two I do is equally mad, ergo I do nothing at all."\textsuperscript{10}

The point being made here is that either the word future means something other than the past under another form, or the future

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} The title of the second chapter of Either/Or, Vol. I.
\item \textsuperscript{8} But since in order to experience sorrow, the tragic guilt must have this vagueness, so reflection must not be present in its infinitude, for then it would reflect her out of her guilt, because reflection in its infinite subjectivity cannot let the element of inherited guilt remain, which causes the sorrow. (Either/Or, Vol. I, p. 152.)
\item \textsuperscript{9} Either/Or, Vol. I, p. 153.
\item \textsuperscript{10} Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 174.
\end{itemize}
and the past are identified. The later is precisely what Author B is condemning Author A for. For if the future and the past are simply the same thing under different names, whether Author A wishes to "do nothing at all" or whether he wishes to play with words regarding them once as the future and then once as the past, doesn't really matter at all. The whole matter has fallen under the shadow of subjectivism.

Carrying the discussion further Author B points out the inability of philosophy to answer the question about the future.

Now I assume that philosophy is in the right, that the principle of contradiction really is annulled, or that the philosophers transcend it every instant in the higher unity which exists for thought. This however, surely cannot hold with respect to the future, for the oppositions must first be in existence before I can mediate them. But if the oppositions are there, then there must be an either/or. The philosopher says, "That's the way it's been hitherto." I ask, "What am I to do if I do not want to be a philosopher?"

Again the future is to be found in the past. The Romantic poet and the Hegelian philosopher have lost any real contact with the future because they have failed to notice the ideality-in-the-past of their reflections.

What can only be reflected out of the past by the poet and what can only be mediated and mediated and mediated by the philosopher as the future is caste aside in the Edifying Discourses:

Through the eternal can one conquer the future, because the eternal is the foundation of the future; therefore through this one can understand that. What then is the eternal power in man? It is faith...The believer is therefore done with the future before he begins on the

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11 Either/Or, Vol. II, p. 175. Relating this statement to the overall apologetic of Kierkegaard, the reader might well ask the question, "What am I to do if I do not want to be a theologian?"
present; for what one has conquered no longer has power
to disturb one, and this victory can only make one more
powerful for the present.\textsuperscript{12}

What has become of reflection? It has lost its place of romantic
importance. Anxiety over the future has been overcome by faith.
By a faithful look at the future the author of the "Expectation
of Faith" has inverted the modern preoccupations with reflective
subjectivity by refusing to accept them in the beginning.\textsuperscript{13}

If Hegelian philosophy is concerned with the real, and as
such is more than a system of thought, then the future as medi­
at ed in that philosophy stands of itself and "the expectation of
faith" can only be an appendage added to it or mediated from it.
On the other hand if the future in Hegelian philosophy is con­
cerned with the past to such a degree that the future is nothing
other than past re-stated, then the future as "the expectation of
faith" is an entirely different matter which in letters only
resembles the future as mediated.

The understanding of faith presented by Søren Kierkegaard
enables one to regard much eschatological talk as a preoccupation
concerned with reflective categories. No matter how preoccupied
one becomes in regard to the future, or how poetically satis­
fied one wishes to see the future, the future for Søren Kierke­
gaard can be had only through faith and this faith can be had only
through being constantly developed. In no way can a person get

\begin{quotation}
\textsuperscript{12} Edifying Discourses, Vol. I, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{13} For Søren Kierkegaard and for the Christian, "In the
beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word
was God." John 1:1.
\end{quotation}
beyond the future, and in no way can a person mediate to the future. The future is united to the infinite and can only be witnessed in man at that point where ideality and actuality merge. This is the place where consciousness is relationship. The manifold theories of subjectivism can be extensively reflected in the thought world of ideality, but they cannot touch actuality except in the consciousness of man.

Reflection is the mere disinterested process of setting thing against thing in collision. Consciousness is the place where this process takes place; indeed it is the energizing force behind the process. There alone doubt can reside. And consciousness is not disinterested. 14

Nor can finite considerations get beyond themselves. For continually they are condemned to the moment of their expression. Something other than a series of finite moments is needed to understand the future. For the author of "The Expectation of Faith" the future regarded solely in its finitude is a dangerous enemy.

He who fights with the future has a more dangerous enemy, he can never remain ignorant about himself; for he fights with himself. The future is not; it borrows its strength from the man himself, and when it has tricked him out of this, then it appears outside of him as the enemy he must meet. Let a man then be as strong as he will, no man is stronger than himself. 15

How then for Soren Kierkegaard is a man to be armed for the conflict with the future? He immediately dismissed the commonly

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approved defenders, as Job did his "friends." Experience as a friend has a double tongue, guessing is a deceitful guide, supposition is a vague glance and conclusion is a sling where a man more often catches himself than the other. Imagine what would happen to modern man if these four "friends of the finite" lost their "infinite gloss." And yet as long as man is content to rotate these ideas intensively and extensively so as to keep busily away from "Him without whom was not anything made," the future remains determined and boring in the past.

The only understanding of the future which Søren Kierkegaard treats as real is that which expects victory. This entire matter is in the hands of faith and the future which edifies is the future of the believer.

And today on the first day of the year, when the thought about the future thrusts itself upon me, I will not satiate my soul with various expectations, nor dissipate it in manifold ideas; I will rally it, and, sound and happy, if possible, go forth to meet the future. It brings what it will and must bring; many expectations disappointed, many fulfilled, so it will happen, as experience has taught me; but there is an expectation which will not be disappointed; experience has not taught expectation of faith, and this is victory.


17 "The Rotation Method" was the title of the chapter of Either/Or, Vol. I. It is also the place where Kierkegaard first begins to develop the concept which will eventually be called "Repetition."

18 John 1:3

Chapter 2. Repetition

Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Like most of Kierkegaard's aesthetic vocabulary, repetition receives its initial exposition in Either/Or.

...only sensuous love, in terms of its very concept, is essentially faithless. But this, its faithlessness, appears also in another way; it becomes in fact only a constant repetition.

This faithlessness which becomes repetition is precisely that form of faithless sensuousness which, while in pursuit of momentary pleasure, allows the personality to be overcome by boredom. Author A does not let the matter rest here. He hopes to save the personality this boredom. In Mozart's Don Juan sensuous faithlessness is not mediated into language. As soon as the listener holds the immediate sensuousness of Mozart's Don Juan firm (mediates the musical Don Juan into the idea of Don Juan) Don Juan vanishes. Repetition of faithless sensuousness into the category of boredom is impossible within the immediacy of Mozart's Don Juan.

Along the same lines of preserving aesthetical immediacy, Author A records an essay on social prudence: "The Rotation..."

20 John 3:5. "Unless a man be born another" The Greek another has the double meaning of "from above" and "again." (New Testament Reading Guide, commentary by Raymond Brown [Collegeville, Minn., 1965], p. 56.)

Method. In this essay the socially prudent man learns to cleverly control all pleasure so as not to become bored with its charms. By shrewdly manipulating the various moments of pleasure Author A hopes to overcome the ennui of repetition.

No moment must be permitted so great a significance that it cannot be forgotten when convenient; each moment ought however, to have so much significance that it can be recollected at will.

Author A praises the art of remembering and forgetting in their role of "insuring against sticking fast in some relationships of life, and making possible the realization of a complete freedom." On the other hand Author A warns against friendship and even more so marriage. The reason being that "the essential thing is never to stick fast, and for this it is necessary to have oblivion back of one." The whole secret of this shrewd repetition lies in arbitrariness. The person confined to this stage must be willing to transform something accidental into the absolute, and as such into the object of his admiration.

The immediate sensuousness of Mozart's Don Juan is a more delicate investigation of the aesthetic than is the shrewdness of "The Rotation Method." The first deals with the basic aesthetic notion of erotic sensuousness as expressed in the musical.

22 See footnote number 17, Part III, p. 65.
The second deals with man's manipulation of sensuous pleasure when located outside the musical. Kierkegaard's most complete presentation of this position comes in the "Diary of a Seducer." The discussion of Mozart's Don Juan is directed toward those modern European aesthetes who were yet aware of the graceful beauty of Greek aestheticism. "The Rotation Method" was more concerned to speak to the quasi-aesthetic personality whose involvement with the "beautiful" was not free from the sticky fingers of modern pragmatism.

Author B sees the matter differently. For him, if repetition is impossible, the possibility of ethics is forever abandoned. By its very nature ethics is related to the universal and not to immediate sensuousness. Nearly the entire production of Author B is consumed in the effort to defend the aesthetic validity of marriage. (granted its unchanging ethical structure)

Directing himself to Author A, Author B states:

It is no wonder you are alarmed and that you associate these signs and "gesticulations" with things of which one dare not say decies repetita placunt; for if that which gives them value was the characteristic qualification "the first time," a repetition is indeed impossible. But healthy love has an entirely different worth; it is in time it accomplishes its work, and therefore, it will be capable of rejuvenation itself by means of these outward signs, and (what to me is the principal thing) it has an entirely different conception of time and the significance of repetition.27

The reader of Either/Or is left with two alternatives, or as

26 The relation of ethics to the universal is taken up again at length in Fear and Trembling.

Kierkegaard puts it, "he becomes an either/or." The sensuous immediacy of Mozart's Don Juan or marriage? The immediacy of Don Juan escapes the ethical constancy of marriage. Marriage is left in boredom if sensuous immediacy is absent. This is as far as Authors A and B can go. The ironic disembodiment of the Hegelian categories is again obvious. Any hope of mediating the aesthetic as immediate sensuousness and the aesthetic viewed ethically into the category of marriage is impossible.

Up to this point Kierkegaard has not fully intuited the concept of repetition which is to be the theme of Constantius' book. So far, repetition is defined more in accord with the common designation. That is, in relation to "the first," boredom, and time. Not until Kierkegaard begins Johannes Climacus Or, Do Omnibus Dubitandum Est does the concept of repetition begin to blossom into its own.

It is when Ideality and Reality (i.e. Actuality) are put into contact with each other that Repetition appears. When, for example, I see something "in the moment," Ideality intervenes and explains that it is a repetition. There is opposition here, because that which was existing, exists again in another manner. That this outward object exists, that I can see. But


29 Although not discussed in this essay "the first" is an important category both in Either/Or (Chapter six, Vol. I, is entitled "The First Love.") and in the Edifying Discourses. (Especially in Vol. I, the last paragraph of the fifth Discourse: "Blessed the man who can truly say: God in heaven was my first love." P. 129)

30 This work was never completed. It was begun in 1842.

31 In the sense that immediacy is reality.
at the same time I bring it into relationship with something else which also exists, something which is the same too. Here is a twofoldness, one resembling the other. Here we can rightly speak of Repetition. 32

When actuality is seen "in the moment" or as "history repeats itself," it is not seen as tempered by "Ideality." Left untempered, actuality finds itself lost in the ambiguousness of human experience.

For experience as a friend has a double tongue which says now one thing, now another; and guessing is a deceitful guide who deserts one when one needs him most, and the supposition is a vague glance which does not look very far, and the conclusion is a sling wherein a man more often catches himself than the other. In addition, those weapons are difficult to use; for with guessing goes fear, with conjecture apprehension, with the conclusion disquiet, since the questing soul does not remain unmoved by the experience. 33

On the other hand how does Ideality (Eternity) help to explain repetition present within man's finite existence?

Eternity [Ideality] does not participate in this contingency. [Of actuality]. It is: unchangeable, "necessary" (opposite of contingent), permanent. Obviously there can be no repetition in a sphere which cannot change or admit of new factors. 34

Whereas actuality is regarded as totally submerged in the moment, Eternity can of itself have nothing to do with this time-bound actuality. Apparently repetition is impossible. Time presents an unending series of unrelated moments. Ideality (Eternity) remains aloof in its timeless unchangeableness.

32 Johannes Climacus, p. 154.
In solving this dilemma of repetition Kierkegaard is aware of three historical positions. Closest at hand is the solution of German romanticism. According to this mode of thinking, existence is apparently left open to freedom (away from boredom) by establishing the present and the future in an "echoed" relationship to the past. An attempt to make the present and the future distinct from the past and yet dependent on the past is a common feature of German romanticism. There exists a hidden reductionism in romanticism which defines everything in relation to something that is assumed to be present in the past. Romanticism seeks out the historical in existence, makes that the subject of its art and by using language well, hopes to convert the historical on its own merit into a trans-historical importance. Again the attempt on the part of German Romanticism to mediate the finite into the infinite is made obvious.

Socrates has another solution. He begins his investigation of human freedom in relation to Ideality. This process is referred to as Recollection.

The error of the Sophist is in seeking to arrogate something to man; the Socratic, on the other hand, in denying in every sense that virtue can be taught. Hence it is obvious that this Socratic conception is negative: it negates life, development, in short, history in its most universal and widest sense. The Sophist negates original history, Socrates subsequent history.—If we next inquire to what more universal consideration this Socratic view must be referred, in what totality it reposes, then it obviously has the significance attributed to recollection. Recollection is retrograde development, however, and hence the reflected image of development in the strict sense... The Socratic approach, on the other hand, is to get the whole of actuality disaffirmed, and then refer mankind to a recollection that recedes further and further
toward a past itself receding as far back in time as the origin of that noble family which no one can remember. 35

In the case of German Romanticism the present is exhausted in relation to the past. Thus reducing all human experience to the level of historical relationship. Socrates also regards the present in light of the past. Yet in the case of Socrates the present is not exhausted in its relation to the past but rather the present stands in an ironical relationship to the past which is a relationship of infinite comparing and rejecting. This ironic understanding of existence brought to light in Socrates is well illustrated in the dialogue of Protagoras.

...the negative lies in the always necessarily and inherently fatal dissatisfaction of an infinite empiricism, the irony in the 'bon appetit!', so to speak, which Socrates wishes Protagoras. 36

Socrates escapes an interpretation of existence which rests momentarily in the finite-historical. Though negative in nature, the concept of Socratic irony remains open to the possibility of the infinite. Such an openness is demanded of any language which is to be called religious (or apologetic).

The third position is that of Christianity. Here human freedom exists in the instantaneous presence of time and eternity. When temporal existence is realized anew in this instantaneous presence of time and eternity that repetition is born which is the title and subject of Constantine Constantius' book.

35 *The Concept of Irony*, p. 97.
Constantius begins by pointing out the difference between hope, recollection and repetition:

Hope is a new garment, starched and stiff and glittering, yet one has never had it on, and hence one does not know how it will become one and how it fits. Recollection is a discarded garment, which beautiful as it may be, does not fit, for one has outgrown it. Repetition is an imperishable garment, which fits snugly and comfortably, neither too tight nor too loose. Hope is a charming maiden but slips through the fingers, recollection is a beautiful old woman but of no use at the instant, repetition is a beloved wife of whom one never tires.\(^{37}\)

Without calling up Christianity to present its own case (Constantius being quite unable to do such, not being a man of faith) Constantius expresses concern for a positive principle of human freedom which asserts something other than a relationship to the past. Further he desires a new word which will describe to rational man what it is to be open to the future in such a way as to somehow escape the negativity of Greek recollection. Such a word he discovers is repetition. The hidden truth of the matter is that such a word, though found on the lips of the a-religious Constantius, depends from beginning to end upon a positive principle within religion. Not until the end of the book does Constantius see the religious nature of the entire investigation. Initially in a Pelagian attire Constantius discusses the matter as if on his own he could resolve it. But having fled up and down the labyrinthine ways of his own mind, Constantius finally admits of the religious starting point of his searching.

\(^{37}\) Repetition, p. 34.
As was often the case with Kierkegaard's publications, Repetition was well received but for the wrong reasons. The most serious level of concern present within the book was generally disregarded. Finally after one prominent Danes' review Constantine Constantius is driven to compose a fifty-five page reply. "A Little Plea" by Constantine Constantius, author of Repetition finds repetition in three forms: repetition (A) in relation to pleasure; repetition (B) in relation to shrewdness; repetition (C) in relation to freedom itself. This third form is the matter of the work Repetition, even though the author, Constantius, goes a considerable way to point out psychologically how in the case of this repetition (C) one is deceived by repetition (A) and (B).

Repetition (A). Freedom first is defined as pleasure or in pleasure. What it now fears is repetition. It is as if repetition possessed a magic power to hold freedom captive when once it had contrived to get it under its influence. Yet in spite of all the inventiveness of pleasure repetition makes its appearance. At this stage, the psychological "moment" of pleasure is let stand for what it is. In so far as each moment of pleasure condemns a man to that particular moment alone, all hope of continuity of life vanishes and pleasure falls into despair. There is a fear of repetition present, but it is not repetition (C). Repetition at this stage is of that kind which finds man wishing pleasure to last forever when he is fully aware that every pleasurable moment is precisely pleasurable because of its definite time limit. A personality defined in
relation to "pleasure-moment" despairs of itself in that it chooses to be closed off from any relation with Ideality or Eternity.

Repetition (B). Here freedom is defined as shrewdness.

Repetition is assumed to exist, but it is the task of freedom to see constantly a new side of repetition... However, since freedom defined as shrewdness is only finitely characterized, repetition must again make its appearance, that is repetition of the trick by which shrewdness wants to delude repetition and make it something else.36

In repetition (A) pleasure is itself seen in the desperate moment.

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.39

The relation of one pleasurable moment to another is left aside. In repetition (B) the shrewd manipulations of finite moments are themselves found to be in despair. Finally repetition (A) and (B) are found wanting for the same reason. In either case human experience is found lost in the momentary satisfaction of the finite and closed off to the infinite.

Repetition (C) is another kind. At this point freedom does not seek pleasure or shrewdness, but repetition itself. Realizing that repetition (A) and (B) of themselves cannot reconcile life's moments in any real way, freedom wishes to keep repetition rather as a means for justifying itself, that is, for making

38 Repetition, p. 12.
In case it should come about that freedom in the individual, related as it is to the environment, might remain, so to speak, lying in the result, so that it cannot withdraw (repeat itself), then all is lost. So then what freedom now fears is not repetition but change, what it wills is not change but repetition.40

Whereas repetition (A) and (B) were finally condemned to the finitude of the pleasurable moment and shrewdness, freedom itself calls for repetition (C) to keep itself free. If freedom is to be present in the individual, repetition must be possible in order to enable freedom to escape the determinism of the moment.

The Kierkegaardian dialectic is hard at work. Repetition (A) and (B) destroy freedom as reflected in pleasure and shrewdness. Repetition (C) is demanded by freedom as reflected in freedom itself. Repetition (A) and (B) are not mediated into a third higher repetition. Either the assumptions of repetition (A) and (B) are true, and so freedom is impossible, or repetition (C) is possible and repetition (A) and (B) are seen as categories of despair. Constantius uses repetition (A) and (B) to deceive the reader into accepting an interest in repetition (C).

Finally freedom in the individual is possible only if repetition (C) is possible. And yet, repetition (C) is neither the product of, nor in accord with repetition (A) and (B).

Then when Stoicism has stepped aside there remains only the religious movement as the true expression

40 Repetition, p. 12.
of repetition, and in its strife it announces itself with the passionate eloquence of the anxious freedom.\textsuperscript{41} Constantine Constantius cannot deal with repetition (C). That is not his concern. He is simply searching modern culture to see how it handles such a problem outside the religious category of faith. Constantius winds up disconcerted and empty handed. At the deepest level of existence his culture was unable to provide the necessary vocabulary. Constantius finds himself in a state similar to Hegel in Hegel's imagined dialogue with Socrates.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{Socrates:} & Shall we begin by being in complete disagreement, or shall we agree about a thing we might call a presupposition? \\
\textbf{Hegel:} & (silent) \\
\textbf{Socrates:} & What presupposition do you begin with? \\
\textbf{Hegel:} & With none at all. \\
\textbf{Socrates:} & Splendid! Then I suppose you do not begin at all? \\
\textbf{Hegel:} & I not begin, who have written twenty-one volumes?\textsuperscript{42}
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{41} Repetition, pp. 12-13.  
\textsuperscript{42} J. 552 (VI.A. 145) Cited in Johannes Climacus, p. 61.
Part IV
Concluding Repetition

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

In staging the problem of how one is to become a Christian Kierkegaard has looked carefully both at the Christian and at the non-believer. The believer is noted for his passionate willingness to believe, to live, to suffer and to be happy. The unbeliever is bored. As an apologist Kierkegaard is concerned mainly with the Christian happiness as it stands over against boredom. Whether one is faithfully happy or unbelievably bored depends in large part on how one regards his time. Thus the initial thrust of Kierkegaard's aesthetic authorship is concerned with the time bound moment.

Kierkegaard is suggesting that if we take a close look around us boredom consists in a disproportionate ordering of time. There is a time to go to work, a time to read the newspaper, a time to eat, a time to watch television, a time to recreate, a time to have children, a time to drink beer, a time to make love, a time to be born, a time to go to church, a time to read more books, a time to go to school, a time to get married, a time to think, and finally a time to die. The entire

1 I Cor. 1:18.
life span of man is filled with moments of clock-calculated activity. The happy life, in terms of technological society, is the full life. Advertising soaks the imagination with this idea, psychology illustrates the necessity of keeping this notion of time equitably balanced, education helps everyone realize this fact, sociology showers it on to the less fortunate, and "theology" sanctifies this notion.

Suppose that life, packaged out in these time-bound moments, was to become boring? Suppose that the pursuit of time-bound pleasure was explicitly proven to be boring. Suppose that the poor man didn't seek out the pleasurable moments of the middle class and the middle class forgot for an instant to be infatuated with the splendid use of time projected by the upper class. Suppose that happiness didn't depend in any way on more money, a better job, better education, a secure future or even talk about these things. Suppose that the entire super-structure of modern culture could be proven to be boring. Who would believe it? Who has the time for such a thought?

Kierkegaard looked around and saw Copenhagen as busy and bored. Now since part of this time-bound activity included going to church, and in writing MA theses in theology surely religion is just as busy and just as boring as the rest of culture. In fact it appeared that theology was the busiest and most boring activity of all, since it was supposed by some to be at the center of things. Kierkegaard saw Christendom to be a busy, pluralistic, unhappy, ambiguous moment of boredom. ²

² Could this be an adequate definition of North American theology?
Now a man who saw what Kierkegaard saw could quit going to church and begin to look around for his soul. The average man, however, was not so fortunate. He is so lost in his moments-of-time that he either doesn't recognize this state of boredom and so remains as he is, sees it and keeps going to church though secretly in despair about the whole matter, or sees it, quits going to church, but can't find the time to look around for his soul. The pseudonymous authors make it evident that living within this boring order of moments is not peculiar to any one type of man. It includes the fragmented personality, the experimental psychologist and the poet. Everyone stands in relation to the moment similarly. There is no temporal means of escaping the demands of time. The only means of overcoming boredom is in overcoming time. Who even cares about such a problem? For the few who care Kierkegaard develops the common word, the instant. Since man has always had time, since he has always lived in a finite world, if you take time away man is gone. But can't man overcome this time? "Yes," answers Kierkegaard. Time can be overcome and it is in the instant that Eternity breaks through into this time. Then the boredom of the momentary experience is radically reduced to nothing and made over again into everything.

But then, one asks, on what occasion will this take place. At what time can I count on converting a moment into an instant? Let me recollect, will it be on New Years, at next Sunday's worship service, at the completion of my education, at the
birth of a child, when I choose a bride, when I purchase a house, when I take a joint, or when I convince myself of my righteousness? Could it be that the occasion, as so well ordered by technological man, is incapable of ever allowing for the possibility of the instant? Could it be that regardless of the sermon, the day, the country, the music, or the community that the occasion of itself cannot determine the instant?

And yet won't something so time-less as an instant cause a person to worry, see a psychiatrist or maybe even return as quickly as possible to a more temporary problem? But what if a person tried to allow the instant to happen, would he not fear and tremble in such a way that all the time bound theoretical constructs of psychology would grow pale and become silent. Is psychology ever silent? Does the quest for knowledge never cease? Can anyone but get on with his business of the day?

But suppose the instant occurs. Suppose Eternity breaks through into time. Wouldn't that too become boring? "No," answers Kierkegaard. For finite man the infinite is not boring. In this one case, when the finite and the infinite come together repetition is beautiful. It is only face to face with the infinite that man blossoms into full manhood and realizes his freedom. Continually, however, the instant is hidden from view and the moment tempts one to return to its embrace. Only the possibility of repeating the eternal in time can give man hope to abandon oneself absurdly to the instant. To expect the future to be filled with more and more moments of pleasure is not the expectation of one who lives in the instant.
Repetition of the infinite has taken the future out of the hands of time-bound moments and let the future come to rest in the instant. The moment by moment measuring out of existence has been overcome.

And yet isn't Kierkegaard's writing itself going to be sucked up into this moment by moment consumption of everything? Won't people start writing more either/or's about Either/Or? Yes, they will and Kierkegaard no doubt expected it. For Kierkegaard offered to the mob-minded intellectuals his pseudonymous out-pourings, but not as the truth but as that necessary bit of flash which would deceitfully make it necessary for the individual reader to consider the possibility of The Truth. Let the pseudonymous muses go on. Let distinctions be made ad infinitum within the un-existential categories of non-belief. To come away from the pseudonymous muses as a non-believing existentialist would have been an impossibility for Kierkegaard. The only existentialist for Kierkegaard is the believer. The reader either finds momentary security in the pseudonymous patterns of thought (becomes an either/or) or he abandons pseudonymity entirely and existentially becomes edified in the Word of God.
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