

THE ESSENTIAL KIERKEGAARD



Edited by

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(pbk.)

THE CONCEPT OF ANXIETY
A SIMPLE PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIENTING
DELIBERATION ON THE DOGMATIC ISSUE OF
HEREDITARY SIN (JUNE 17, 1844)
BY VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS

The elemental themes involved in the analysis of anxiety are freedom/necessity, continuity/discontinuity, good/evil, innocence/guilt, and the becoming of the self. *Fragments* (published four days earlier) deals with the ontology of freedom, and *Anxiety* and *The Sickness unto Death* deal with the anthropological aspects of freedom. Anxiety is the "dizziness of freedom," the awareness of the "possibility of *being* able." The term "psychological" is therefore used in the earlier sense of philosophical anthropology, the conception of human nature. Anxiety in this view, like despair in *The Sickness unto Death*, is therefore not simply a defect but a mark of the human being's possibility of becoming spirit, an authentic self, qualitatively beyond the given duality of the psychical-physical. The actualization of this possibility entails reflection and a decisive qualitative leap, whereby the individual enters the ethical sphere of good/evil, of guilt and sin. The development of the elemental themes involves discussions of various forms of anxiety, the consequence of guilt and sin in the history of the human race, and the possibility of the loss of freedom. The final chapter is "Anxiety as Saving through Faith." "Therefore he who in relation to guilt is educated by anxiety will rest only in the Atonement,"⁵² a conclusion that in a reformulation is echoed in the final lines of *The Sickness unto Death*.⁵³

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The age of making distinctions is past. It has been vanquished by the system. In our day, whoever loves to make distinctions is regarded as an eccentric whose soul clings to something that has long since vanished. Be that as it may, yet Socrates still is what he was, the simple wise man, because of the peculiar distinction that he expressed both in words and in life, something that the eccentric Hamann first reiterated with great admiration two thousand years later: "For Socrates was great in 'that he distinguished between what he understood and what he did not understand.'"

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Innocence is ignorance. In innocence, man is not qualified as spirit but is psychically qualified in immediate unity with his natural condition. The spirit in man is dreaming. This view is in full accord with that of the Bible, which by denying that man in his innocence has knowledge of the difference between good and evil denounces all the phantasmagoria of Catholic meritoriousness.

In this state there is peace and repose, but there is simultaneously something else that is not contention and strife, for there is indeed nothing against which to strive. What, then, is it? Nothing. But what effect does nothing have? It begets anxiety. This is the profound secret of innocence, that it is at the same time anxiety. Dreamily the spirit projects its own actuality, but this actuality is nothing, and innocence always sees this nothing outside itself.

Anxiety is a qualification of the dreaming spirit, and as such it has its place in psychology. Awake, the difference between myself and my other is posited; sleeping, it is suspended; dreaming, it is an intimated nothing. The actuality of the spirit constantly shows itself as a form that tempts its possibility but disappears as soon as it seeks to grasp for it, and it is a nothing that can only bring anxiety. More it cannot do as long as it merely shows itself. The concept of anxiety is almost never treated in psychology. Therefore, I must point out that it is altogether different from fear and similar concepts that refer to something definite, whereas anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility. For this reason, anxiety is not found in the beast, precisely because by nature the beast is not qualified as spirit.

When we consider the dialectical determinations of anxiety, it appears that exactly these have psychological ambivalence. Anxiety is a *sympathetic antipathy* and an *antipathetic sympathy*. One easily sees, I think, that this is a psychological determination in a sense entirely different from the *concupiscentia* [inordinate desire] of which we spoke. Linguistic usage confirms this perfectly. One speaks of a pleasing anxiety, a pleasing anxiousness [*Beängstelse*], and of a strange anxiety, a bashful anxiety, etc.

The anxiety that is posited in innocence is in the first place no guilt, and in the second place it is no troublesome burden, no suffering that cannot be brought into harmony with the blessedness of innocence. In observing children, one will discover this anxiety intimated more particularly as a seeking for the adventurous, the monstrous, and the enigmatic. That there are children in whom this anxiety is not found proves nothing at all, for neither is it found in the beast, and the less spirit, the less anxiety. This anxiety belongs so essentially to the child that he cannot do without it. Though it causes him anxiety, it captivates him by its pleasing anxiousness [*Beängstelse*]. In all cul-

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tures where the childlike is preserved as the dreaming of the spirit, this anxiety is found. The more profound the anxiety, the more profound the culture. Only a prosaic stupidity maintains that this is a disorganization. Anxiety has here the same meaning as melancholy at a much later point, when freedom, having passed through the imperfect forms of its history, in the profoundest sense will come to itself.*

Just as the relation of anxiety to its object, to something that is nothing (linguistic usage also says pregnantly: to be anxious about nothing), is altogether ambivalent, so also the transition that is to be made from innocence to guilt will be so dialectical that it can be seen that the explanation is what it must be, psychological. The qualitative leap stands outside of all ambivalence. But he who becomes guilty through anxiety is indeed innocent, for it was not he himself but anxiety, a foreign power, that laid hold of him, a power that he did not love but about which he was anxious. And yet he is guilty, for he sank in anxiety, which he nevertheless loved even as he feared it. There is nothing in the world more ambivalent; therefore this is the only psychological explanation. But, to repeat once more, it could never occur to the explanation that it should explain the qualitative leap. Every notion that suggests that the prohibition tempted him, or that the seducer deceived him, has sufficient ambivalence only for a superficial observation, but it perverts ethics, introduces a quantitative determination, and will by the help of psychology pay man a compliment at the sacrifice of the ethical, a compliment that everyone who is ethically developed must reject as a new and more profound seduction.

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That anxiety makes its appearance is the pivot upon which everything turns. Man is a synthesis of the psychical and the physical; however, a synthesis is unthinkable if the two are not united in a third. This third is spirit.⁵⁴ In innocence, man is not merely animal, for if he were at any moment of his life merely animal, he would never become man. So spirit is present, but as immediate, as dreaming. Inasmuch as it is now present, it is in a sense a hostile power, for it constantly disturbs the relation between soul and body, a relation that indeed has persistence and yet does not have endurance, inasmuch as it first receives the latter by the spirit. On the other hand, spirit is a friendly power, since it is precisely that which constitutes the relation. What, then, is man's relation to this ambiguous power? How does spirit relate itself to itself and to its conditionality? It relates itself as anxiety. Do away with itself, the spirit cannot; lay hold of itself, it cannot, as long as it has itself outside of itself. Nor can man sink down into the vegetative, for he is qualified as spirit; flee away from anxiety, he cannot, for he loves it; really love it, he cannot, for

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* Concerning this, one should consult *Either/Or* (Copenhagen: 1843), especially if one is aware that the first part expresses the melancholy in its anguished [*angestfulde*] sympathy and egotism, which is explained in the second part.

he flees from it. Innocence has now reached its uttermost point. It is ignorance; however, it is not an animal brutality but an ignorance qualified by spirit, and as such innocence is precisely anxiety, because its ignorance is about nothing. Here there is no knowledge of good and evil etc., but the whole actuality of knowledge projects itself in anxiety as the enormous nothing of ignorance.

Innocence still is, but only a word is required and then ignorance is concentrated. Innocence naturally cannot understand this word, but at that moment anxiety has, as it were, caught its first prey. Instead of nothing, it now has an enigmatic word. When it is stated in Genesis that God said to Adam, "Only from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you must not eat," it follows as a matter of course that Adam really has not understood this word, for how could he understand the difference between good and evil when this distinction would follow as a consequence of the enjoyment of the fruit?

When it is assumed that the prohibition awakens the desire, one acquires knowledge instead of ignorance, and in that case Adam must have had a knowledge of freedom, because the desire was to use it. The explanation is therefore subsequent. The prohibition induces in him anxiety, for the prohibition awakens in him freedom's possibility. What passed by innocence as the nothing of anxiety has now entered into Adam, and here again it is a nothing—the anxious possibility of *being able*. He has no conception of what he is able to do; otherwise—and this is what usually happens—that which comes later, the difference between good and evil, would have to be presupposed. Only the possibility of being able is present as a higher form of ignorance, as a higher expression of anxiety, because in a higher sense it both is and is not, because in a higher sense he both loves it and flees from it.

After the word of prohibition follows the word of judgment: "You shall certainly die."⁵⁵ Naturally, Adam does not know what it means to die. On the other hand, there is nothing to prevent him from having acquired a notion of the terrifying, for even animals can understand the mimic expression and movement in the voice of a speaker without understanding the word. If the prohibition is regarded as awakening the desire, the punishment must also be regarded as awakening the notion of the deterrent. This, however, will only confuse things. In this case, the terror is simply anxiety. Because Adam has not understood what was spoken, there is nothing but the ambivalence of anxiety. The infinite possibility of being able that was awakened by the prohibition now draws closer, because this possibility points to a possibility as its sequence.

In this way, innocence is brought to its uttermost. In anxiety it is related to the forbidden and to the punishment. Innocence is not guilty, yet there is anxiety as though it were lost.

Further than this, psychology cannot go, but so far it can go, and above all, in its observation of human life, it can point to this again and again.

Here, in the conclusion, I have adhered to the biblical narrative. I have assumed the prohibition and the voice of punishment as coming from without. Of course, this is something that has troubled many thinkers. But the difficulty is merely one to smile at. Innocence can indeed speak, inasmuch as in language it possesses the expression for everything spiritual. Accordingly, one need merely assume that Adam talked to himself. The imperfection in the story, namely, that another spoke to Adam about what he did not understand, is thus eliminated. From the fact that Adam was able to talk, it does not follow in a deeper sense that he was able to understand what was said. This applies above all to the difference between good and evil, which indeed can be expressed in language but nevertheless is only for freedom, because for innocence it can have only the meaning we have indicated in the preceding account. Innocence can indeed express this difference, but the difference is not for innocence, and for innocence it can only have the meaning that was indicated in the preceding account.

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*Anxiety as the Presupposition of Hereditary Sin
and as Explaining Hereditary Sin Retrogressively
in Terms of Its Origin*

Let us now examine the narrative in Genesis more carefully as we attempt to dismiss the fixed idea that it is a myth, and as we remind ourselves that no age has been more skillful than our own in producing myths of the understanding, an age that produces myths and at the same time wants to eradicate all myths.

Adam was created; he had given names to the animals (here there is language, though in an imperfect way similar to that of children who learn by identifying animals on an A B C board) but had not found company for himself. Eve was created, formed from his rib. She stood in as intimate a relation to him as possible, yet it was still an external relation. Adam and Eve are merely a numerical repetition. In this respect, a thousand Adams signify no more than one. So much with regard to the descent of the race from one pair. Nature does not favor a meaningless superfluity. Therefore, if we assume that the race descended from several pairs, there would be a moment when nature had a meaningless superfluity. As soon as the relationship of generation is posited, no man is superfluous, because every individual is himself and the race.

Now follows the prohibition and the judgment. But the serpent was more cunning than all the animals of the field. He seduced the woman. Even though one may call this a myth, it neither disturbs thought nor confuses the

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concept, as does a myth of the understanding. The myth allows something that is inward to take place outwardly.

First we must note that the woman was the first to be seduced, and that therefore she in turn seduced the man. In what sense woman is the weaker sex, as it is commonly said of her, and also that anxiety belongs to her more than to man,* I shall try to develop in another chapter.

In the foregoing, it has been said several times that the view presented in this work does not deny the propagation of sinfulness through generation, or, in other words, that sinfulness has its history through generation. Yet it is said only that sinfulness moves in quantitative categories, whereas sin constantly enters by the qualitative leap of the individual. Here already one can see one significant aspect of the quantitation that takes place in generation. Eve is a derived creature. To be sure, she is created like Adam, but she is created out of a previous creature. To be sure, she is innocent like Adam, but there is, as it were, a presentiment of a disposition that indeed is not sinfulness but may seem like a hint of the sinfulness that is posited by propagation. It is the fact of being derived that predisposes the particular individual, yet without making him guilty.

Here we must remember what was said about the prohibition and the word of judgment in §5. The imperfection in the narrative—how it could have occurred to anyone to say to Adam what he essentially could not understand—is eliminated if we bear in mind that the speaker is language, and also that it is Adam himself who speaks.**

There remains the serpent. I am no friend of cleverness and shall, *volente deo* [God willing], resist the temptations of the serpent, who, as at the dawn of time when he tempted Adam and Eve, has in the course of time tempted writers to be clever. Instead, I freely admit my inability to connect any definite thought with the serpent. Furthermore, the difficulty with the serpent is something quite different, namely, that of regarding the temptation as coming from without. This is simply contrary to the teaching of the Bible, contrary to the well-known classical passage in James,⁵⁶ which says that God tempts no one and is not tempted by anyone, but each person is tempted by

* Nothing is hereby determined about woman's imperfection in relation to man. Although anxiety belongs to her more than to man, anxiety is by no means a sign of imperfection. If one is to speak of imperfection, this must be found in something else, namely, that in anxiety she moves beyond herself to another human being, to man.

** If one were to say further that it then becomes a question of how the first man learned to speak, I would answer that this is very true, but also that the question lies beyond the scope of the present investigation. However, this must not be understood in the manner of modern philosophy as though my reply were evasive, suggesting that I *could* answer the question in another place. But this much is certain, that it will not do to represent man himself as the inventor of language.

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himself. If one indeed believes that he has rescued God by regarding man as tempted by the serpent and believes that in this way one is in accord with James, "that God tempts no one," he is confronted with the second statement, that God is not tempted by anyone. For the serpent's assault upon man is also an indirect temptation of God, since it interferes in the relation between God and man, and one is confronted by the third statement, that every man is tempted by himself.

Now follows the fall. This is something that psychology is unable to explain, because the fall is the qualitative leap. However, let us for a moment consider the consequence as it is presented in the narrative in order to fix our attention once more on anxiety as the presupposition for hereditary sin.

The consequence is a double one, that sin came into the world and that sexuality was posited; the one is to be inseparable from the other. This is of utmost importance in order to show man's original state. If he were not a synthesis that reposed in a third, one thing could not have two consequences. If he were not a synthesis of psyche and body that is sustained by spirit, the sexual could never have come into the world with sinfulness.

We shall leave project makers out of consideration and simply assume the presence of the sexual difference before the fall, except that as yet it was not, because in ignorance it is not. In this respect we have support in the Scriptures.

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

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So sinfulness is by no means sensuousness, but without sin there is no sexuality, and without sexuality, no history. A perfect spirit has neither the one nor the other, and therefore the sexual difference is canceled in the resurrection, and therefore an angel has no history. Even if Michael had made a record of all the errands he had been sent on and performed, this is nevertheless not his history. First in sexuality is the synthesis posited as a contradiction, but like every contradiction it is also a task, the history of which begins at that same moment. This is the actuality that is preceded by freedom's possibility. However, freedom's possibility is not the ability to choose the good or the evil. Such thoughtlessness is no more in the interest of Scriptures than in the interest of thought. The possibility is to *be able*. In a logical system, it is convenient to say that possibility passes over into actuality. However, in actuality it is not so convenient, and an intermediate term is required.

The intermediate term is anxiety, but it no more explains the qualitative leap than it can justify it ethically. Anxiety is neither a category of necessity nor a category of freedom; it is entangled freedom, where freedom is not free in itself but entangled, not by necessity, but in itself. If sin has come into the world by necessity (which is a contradiction), there can be no anxiety. Nor can there be any anxiety if sin came into the world by an act of an abstract *liberum arbitrium*⁵⁷ (which no more existed in the world in the beginning than in a late period, because it is a nuisance for thought). To want to give a logical explanation of the coming of sin into the world is a stupidity that can occur only to people who are comically worried about finding an explanation.

Were I allowed to make a wish, then I would wish that no reader would be so profound as to ask: What if Adam had not sinned? In the moment actuality is posited, possibility walks by its side as a nothing that entices every thoughtless man. If only science could make up its mind to keep men under discipline and to bridle itself! When someone asks a stupid question, care should be taken not to answer him, lest he who answers becomes just as stupid as the questioner. The foolishness of the above question consists not so much in the question itself as in the fact that it is directed to science. If one stays at home with it, and, like Clever Elsie with her projects, calls together like-minded friends, then one has tolerably understood one's own stupidity. Science, on the contrary, cannot explain such things. Every science lies either in a logical immanence or in an immanence within a transcendence that it is unable to explain. Now sin is precisely that transcendence, that *discrimen rerum* [crisis] in which sin enters into the single individual as the single individual. Sin never enters into the world differently and has never entered differently. So when the single individual is stupid enough to inquire about sin as if it were something foreign to him, he only asks as a fool, for either he does not know at all what the question is about, and thus cannot come to know it, or he knows it and understands it, and also knows that no science can explain it to him. However, science at times has been adequately accommodating in responding to wishes with weighty hypotheses that it at last admits are inadequate as explanations. This, of course, is entirely true, yet the confusion is that science did not energetically dismiss foolish questions but instead confirmed superstitious men in their notion that one day there would come a project maker who is smart enough to come up with the right answer. That sin came into the world six thousand years ago is said in the same way that one would say about Nebuchadnezzar that it was four thousand years ago that he became an ox. When the case is understood in this way, it is no wonder that the explanation accords with it. What in one respect is the simplest thing in the world has been made the most difficult. What the most ordinary man understands in his own way, and quite correctly so—because he understands

that it is not just six thousand years since sin came into the world—science with the art of speculators has announced as a prize subject that as yet has not been answered satisfactorily. How sin came into the world, each man understands solely by himself. If he would learn it from another, he would *eo ipso* misunderstand it. The only science that can help a little is psychology, yet it admits that it explains nothing, and also that it *cannot* and *will not* explain more. If any science could explain it, everything would be confused. That the man of science ought to forget himself is entirely true; nevertheless, it is therefore also very fortunate that sin is no scientific problem, and thus no man of science has an obligation (and the project maker just as little) to forget how sin came into the world. If this is what he wants to do, if he magnanimously wants to forget himself in the zeal to explain all of humanity, he will become as comical as that privy councilor who was so conscientious about leaving his calling card with every Tom, Dick, and Harry that in so doing he at last forgot his own name. Or his philosophical enthusiasm will make him so absent-minded that he needs a good-natured, level-headed wife whom he can ask, as Soldin asked Rebecca when in enthusiastic absent-mindedness he also lost himself in the objectivity of the chatter: “Rebecca, is it I who is speaking?”

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That the admired men of science in my most honored contemporary age, men whose concern in their search after the system is known to the whole congregation and who are concerned also to find a place for sin within it, may find the above position highly unscientific is entirely in order. But let the congregation join in the search, or at least include these profound seekers in their pious intercessions; they will find the place as surely as he who hunts for the burning tow finds it when he is unaware that it is burning in his own hand.

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In the two previous chapters, it was maintained continually that man is a synthesis of psyche and body that is constituted and sustained by spirit. In the individual life, anxiety is the moment—to use a new expression that says the same as was said in the previous discussion, but that also points toward that which follows.

In recent philosophy there is a category that is continually used in logical no less than in historical philosophical inquiries. It is the category of transition. However, no further explanation is given. The term is freely used without any ado, and while Hegel and the Hegelian school startled the world with the great insight of the presuppositionless beginning of philosophy, or the thought that before philosophy there must be nothing but the most complete absence of presuppositions, there is no embarrassment at all over the use in Hegelian thought of the terms “transition,” “negation,” “mediation,” i.e., the principles of motion, in such a way that they do not find their place in the systematic progression. If this is not a presupposition, I do not know

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what a presupposition is. For to use something that is nowhere explained is indeed to presuppose it. The system is supposed to have such marvelous transparency and inner vision that in the manner of the *omphalopsychoi* [navel souls] it would gaze immovably at the central nothing until at last everything would explain itself and its whole content would come into being by itself. Such introverted openness to the public was to characterize the system. Nevertheless, this is not the case, because systematic thought seems to pay homage to secretiveness with respect to its innermost movements. Negation, transition, mediation are three disguised, suspicious, and secret agents (*agentia* [main springs]) that bring about all movements. Hegel would hardly call them presumptuous, because it is with his gracious permission that they carry on their ploy so unembarrassedly that even logic uses terms and phrases borrowed from transition in time: "thereupon," "when," "as being it is this," "as becoming it is this," etc.

Let this be as it may. Let logic take care to help itself. The term "transition" is and remains a clever turn in logic. Transition belongs in the sphere of historical freedom, for transition is a *state* and it is actual.* Plato fully recognized the difficulty of placing transition in the realm of the purely metaphysical, and for that reason the category of *the moment*** cost him so much effort. To ignore the difficulty certainly is not to "go further" than Plato. To ignore it, and thus piously to deceive thought in order to get speculation afloat and the movement in logic going, is to treat speculation as a rather fi-

* Therefore, when Aristotle says that the transition from possibility to actuality is a κίνησις [movement], it is not to be understood logically but with reference to historical freedom.

** Plato conceives of the moment as purely abstract. In order to become acquainted with its dialectic, one should keep in mind that the moment is non-being under the category of time. Non-being (τὸ μὴ ὄν; τὸ κενόν [that which is not; the empty] of the Pythagoreans) occupied the interest of ancient philosophers more than it does modern philosophers. Among the Eleatics, non-being was conceived ontologically in such a way that what was affirmed about it could be stated only in the contradictory proposition that only being is. If one pursues this further, he will see that it reappears in all the spheres. In metaphysical propaedeutics, the proposition was expressed thus: He who expresses non-being says nothing at all (this misunderstanding is refuted in *The Sophist*, and in a more mimical way it was refuted in an earlier dialogue, *Gorgias*). Finally, in the practical spheres the Sophists used non-being as a means to do away with all moral concepts; non-being is not, *ergo* everything is true, *ergo* everything is good, *ergo* deceit etc. are not. This position is refuted by Socrates in several dialogues. Plato dealt with it especially in *The Sophist*, which like all of his dialogues at the same time artistically illustrates what it also teaches, for the Sophist, whose concept and definition the dialogue seeks while it deals principally with non-being, is himself a non-being. Thus the concept and the example come into being at the same time in the warfare in which the Sophist is attacked, and which ends not with his annihilation but with his coming into being [*bliver til*], which is the worst thing that can happen to him, for despite his sophistry, which like the armor of Mars enables him to become invisible, he must come forth into the light. Recent philosophy has not essentially come any further in its conception of non-being, even though it presumes to be Christian. Greek philosophy and the modern alike maintain that everything turns on bringing non-being into being, for to do away with it or to make it vanish seems extremely easy. The Christian

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nite affair. However, I remember once having heard a speculator say that one must not give undue thought to the difficulties beforehand, because then one never arrives at the point where one can speculate. If the important thing is to get to the point where one can begin to speculate, and not that one's speculation in fact becomes true speculation, it is indeed res-

view takes the position that non-being is present everywhere as the nothing from which things were created, as semblance and vanity, as sin, as sensuousness removed from spirit, as the temporal forgotten by the eternal; consequently, the task is to do away with it in order to bring forth being. Only with this orientation in mind can the concept of Atonement be correctly understood historically, that is, in the sense in which Christianity brought it into the world. If the term is understood in the opposite sense (the movement proceeding from the assumption that non-being is not), the Atonement is volatilized and turned inside out.

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It is in *Parmenides* that Plato sets forth "the moment." This dialogue is engaged in pointing out contradictions within the concepts themselves, something that Socrates expressed in so decisive a way, that while it does not serve to put to shame the beautiful old Greek philosophy, it may well put to shame a more recent boastful philosophy, which unlike the Greek does not make great demands upon itself but upon men and their admiration. Socrates points out that there is nothing wonderful about being able to demonstrate contrariety (τὸ ἐναντίον) of a particular thing participating in diversity, but if anyone were able to show contradictions in the concepts themselves, that would be something to admire (ἀλλ' εἰ ὁ ἐστὶν ἓν, αὐτὸ τοῦτο πολλά ἀποδείξει καὶ αὐτὰ πολλά δὴ ἓν, τοῦτο ἤδη θαυμάσομαι. καὶ περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων ὡσαύτως [But if anyone can prove that what is simply unity itself is many or that plurality itself is one, then I shall begin to be surprised] 129 B C).

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The procedure is that of an imaginatively constructing dialectic. It is assumed both that the one (τὸ ἓν) is and that it is not, and then the consequences for it and for the rest are pointed out. As a result, the moment appears to be this strange entity (ὄτιπον [that which has no place], the Greek word is especially appropriate) that lies between motion and rest without occupying any time, and into this and out from this that which is in motion changes into rest, and that which is at rest changes into motion. Thus the moment becomes the category of transition (μεταβολή), for Plato shows in the same way that the moment is related to the transition, of the one to the many, of the many to the one, of likeness to unlikeness, etc., and that it is the moment in which there is neither ἓν [one] nor πολλά [many], neither a being determined nor a being combined (οὔτε διακρίνεται οὔτε ξυγκρίνεται, §157 A). Plato deserves credit for having clarified the difficulty; yet the moment remains a silent atomistic abstraction, which, however, is not explained by ignoring it. Now if logic would be willing to state that it does not have the category of transition (and if it does have this category, it must find a place for it within the system itself, although in fact it also operates in the system), it will become clearer that the historical spheres and all the knowledge that rests on a historical presupposition have the moment. This category is of utmost importance in maintaining the distinction between Christianity and pagan philosophy, as well as the equally pagan speculation in Christianity. Another passage in the dialogue *Parmenides* points out the consequence of treating the moment as such an abstraction. It shows how, if the one is assumed to have the determination of time, the contradiction appears that the one (τὸ ἓν) becomes older and younger than itself and the many (τὰ πολλά), and then again neither younger nor older than itself or the many (§151 E). The one must nevertheless be, so it is said, and then "to be" is defined as follows: Participation in an essence or a nature in the present time (τὸ δὲ εἶναι ἄλλο τί ἐστὶ ἢ μέθεξις οὐσίας μετὰ χρόνου τοῦ παρόντος, §151 E). In the further development of the contradictions [§152 B C], it appears that the present (τὸ νῦν) vacillates between meaning the present, the eternal, and the moment. This "now" (τὸ νῦν) lies between "was" and "will become," and naturally "the one"

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olutely said that the important thing is to get to the point of speculating, just as it is praiseworthy for a man who has no means of riding to Deer Park in his own carriage to say: One must not trouble oneself about such things, because one can just as well ride a coffee grinder. This, of course, is the case. Both riders hope to arrive at Deer Park. On the other hand, the man who firmly resolves not to trouble himself about the means of conveyance, just as long as he can get to the point where he can speculate, will hardly reach speculation.

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

Man, then, is a synthesis of psyche and body, but he is also a *synthesis of the temporal and the eternal*. That this often has been stated, I do not object to at all, for it is not my wish to discover something new, but rather it is my joy and dearest occupation to ponder over that which is quite simple.

As for the latter synthesis, it is immediately striking that it is formed differently from the former. In the former, the two factors are psyche and body, and spirit is the third, yet in such a way that one can speak of a synthesis only when spirit is posited. The latter synthesis has only two factors, the temporal and the eternal. Where is the third factor? And if there is no third factor, there really is no synthesis, for a synthesis that is a contradiction cannot be completed as a synthesis without a third factor, because the fact that the synthesis is a contradiction asserts that it is not. What, then, is the temporal?

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

cannot, in passing from the past to the future, bypass this "now." It comes to a halt in the now, does not become older but is older. In the most recent philosophy, abstraction culminates in pure being, but pure being is the most abstract expression for eternity, and again as "nothing" it is precisely the moment. Here again the importance of the moment becomes apparent, because only with this category is it possible to give eternity its proper significance, for eternity and the moment become the extreme opposites, whereas dialectical sorcery, on the other hand, makes eternity and the moment signify the same thing. It is only with Christianity that sensuousness, temporality, and the moment can be properly understood, because only with Christianity does eternity become essential.

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

The present, however, is not a concept of time, except precisely as something infinitely contentless, which again is the infinite vanishing. If this is not kept in mind, no matter how quickly it may disappear, the present is posited, and being posited it again appears in the categories: the past and the future.

The eternal, on the contrary, is the present. For thought, the eternal is the present in terms of an annulled succession (time is the succession that passes by). For representation, it is a going forth that nevertheless does not get off the spot, because the eternal is for representation the infinitely contentful present. So also in the eternal there is no division into the past and the future, because the present is posited as the annulled succession.

Time is, then, infinite succession; the life that is in time and is only of time has no present. In order to define the sensuous life, it is usually said that it is in the moment and only in the moment. By the moment, then, is understood that abstraction from the eternal that, if it is to be the present, is a parody of it. The present is the eternal, or rather, the eternal is the present, and the present is full. In this sense the Latin said of the deity that he is *praesens* (*praesentes dii* [the presence of the gods]), by which expression, when used about the deity, he also signified the powerful assistance of the deity.

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The moment signifies the present as that which has no past and no future, and precisely in this lies the imperfection of the sensuous life. The eternal also signifies the present as that which has no past and no future, and this is the perfection of the eternal.

If at this point one wants to use the moment to define time and let the moment signify the purely abstract exclusion of the past and the future and as such the present, then the moment is precisely not the present, because the intermediary between the past and the future, purely abstractly conceived, is not at all. Thus it is seen that the moment is not a determination of time, because the determination of time is that it "passes by." For this rea-

* Incidentally, this is space. The skillful reader will no doubt see herein the proof of the correctness of my presentation, because for abstract thought, time and space are entirely identical (*nacheinander, nebeneinander*), and become so for representation, and are truly so in the definition of God as *omnipresent*.

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son time, if it is to be defined by any of the determinations revealed in time itself, is time past. If, on the contrary, time and eternity touch each other, then it must be in time, and now we have come to the moment.

"The moment" is a figurative expression, and therefore it is not easy to deal with. However, it is a beautiful word to consider. Nothing is as swift as a blink of the eye, and yet it is commensurable with the content of the eternal. Thus when Ingeborg looks out over the sea after Frithiof, this is a picture of what is expressed in the figurative word. An outburst of her emotion, a sigh or a word, already has as a sound more of the determination of time and is more present as something that is vanishing and does not have in it so much of the presence of the eternal. For this reason a sigh, a word, etc. have power to relieve the soul of the burdensome weight, precisely because the burden, when merely expressed, already begins to become something of the past. A blink is therefore a designation of time, but mark well, of time in the fateful conflict when it is touched by eternity.* What we call the moment, Plato calls τὸ ἐξαίφνης [the sudden]. Whatever its etymological explanation, it is related to the category of the invisible, because time and eternity were conceived equally abstractly, because the concept of temporality was lacking, and this again was due to the lack of the concept of spirit. The Latin term is *momentum* (from *movere* [to move]), which by derivation expresses the merely vanishing.**

Thus understood, the moment is not properly an atom of time but an atom of eternity. It is the first reflection of eternity in time, its first attempt, as it were, at stopping time. For this reason, Greek culture did not comprehend the moment, and even if it had comprehended the atom of eternity, it did not comprehend that it was the moment, did not define it with a for-

* It is remarkable that Greek art culminates in the plastic, which precisely lacks the glance. This, however, has its deep source in the fact that the Greeks did not in the profoundest sense grasp the concept of spirit and therefore did not in the deepest sense comprehend sensuousness and temporality. What a striking contrast to Christianity, in which God is pictorially represented as an eye.

** In the New Testament there is a poetic paraphrase of the moment.⁵⁸ Paul says the world will pass away ἐν ἀτόμῳ καὶ ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ [in a moment and in the twinkling of an eye]. By this he also expresses that the moment is commensurable with eternity, precisely because the moment of destruction expresses eternity at the same moment. Permit me to illustrate what I mean, and forgive me if anyone should find the analogy offensive. Once here in Copenhagen there were two actors who probably never thought that their performance could have a deeper significance. They stepped forth onto the stage, placed themselves opposite each other, and then began the mimical representation of one or another passionate conflict. When the mimical act was in full swing and the spectators' eyes followed the story with expectation of what was to follow, they suddenly stopped and remained motionless as though petrified in the mimical expression of the moment. The effect of this can be exceedingly comical, for the moment in an accidental way becomes commensurable with the eternal. The plastic effect is due to the fact that the eternal expression is expressed eternally; the comic effect, on the other hand, consists in the eternalization of the accidental expression.

ward direction but with a backward direction. Because for Greek culture the atom of eternity was essentially eternity, neither time nor eternity received what was properly its due.

The synthesis of the temporal and the eternal is not another synthesis but is the expression for the first synthesis, according to which man is a synthesis of psyche and body that is sustained by spirit. As soon as the spirit is posited, the moment is present. Therefore one may rightly say reproachfully of man that he lives only in the moment, because that comes to pass by an arbitrary abstraction. Nature does not lie in the moment.

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It is with temporality as it is with sensuousness, for temporality seems still more imperfect and the moment still more insignificant than nature's apparently secure endurance in time. However, the contrary is the case. Nature's security has its source in the fact that time has no significance at all for nature. Only with the moment does history begin. By sin, man's sensuousness is posited as sinfulness and is therefore lower than that of the beast, and yet this is because it is here that the higher begins, for at this point spirit begins.

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

By this division, attention is immediately drawn to the fact that the future in a certain sense signifies more than the present and the past, because in a certain sense the future is the whole of which the past is a part, and the future can in a certain sense signify the whole. This is because the eternal first signifies the future or because the future is the incognito in which the eternal, even though it is incommensurable with time, nevertheless preserves its association with time. Linguistic usage at times also takes the future as identical with the eternal (the future life—the eternal life). In a deeper sense, the Greeks did not have the concept of the eternal; so neither did they have the concept of the future. Therefore Greek life cannot be reproached for being lost in the moment, or more correctly, it cannot even be said that it was lost, for temporality was conceived by the Greeks just as naively as sensuousness, because they lacked the category of spirit.

The moment and the future in turn posit the past. If Greek life in any way denotes any qualification of time, it is past time. However, past time is not defined in its relation to the present and the future but as a qualification of time in general, as a passing by. Here the significance of the Platonic "recollection" is obvious. For the Greeks, the eternal lies behind as the past that can only be entered backwards.* However, the eternal thought of as the past

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* Here the category that I maintain should be kept in mind, namely, repetition, by which eternity is entered forwards.

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is an altogether abstract concept, whether the eternal is further defined philo-
sophically (a philosophical dying away), or historically.

On the whole, in defining the concepts of the past, the future, and the eter-
nal, it can be seen how the moment is defined. If there is no moment, the
eternal appears behind as the past. It is as when I imagine a man walking along
a road but do not posit the step, and so the road appears behind him as the
distance covered. If the moment is posited but merely as a *discrimen* [bound-
ary], the future is the eternal. If the moment is posited, so is the eternal, but
also the future, which reappears as the past. This is clearly seen in the Greek,
the Jewish, and the Christian views. The pivotal concept in Christianity, that
which made all things new, is the fullness of time, but the fullness of time is
the moment as the eternal, and yet this eternal is also the future and the past.
If attention is not paid to this, not a single concept can be saved from a hereti-
cal and treasonable admixture that annihilates the concept. One does not get
the past by itself but in a simple continuity with the future (with this the con-
cepts of conversion, atonement, and redemption are lost in the world-his-
torical significance and lost in the individual historical development). One
does not get the future by itself but in a simple continuity with the present
(thereby the concepts of resurrection and judgment are destroyed).

In one of Grimm's fairy tales⁵⁹ there is a story of a young man who goes
in search of adventure in order to learn what it is to be in anxiety. We will
let the adventurer pursue his journey without concerning ourselves about
whether he encountered the terrible on his way. However, I will say that this
is an adventure that every human being must go through—to learn to be
anxious in order that he may not perish either by never having been in anx-
iety or by succumbing in anxiety. Whoever has learned to be anxious in the
right way has learned the ultimate.

If a human being were a beast or an angel, he could not be in anxiety. Be-
cause he is a synthesis, he can be in anxiety; and the more profoundly he is
in anxiety, the greater is the man—yet not in the sense usually understood,
in which anxiety is about something external, about something outside a per-
son, but in the sense that he himself produces the anxiety. Only in this sense
can the words be understood when it is said of Christ that he was anxious
unto death, as well as the words spoken by Christ to Judas: What you are
going to do, do quickly. Not even the terrifying verse that made even Luther
anxious when preaching on it—"My God, my God, why have you aban-
doned me"—not even these words express suffering so profoundly. For the
latter signify a condition in which Christ finds himself. And the former sig-
nify the relation to a condition that is not.

Anxiety is freedom's possibility, and only such anxiety is through faith ab-
solutely educative, because it consumes all finite ends and discovers all their
deceptiveness. And no Grand Inquisitor has such dreadful torments in readi-

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ness as anxiety has, and no secret agent knows as cunningly as anxiety how to attack his suspect in his weakest moment or to make alluring the trap in which he will be caught, and no discerning judge understands how to interrogate and examine the accused as does anxiety, which never lets the accused escape, neither through amusement, nor by noise, nor during work, neither by day nor by night.

Whoever is educated by anxiety is educated by possibility, and only he who is educated by possibility is educated according to his infinitude. Therefore possibility is the weightiest of all categories. It is true that we often hear the opposite stated, that possibility is so light, whereas actuality is so heavy. But from whom does one hear such words? From wretched men who never knew what possibility is, and who, when actuality had shown that they were not good for anything and never would be, mendaciously revived a possibility that was very beautiful and very enchanting, while the foundation of this possibility was at the most a little youthful giddiness, of which they ought rather to be ashamed. Therefore this possibility that is said to be so light is commonly regarded as the possibility of happiness, fortune, etc. But this is not possibility. It is rather a mendacious invention that human depravity has dressed up so as to have a reason for complaining of life and Governance and a pretext for becoming self-important. No, in possibility all things are equally possible, and whoever has truly been brought up by possibility has grasped the terrible as well as the joyful. So when such a person graduates from the school of possibility, and he knows better than a child knows his ABC's that he can demand absolutely nothing of life and that the terrible, perdition, and annihilation live next door to every man, and when he has thoroughly learned that every anxiety about which he was anxious came upon him in the next moment—he will give actuality another explanation, he will praise actuality, and even when it rests heavily upon him, he will remember that it nevertheless is far, far lighter than possibility was. Only in this way can possibility be educative, because finiteness and the finite relations in which every individual is assigned a place, whether they be small, or everyday, or world-historical, educate only finitely, and a person can always persuade them, always coax something else out of them, always bargain, always escape from them tolerably well, always keep himself a little on the outside, always prevent himself from absolutely learning something from them; and if he does this, the individual must again have possibility in himself and himself develop that from which he is to learn, even though in the next moment that from which he is to learn does not at all acknowledge that it is formed by him but absolutely deprives him of the power.

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However, in order that an individual may thus be educated absolutely and infinitely by the possibility, he must be honest toward possibility and have faith. By faith I understand here what Hegel somewhere in his way cor-

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rectly calls the inner certainty that anticipates infinity. When the discoveries of possibility are honestly administered, possibility will discover all the finitudes, but it will idealize them in the form of infinity and in anxiety overwhelm the individual until he again overcomes them in the anticipation of faith.