Conscience, Guilt and the Struggle for Purity of Heart in Kierkegaard

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Abstract

For Kierkegaard, “purity of heart” means to will only one thing- the good. He calls the pull towards the good “conscience”. At some point, any person may be forced to come to terms with their conscience when it disrupts their life through restlessness, anxiety or through one of its other manifestations and reveals the need to take the demands of the good seriously. But how are we to do justice to the demands of conscience? Is it possible to reach purity of heart without giving up on happiness altogether? Would it even be possible to give up on happiness? This thesis will consider the possibility of trying to make the good the sole end of one’s will and thus the finding and development of conscience. We will consider from where we are to get a conscience, what it means for conscience to grow and what the obstacles might be in living this way of life. We will see that a person who tries to obtain purity of heart is met with a great challenge. The conscience can demand extreme things, can require that one give up one’s possessions, one’s time, one’s loved ones, it might require that one give up on happiness and it might even require the impossible. The question arises as to how it is possible to live this kind of life without reaching breaking point- a point at which one flees from conscience into a demonic form of life. It will be argued that it is faith that allows us to avoid the danger of the demonic but at the cost of great humility. We must be prepared to set aside the understanding to accommodate a hope that may seem absurd.

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Abbreviations

CA – Kierkegaard, S. 1980. *The Concept of Anxiety.* Thomte, R. & Anderson, A. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press.

CUP – Kierkegaard, S. 1992. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments.* Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

EO (1/2) – Kierkegaard, S. 1987. *Either/Or Part I/II*. Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

FT – Kierkegaard, S. 1983. *Fear and Trembling.* Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

JFY- Kierkegaard, S. 1991. *For Self-Examination/ Judge for Yourselves*. Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

JP – Kierkegaard, S. 1967 & 1978. *Journals and Papers*: Volume 1 & 6. Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Indiana: Indiana University Press

NB(2) – Kierkegaard, S. 2011. *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, *Volume 4*. Kirmmse B, Soderquist, B. et. al. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

PF – Kierkegaard, S. 1985. *Philosophical Fragments*. Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

PC – Kierkegaard, S. 1991. *Practice in Christianity*. Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

SUD – Kierkegaard, S. 1980. *Sickness Unto Death.* Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

TA – Kierkegaard, S. 1978. *Two Ages.* Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

UDVS – Kierkegaard, S. 1993. *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*. Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

WL – Kierkegaard, S. 1995. *Works of Love*. Hong, H. & Hong E. [eds. & trans.] Princeton: Princeton University Press

Introduction

The term "conscience" (samvittighed) is scattered throughout Kierkegaard's non-pseudonymous texts[1], but also is implicit in many of his pseudonymous ones[2]. It thus seems to show itself in forms of life that are not characteristically religious, but which belong to the aesthetic and the ethical stages. Although many commentators touch on Kierkegaardian conscience in brief, it is rare to find an account which tracks the way in which the concept evolves throughout his writings.[3] Conscience is usually only addressed in its most advanced, Christian form. A key advantage, however, to thinking of conscience as extending beyond the religious is that this allows us to chart the way in which it develops. This thesis will give a genetic account of conscience starting with guilt consciousness and tracking the way in which it evolves into its mature form. Because conscience refers to an experience that is available to any individual, bringing conscience to the centre of our reading of Kierkegaard will allow us to build up an account of his works that starts from the first personal, allowing us to focus not only on the philosophical coherence of Kierkegaard's writings, but at the same time on the first personal experience of what it is like to undergo the processes Kierkegaard illustrates. Reading Kierkegaard in this way will allow us to incorporate some of the more performative aspects of his writings into our account. [4]

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[1] WL: p135, 137, 147; UDVS: p32, 128, 129, 134 to take a few examples (there are many more).

[2] As that which pulls one towards the good, usually as a mirror of guilt consciousness- for example in *CUP*, *CA* and in relation to despair in *SUD*. I will illustrate this in more detail in chapter 1.

[3] For example, Stack (1977: P123), Walsh (2009: P133), Ferreira (2001: pp84-98), Evans (2004: pp102-162). I will deal with these accounts in chapter 1. What most of them have in common is that they think of conscience only in relation to the religious stages of life (either in relation to sin-consciousness or to love). By giving an account of conscience that can be witnessed in all stages of life, I aim to demonstrate that conscience is a much more central concept in Kierkegaard's writings that is sometimes suggested.

[4] At times this may give the impression that I am being unfair to Kierkegaard- I will present aspects of his work as problematic even though they may ultimately resolve themselves elsewhere. In places this will be unavoidable. This is because the kind of experience or process someone might go through reading the works would be lost if we were to jump to the conclusion all at once and try to take in to account everything at the same time. If we do this, we begin to read Kierkegaard abstractly and lose much of the tension and difficulty a reader might actually experience.

It is easy to become an apologist for Kierkegaard for a number of reasons. It is difficult in the first place to get clear exactly what his own views were due to the pseudonymous nature of many of the texts and

When we read Kierkegaardian conscience genetically, we discover a problem. Kierkegaard states that conscience is something in which we must receive "rigorous schooling", but we might reasonably ask why we should want such a schooling. Conscience often seems to be in tension with the demands of the pull towards happiness. Think, for example, of the many ways in which one's conscience might push one to give up possessions, to give one's time, to alter one's diet, to discipline one's activity etc. Furthermore, conscience is closely tied to guilt and so long as we feel guilty, we suffer. As human beings, the pull towards happiness is already present in us, so why should we want to cultivate a conscience that comes in to tension with such a pull? Why should we promote in ourselves something which causes us to suffer?

We might think it best to live without a conscience, focussing instead on happiness. Kierkegaard's aesthete and ethicist represent attempts to live life in this manner, but they also serve as clear examples of why it may not be possible to live without a conscience. For the aesthete, happiness is found in the novelty of fleeting temporal pleasures. For the ethicist in contrast, happiness is found in stability and structure. Both characters represent quite mature and committed attempts to produce the happiest life possible. In both cases, however, Kierkegaard demonstrates to us that these forms of life

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the performative nature of many others. In addition to this, however, Kierkegaard was a writer with extraordinary psychological insight and at many points fighting against him can feel like a losing battle. At times it can be frustrating to try to express what it is about a certain text which causes such discomfort-sometimes texts feel unfair or overly demanding (*UDVS* is the best example of this for me). I want to capture this feeling and give it the best account that I can without losing track of it in the wider scheme of Kierkegaard's writings. Ultimately such frustration probably does arise from a flaw in the reader of the text rather than the text itself (I don't like how I feel when I read *UDVS* because I am not pure of heart and the task of trying to be is extremely uncomfortable), but I believe that understanding such frustration and giving it voice will help to better demonstrate the performative nature of the writings. It will also help to better express what it is like to read such texts *as a human being*. It is all well and good to suggest that, in theory, there is no conflict between conscience and happiness, but doing this undermines the very real existential conflict that Kierkegaard's reader might experience.

are self-undermining. For the aesthete, life becomes weary and meaningless, with grief and anxiety becoming unbearable. The ethicist, on the other hand, is forced to battle against the arbitrariness of the ethical standards of their community, sacrificing their individuality to fit in to the crowd. Indeed, if conscience were confined to the religious stage of life, these forms of life might be sustainable, but we find throughout Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings suggestions that this is not the case. In both the aesthete and the ethicist conscience is the catch. It is evident, but not in its most developed form, manifesting in the aesthete as restlessness and anxiety, creeping into life every time the aesthete fails to maintain distraction. Likewise, the ethicist experiences conscience as anxiety and as a fear of inconsistency and fragmentation.

It might be so that we can shelter from conscience to a degree, to talk ourselves out of it and protect ourselves from it, but all of these reactions have consequences. Conscience can be held at bay for a time but may burst through once more as anxiety or restlessness, undermining one's attempts to be free from it and disrupting one's happiness. The person who lives purely for happiness might be forced to confront conscience whether they aim to or not.

But as we saw, Conscience requires that we make sacrifices which may put it in tension with the demands of happiness. It also seems untrue, then, that fulfilling the demands of conscience will make us better off when it comes to happiness. There is a fundamental tension in the human being between the pull towards happiness and the pull towards conscience. It is as if we are stuck in a double bind, on the one hand excluded from absolute happiness by the demands of conscience and on the other excluded from the

absolute good by the demands of happiness. Neither can be satisfied without the other and yet neither can be satisfied alongside the other.

If we try to live in accordance only with the pull towards happiness, we find that conscience disrupts us, as is evidenced in the aesthetic and ethical forms of life. What happens, however, when we try to live in accordance with conscience? Much of Kierkegaard's authorship addresses this question, describing a way of life, the Christian, which is uncompromising in its approach to conscience. We see this, for example, In Kierkegaard's repeated insistence in UDVS that "If a person is to will the good in truth, he must will to do everything for the good" (UDVS: P79). In practice what this requires of the individual is that they be prepared to subordinate any other given desire, any attachment to any person or possession, should this be what the good requires of them. He states also of the person who wills the good in truth that "he must will to suffer everything for it" (UDVS: P78).

If one is to take conscience seriously in its full force, is to make the good the sole end of their will, then there must be no suffering, no pain that would be too much to bear for the sake of the good. All of this would be fine if, in practice, the good happened not to demand great suffering from us, but Kierkegaard suggests elsewhere that it does. This is because, as Climacus describes, relating to the good (or God)[5] as the sole end of the will

[5] Whilst "the good" and "God" are not exactly the same, there are good reasons why the two can be used interchangeably here. The process of clearing out finitude and committing oneself wholeheartedly to the eternal is not one that belongs solely to Christian dogmatics. The same process is evident in the Socratic. Kierkegaard distinguishes between religiousness A and B. The former does not involve Christian dogmatics whilst the latter does. For the Christian, conscience represents the voice of God. For the atheist this may not be so, but it does not mean that conscience cannot have authority.

Throughout the thesis, I will speak mainly in terms of Christian categories because these are the categories that Kierkegaard works with. It is worth noting, however, that many of the processes described can be understood either in Christian or non-Christian terms. As an example we may take sin. The process through which sin comes in to the world is a psychological one- experienced by the Christian and non-Christian alike (I will demonstrate this in chapter 1). The difference between the two approaches lies in the meaning attributed

involves that one die to the world: “God is in the ground only when everything that is in the way is cleared out, every finitude, and first and foremost the individual himself in his finitude, in his cavilling against God.” (CUP: pp560-561). To genuinely be said to relate to the good as the highest end of one’s will, a weaning process must take place in which one’s attachment to the temporal is subordinated to God’s will. Such a process, Kierkegaard argues, is characterised by suffering: “The meaning of religious suffering is dying to immediacy; its actuality is its essential continuance“(CUP: P499). To live the life of conscience requires deep suffering because it requires that we go through a process of “dying to immediacy”- a process in which we learn to subordinate all desires to the good. We must learn, through this process, to be willing to do anything the good demands of us, even when this runs directly counter to our own desire for happiness.

It would seem, then, that Kierkegaard falls clearly down on one side of the tension between happiness and conscience, arguing that we ought to subordinate our desire for happiness to the demands of the good. But isn’t Kierkegaard expecting a great deal from the human being here? It is all well and good to say that one ought to will the good in truth, but it is questionable whether it is really a choice to do such a thing. If the demands for purity of heart are as a stringent as Kierkegaard states that they are- allowing us no possibility of letting our desires for temporal happiness win out over the good, then we are likely to find

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to such a process. To the Christian, the process through which sin comes in to the world represents a fall away from God and results in sin-consciousness. For the non-Christian, on the other hand, the same process can be understood as transgression, resulting in guilt-consciousness. In both cases, conscience is the result, but for the Christian, conscience will be understood as the voice of God and for the non-Christian it will be understood otherwise (as the pull towards ‘the good’ for example). Accordingly, I will argue that faith can exist as much in the non-Christian as in the Christian. In Christian faith, it refers to the leaving open of a space beyond the understanding in order to accept the specific narrative of the God-man. In non-Christian faith, it refers similarly to an opening up of a space beyond the understanding, but what lies beyond (in this space, if you like), can be given a different form (or potentially none at all). Both forms of faith involve a relationship to the unknown, humility and an opening up for negativity (the continual falling short of one’s understanding), but in one case, specific positive content is given to this negative space. We will attend to the distinction between religiousness A and B in detail in chapter 6.

that we just fail at being pure of heart whether we like it or not. To most, the life Kierkegaard describes will appear unbearable and so even if it were possible to choose it, the question would arise as to how anyone could maintain the motivation to do so. The demands of conscience are radical and uncompromising, sometimes requiring great sacrifice. Sometimes these demands might even seem impossible to fulfil (loving all human beings unconditionally, for example). At times in which conscience becomes unbearable to address, it is likely that a person will slip away from their commitment to the good for the sake of happiness, thus subordinating the good to desire.

Whilst a life that compromises on the demands of conscience might afford ups and downs, it nevertheless may seem preferable to the incredible strain demanded by the way of being Kierkegaard describes. Furthermore, compromise might not be such a bad thing when it comes to actually fulfilling the demands in practice. If the demands of conscience become particularly unbearable, particularly relentless, then one might find themselves in a demonic relation to conscience, fleeing from it in order to find shelter whilst simultaneously experiencing great suffering. Wouldn't such a life therefore be altogether counter-productive? Wouldn't we, in practice, be able to do more good if we were to lessen the absolute demands placed upon us and instead focus only on a partial commitment to the good?

The problem, then, is this- It might seem as though the natural conclusion to the life in which conscience is allowed to grow to its mature form is the demonic, insofar as the demands of conscience are inexhaustible and incredibly demanding. As Kierkegaard writes, conscience has an expansive quality and spreads itself to all areas of life, giving the individual nowhere to take refuge (WL: p113). We might reach a point at which it becomes

clear that even willing happiness falls into conflict with conscience, as it means that the will is not focussed solely on the good, but is divided (we remain double-minded, a slave of two masters). Truly achieving "purity of heart", then, might require that we be willing to give up on happiness altogether. If we think that the desire for happiness is a central part of what it means to be human, it would seem as though our very humanity presents itself as an obstacle to fulfilling the demands of conscience. How, then, are we to live such a perfectionist life as a human being and how could it ever be sustainable? Wouldn't such a life be deeply pathological? Is compromise the only feasible option available to us? How are we to understand Kierkegaard's paradoxical claims about the joys of suffering found in *The Gospel of Sufferings*?

There are, then, several questions we will need to address if Kierkegaard is to be said to have successfully found a way of navigating the tension between the pull towards happiness and conscience without compromising on the demands of conscience. We must ask, first, whether it is possible to reach the absolute good without falling in to the demonic. We must ask whether purity of heart is something that can be chosen and whether it is possible to maintain happiness in the face of guilt. I will argue that it is faith that allows us to find a way through the risks described above and thus faith that can keep us from sinking into a demonic form of life.

Faith is closely linked with humility, as it requires of us that we open up a space for that which does not make sense to human understanding. One way to respond to a paradox is through offence- through a turning away and a rejection. Such a response is seen in the case of the demonic who flees from the good because of the terrible tension it places upon them. The response of faith differs from this insofar as it allows an individual to hold open

the space for a possibility that they cannot comprehend or sensibly hope for- the coming together of the good with happiness.[6] Faith, then, does not solve or eliminate the tension. It does not show us intellectually what we need to do in order to reach purity of heart. Instead, it opens up a space for hope. In faith, one can hope that one can will the good in truth and yet be happy. This allows one to neither become complacent when it comes to the good, nor give up on the hope for happiness but to maintain both wishes alongside one another, in tension.

In chapter one, I shall examine the question of how we are to gain a conscience if we do not already have one. It is problematic to speak, as Kierkegaard does, of conscience as something that requires rigorous schooling when it is a defining characteristic of conscience that it be radically individual. This is because it seems, if we are to learn to have a conscience, that we must learn from somewhere or someone. The problem is that the process of learning itself seems to undermine the radical individuality of conscience because it requires that we draw on some externality. How are we to know if what we are told are right and wrong are really that unless we have some internal standard (namely conscience) by which to judge? The question of where we gain a conscience is a version of the Meno paradox- Either it is the case that we already have a conscience and do not need to search for one, or it is the case that we do not have a conscience and thus would not be able to recognise it when we eventually find it. I will argue that it is through recollection that we find conscience. Specifically, we find conscience through a recollection of wrongdoing or guilt consciousness. We will turn our attention to Kierkegaard's writings on original sin in

[6] Kierkegaardian faith has much in common with Kantian practical reason in this sense. This, however, is a complicated issue that I will address in a later chapter (chapter 5). One key difference between the two thinkers is the angle from which the problem is approached. Kant searches for a rational solution to a rational problem. Kierkegaard's solution, on the other hand, is paradoxical and involves a surrendering of the human understanding in humility.

order to see how a person might gain a sense of good and evil that does not depend on any pre-existing knowledge of good and evil and which allows for the kind of radical individuality required.

In the first chapter, we will have identified that conscience is already present in most, although it may need to be recollected. But such recollection is not without difficulty. Conscience is closely linked with guilt consciousness and may require that we make sacrifices that threaten our happiness. Kierkegaard states that it is not enough to just have a conscience- one must at the same time *will* to have it. In chapter two, we will ask who it is that is able to will to have a conscience and what the obstacles to willing conscience might be. We will consider the two forms of life Kierkegaard outlines outside the religious stages- the aesthetic and the ethical. Both of these forms of life will be characterised as attempts to maximise happiness at the expense of conscience. We will see, however, that such forms of life are limited because they constitute examples of what Kierkegaard describes as "double-mindedness". The double-minded person has a divided will and is pulled towards more than one end. Such a state of being leads to fragmentation in the self and, ultimately, suffering. The alternative to this is what Kierkegaard describes as "purity of heart", the state in which the individual wills only one thing in truth. The only thing that can be willed with purity of heart, he argues, is the good. We will consider why this is so and what exactly the failing of the double-minded person is.

We will see that, on the one hand, certain forms of double-mindedness arise out of lack of spirit- some do not realise either that their will is divided, that they have a conscience or that it is an option to will the good in truth. This is true of the aesthete and some forms of the ethical stage. On the other hand, there are other forms of double-

mindedness that arise not from a lack of spirit, but rather from a weakness of the will. Some might recognise the demands of conscience and the good but remain unable to let go of the pull towards happiness. The difficulty for such individuals is that they appear morally responsible to a greater degree. Whilst the former double-minded person could hide behind a lack of knowledge the latter may not be able to do so. It is in the latter that the suffering of conscience makes itself most felt. Whilst, then, it might seem necessary to confront conscience in order to free oneself from the strain of double-mindedness, we are likely to find that such a confrontation both fails to overcome double-mindedness and furthermore brings great suffering into our lives. This is the suffering of guilt-consciousness- the recognition that one has failed and continues to fail to will the good in truth.

In chapter three we will explore double-mindedness in more detail by considering a particular example. This will allow us to get a clearer picture of the danger involved in living with a conscience and from where the threat of the demonic arises. To do this, we will turn our attention to Kierkegaard's WL. In this book, he deals in detail with the Christian commandment "love thy neighbour as thyself", exploring what it implies. On the one hand, Kierkegaard states that the commandment implies that we must love all equally and non-preferentially, as if we were "blind" to those things that prevent us from loving others. On the other hand, he speaks of the importance of particular relationships, of preferential love (even marriage) and of "loving the people we see". It would seem, then, that there is a tension in this text between blindness and sight, between unconditionality and preference. Many commentators have addressed this tension in various ways, some arguing that it is unproblematic (Ferreira, J. 1997: p73) and some even suggesting that the book is, by itself, inconsistent (Krishek, S. 2009: p122). I will argue for a different way of reading WL based on our exploration of conscience.

The tension present in the text between preferential human love and non-preferential Christian love, I will argue, is analogous to the one we have been considering between the pull towards happiness and the pull of conscience. This is because both tensions are examples of a more fundamental one- the tension between the temporal and the eternal (A tension that structures Kierkegaard's authorship). The danger of WL, I will argue, is that it produces a deadly combination. On the one hand, conscience is brought in to love through the commandment because love is made an ethical matter. At the same time, the commandment is made so difficult to fulfil that failure becomes inevitable. The danger of WL is that it brings with it the threat of extremely deep guilt. It presents us with an ethical commandment that we cannot fulfil. Drawing on the work of Melanie Klein, we will see how such guilt might constitute a serious obstacle to loving others. She argues that, rather than producing positive, loving feelings, excessive guilt can produce feelings of persecution, suspicion and hatred towards others. By producing excessive guilt, the commandment to love the neighbour might thus become self-undermining.

Rather than providing a solution to this problem, I will instead demonstrate that there are good reasons to think that a tension exists in the text intentionally. Love is an example of what Kierkegaard describes as a "sign of contradiction" in PC. This is a sign that pulls the individual in two directions simultaneously (between the temporal and the eternal), revealing to them their own double-mindedness. By making the division in the self evident, the sign of contradiction helps the individual to be constituted as spirit- to become concerned about the kind of self that they are. I will argue that WL does contain a tension, but it is not one that we ought to try to solve as commentators. Instead it is a performative tension designed to bring about an existential change in Kierkegaard's reader. It is a particular example that brings us to a state in which we can experience the conflicting

demands of happiness and conscience and discover where we stand in relation to such a conflict.

In chapter four we will consider the sign of contradiction in more detail. Confronting a sign of contradiction opens up the space for what Kierkegaard calls “the decision”. Either the individual will respond to the sign with offence or with faith. At this point, conscience has reached quite a mature form. The individual is made aware through the sign of contradiction that they are double-minded. It is now their “decision” to respond to the tension in themselves in one way or another. On the one hand, they might turn away from the tension, avoiding the demands of conscience so as to allow themselves shelter. With a turning away from conscience comes a loss of spirit- such an individual is able to release themselves, to a degree, from the difficulty of having to come to terms with double-mindedness. This is what Kierkegaard describes as “offence” and the demonic serves as a severe example of such a state. The other option is faith.

Faith does not solve the tension, but rather allows the individual to hold together the two sides of the tension without offence. Faith allows for the possibility of hope because it requires of us that we set aside the understanding (that which would deem an overcoming of the tension impossible). In faith, we open up a space through which we can hope for the fulfilment of the demands of conscience and yet at the same time we can maintain our hope for happiness. Faith requires humility because it requires that we accept that we cannot bring about purity of heart by ourselves. For the Christian, this is the point at which God’s grace is required.

Once we have seen that faith might open up to us a new way to relate to the fundamental tension, a problem appears. It does not seem to be the case that we can just

choose faith and yet Kierkegaard often uses the language of agency in relation to it. The question will therefore arise as to whether or not faith is a choice or something that is solely given to us through grace. I will demonstrate that reading Kierkegaard's texts shows us that faith can be understood neither in terms of pure passivity nor in terms of agency, but must instead involve both grace and choice. In order to understand how such a middle way between the active and the passive is possible, we will consider both the work of Han-Pile on medio-passivity (Han-Pile, B. 2011: p233) and Wrathall on motivation (Wrathall, M. 2009). It will be argued that the movement into faith results from a high degree of psychic pressure, but nevertheless involves the taking up of this pressure in a particular way.

Chapter five will address in more detail how exactly faith might allow us to find a way in which to live with the demands of conscience without falling in to the demonic. Here we will consider what it is like to live the life of faith and the joys that can result. The problem of double-mindedness is akin, we will see, to the problem Kant identifies in the second critique- that the good does not seem to be met with happiness in this world. For Kant, such a separation is problematic because it means that the will can never be fully fixed on the good, some part of it always being fixed on happiness. Practical reason provides us with a solution to the problem of moral motivation because it allows us to recognise that there is space to hope for the "highest good" – a kind of happiness which does fall in to alignment with the good. The same is the case, I will argue, with Kierkegaardian faith. Faith does not show us how to be pure of heart, but it opens up a space for that which cannot be understood or imagined. In particular, faith can allow us space to hope for the alignment of the good with happiness. This will involve opening up the space for eternal happiness, a kind of happiness that is not dependent on the contingencies of temporality. Eternal happiness is available to us at all times and does not come into tension with the demands of conscience.

It can be cultivated in the present moment through a certain kind of focus, described by Kierkegaard as the joy of observing the “lilies of the field and the birds of the air”.

Here we face a new problem, however. By making sense of faith in terms of the Kantian problem, we end up with quite an instrumental account of faith- one in which faith becomes a tool to fix a motivational problem. Not only does this not seem in keeping with Kierkegaard’s writings on faith, but it also poses once again the problem of agency. Faith, I argue in chapter four, is not to be thought of in terms of reasons or causes, but rather as motivated. It thus seems problematic to now speak of faith as something we have good reasons to have. The problem is that Kierkegaard does seem to speak of faith instrumentally throughout UDVS and at times the text reads like an attempt to convince the reader to have faith. I will argue for a different way to read this text. Rather than reading UDVS as an attempt to convince a reader, I will demonstrate that the same text can be read instead as an attempt to remind the reader of a faith that is already present in them. Building up faith will thus be a task of recollection much like that of building up conscience. UDVS provides an opportunity for such recollection.

In chapter 6, we will widen our focus. Throughout the thesis, we will have taken a first personal approach to understanding conscience, happiness and faith. In the final chapter we will look at faith more generally. In order to do this, we will consider the state of the contemporary spiritual landscape of the west. Drawing on the work of Heelas and Woodhead (2005) on spirituality, we will see that a large shift has happened away from the congregational forms of religion that much of Kierkegaard’s writing is constructed as a response to, towards new forms of “subjective spirituality”. These are forms of spirituality in which the emphasis is placed on the subjectivity and inner life of the individual. Rather than

shaping themselves to live in alignment with the demands of a power or institution, the subjectively spiritual individual turns inward to find guidance from within. The question will be: Given that the spiritual landscape has shifted in this way, how much can Kierkegaard contribute in a context so radically different from the one in which he was writing? The chapter will aim to demonstrate that it is possible to have faith even if one does not buy in to Christian dogmatics. We will see also that faith exists as a response to any tension between the temporal and the eternal. The form of faith as a response to the particular tension between happiness and conscience we consider throughout the thesis will thus be recognised as just one example of faith.

A key failing in Heelas and Woodhead's account is that no clear definition of spirituality is given. As a result, it is difficult to understand what they take the shift to the new forms of "subjective spirituality" to consist in. Here we will see that Kierkegaardian categories might help us to understand what makes new forms of spirituality "spiritual". This will be faith. We have thus far spoken of faith as that which allows for a space to open up beyond the understanding in which paradox can be held without offence. This is precisely the mechanism operating, I will argue, in contemporary forms of spirituality that are genuinely spiritual. These forms of spirituality involve the holding open of a space beyond the understanding- the space for a "something more" that cannot be captured in language. Nevertheless, these forms of spirituality usually involve relating to this "something more" in positive terms- it is given a name or expression (for example God, nature, the eternal, purusha, the divine etc.). A paradoxical structure thus exists in these forms of spirituality- that we end up using a positive expression for something which escapes expression. It is here that faith is required to hold open the space for that which continually escapes us alongside whatever positive expression we draw on to relate to this

space. These contemporary forms of spirituality, I will argue, fall into the category that Kierkegaard describes as “religiousness A”. They provide us with an example of where we might find faith in the contemporary world outside the framework of Christianity.

A Note on Pseudonymity

The question of how to read Kierkegaard in light of the fact that many of his writings are pseudonymous is an important one if we are to address performativity in the works. It is, however, a difficult one. It would be easy to assume that the texts published under Kierkegaard's own name simply express his view and that those which are pseudonymous are those we should treat with suspicion, search for irony within and read performatively. Unfortunately, Kierkegaard's writings are more nuanced than this. There seems, to me, little reason to think that the texts published under his own name straightforwardly express propositions he takes to be true. This is because many of these texts employ what seem to be existential exercises on the reader. If we take, for example, WL as a text expressing straightforwardly Kierkegaard's view, then an issue ensues: The text seems contradictory. On the one had it seems to argue that we ought to love blindly all people, equally. Nevertheless, the text also speaks of the values of marriage and our duty to love the people we see. In simplistic terms, even the dichotomy: to love blindly, to love the people we see, would seem to be contradictory. Many of the debates surrounding WL centre on this apparent contradiction. I will argue later on (chapters 3 & 4) that there are reasons to think that Kierkegaard would have been aware of this tension in this text and might have been employing a rhetorical technique in order to encourage his reader to experience a certain tension within themselves. We see him describe such a technique in PC when he speaks of the "sign of contradiction".

The use of pseudonyms in Kierkegaard's work is important because it serves to undermine the authority of the texts. This means that we cannot take the texts on face value, but must judge for ourselves how much of the text rings true to our own lives. In this

sense, Kierkegaard's writings serve as mirrors, of the kind Stokes describes in Kierkegaard's Mirrors:

> "Ethical contemplation shows the self to itself in a way that is both evaluative and effects actual change upon the self. This reflection offers an evaluation that confronts us and forces us to change the qualifications under which we live… The metaphorical mirror, then, does not simply reflect the self but presents the self back to itself transfigured by the judgements appropriate to it (in this case, ethical). Evaluation is embedded in the reflection" (Stokes, P. 2010: p113).

Kierkegaard's writings present us with a series of different mirrors in this sense, each presenting an opportunity to recognise different aspects of ourselves in the pseudonyms he presents. As Stokes writes, this experience is an inherently evaluative one in which we consider the qualifications under which we live. A key aspect of this experience in Kierkegaard's non-pseudonymous writings is that they tend to reflect back at the reader paradox or double-mindedness. As I will argue (in chapter 4), recognising ourselves as double-minded in such an evaluative mood is what leads to the constitution of the self as spirit. This is a state of self-reflexivity (the relation of the self to itself), in which we become concerned about the kind of self we are.

For Kierkegaard's texts to function as mirrors in this way, we must take them, at least to some degree, seriously. This, I think, might be one reason why some of Kierkegaard's texts are left with no pseudonym. Although I agree with Westphal that we should not straightforwardly assume that Kierkegaard's pseudonymous texts present his own views, I disagree that "To attribute to Kierkegaard the enthusiasm for Mozart expressed by A is like confusing Fyodor Dostoyevski with Raskolnikov or Arthur Miller with Willy Loman" (Westphal, M. 1996: p9). Kierkegaard's texts are more ambiguous than this. Some of them are published under Kierkegaard's own name and others received pseudonyms only shortly before publishing. The texts have some authority, more than we

would attribute to a fictional character. This allows for a greater degree of intimacy than we might have with a fictional character and thus undermines the defence –"the character is not real, so I do not need to take them seriously". It isn't clear in Kierkegaard's case how much is fiction and how much is not and this is partly how the texts force the reader to judge for themselves.[7]

It seems unlikely also that Kierkegaard's journals are the master key to understanding his own views. The journals are so coherently written, so presentable that it is difficult for them to pass as an authority on Kierkegaard's inner life. They lack the mundanities, incoherence and boring day to day details that one would expect to find in a personal diary, for example. At times one gets the impression that Kierkegaard was aware that they would one day be published.

As they seem to employ performative techniques, it is possible (and helpful) to read Kierkegaard's non-pseudonymous texts performatively, as we would the pseudonymous ones. This blurs somewhat the distinction between the two groups of texts. Whilst it is true of the pseudonymous texts that they include irony and so not everything in them should be taken on face value, there is much in these texts which fits systematically with Kierkegaard's non-pseudonymous writings. It is therefore also not straightforwardly the case that these texts do not present Kierkegaard's own views. The fact is, we cannot really know if they do or do not. What we can do, however, is follow the themes that run throughout all of the texts, paying attention to irony or performativity when it becomes

[7] Westphal thinks of the pseudonyms in terms of the death of the author (Westphal, M. 1996: P11). This is a helpful way to think of Kierkegaard's writings, but I would argue that the natural consequence of the death of the author is not so much that we must take all texts (or at least all authors) as straightforwardly fictitious. Instead, we are left with an ambiguity precisely of the sort we find in Kierkegaard authorship- the line between fiction and non-fiction is blurred.

evident. Of course, this might mean that at times we are led astray in our reading, falling in to one of a number of performative traps that Kierkegaard lays out for us. We might find at times that irony goes over our heads and that after much energy and reflection, we finally conclude that the line of interpretation we have taken is based on a misunderstanding. Such moments of misunderstanding, although frustrating, represent an important part of Kierkegaard's authorship- they force us to confront ourselves.

In this thesis, I will deal with pseudonymous and non-pseudonymous texts alike, aiming to outline some of the key places in which performativity becomes particularly salient. I will assume that both kinds of texts do and do not present Kierkegaard's own views. Their aim, more than anything, is to bring about sites for existential self-confrontation and transformation in the reader. Specifically, I will demonstrate that Kierkegaard's writings aim to elicit a confrontation in the individual between the pull towards the temporal and the eternal, between happiness and the good. As such, I will follow themes that exist in both kinds of texts bringing them in to dialogue thereby demonstrating certain threads of coherence that exist throughout all of them. I will, of course, honour Kierkegaard's request:

> "If it should occur to anyone to want to quote a particular passage from the books, it is my wish, my prayer, that he will do me the kindness of citing the respective pseudonymous author's name not mine" (JP 6: 6786, 6566).

The pseudonymous texts will be thus be cited as belonging to the pseudonyms rather than to Kierkegaard, but it will be clear throughout the thesis that this does not mean that we cannot read the texts in relation to one another. Although there may be limitations to reading Kierkegaard in this way, I hope it will become clear that doing so allows us to trace

some of the existential transformations that a reader of Kierkegaard might undergo in exploring his texts.

Chapter 1

Finding a Conscience: The Meno Paradox

For Kierkegaard, becoming a single individual is arguably one of the most important parts of what it is to be a Christian, most of his writing being dedicated to the topic. About conscience, Kierkegaard writes "What does it mean to be and to will to be a single individual? It means to have and to will to have a conscience" (JFY: P91). As a defining characteristic of what it is to be a single individual, the task of developing and willing to have a conscience is therefore central to Kierkegaard's writing. This chapter will consider what exactly Kierkegaard means by conscience by exploring some of the key places in which he uses the term. The task here will be to get clear about what conscience is. In chapter two, we will turn our attention to the second part of the quotation and consider what it means to will to have a conscience and who is able to do this.

Kierkegaard considers conscience to be something that the individual ought to work hard to develop, describing it at one point as a great achievement. On the other hand, he suggests also that conscience plays a disrupting or awakening role. The suggestion is that the person who is not aware of their own wrongdoing or of their task is made aware by a heavy or burdened conscience. Here we find a tension. If conscience is something that we have to work hard to develop, how can we understand it also as something that disrupts us in the way that Kierkegaard suggests? It would seem as though the individual who had not yet developed their conscience would not yet be able to experience such a disruption. The chapter will ask whether conscience is something each individual has already by virtue of being a human being, allowing it to have a disruptive effect even when not yet developed, or whether it is something one must develop before one can be said to have it at all. We will consider the origin of conscience, linking it to Haufniensis' writings on the origins of sin in *CA*. The argument will be that, rather than developing conscience anew, the individual must recollect it from their first experience with sin.

In order to begin exploring what it means to say that conscience is a task, it will first be helpful to have a preliminary definition of conscience. Kierkegaard does not provide a direct definition of the term and we will not be able to get a clear understanding of conscience until we have explored in more detail the origin of conscience and how Kierkegaard thought we should learn to have one. For now, we must therefore be content with a preliminary definition. In *UDVS,* Kierkegaard describes conscience in the following way*:*

> "In eternity there is an infinite silence in which the conscience speaks only with the single individual about whether he as an individual has done good or evil, and about his not wanting to be an individual while he lived!" (UDVS: p128).

The first thing to note about this passage is that here Kierkegaard is speaking of conscience in its more developed form. This is the form of conscience that he envisages the single, religious individual as having. We should not therefore assume that all of these characteristics belong to anyone with a conscience. From the passage, however, we can get a preliminary sense of what conscience is. For one thing, we see that conscience has to do with morality and with an individual's awareness of whether they have done good or evil. It is in conscience that the individual answers for their actions and intention, good or bad. We see that conscience also has the characteristic of being radically individual. Conscience plays an important role in separating a person from the crowd in a way that forces them to take responsibility for their status as an individual human being. What this means is that the individual with a conscience cannot simply defer judgement to others. Whether or not what they do is considered wrong in the eyes of the crowd does not define whether they feel guilt.

In addition to being pulled out of the crowd, the individual with a conscience is confronted with the question of whether or not they *want* to be a single individual. In other words, conscience does not only have to do with one's actions but also with the purity of one's intentions. It is not enough to feel the pull of conscience begrudgingly, to hide in the crowd or compare oneself to others. Conscience also confronts a person with the question of whether or not they want to be a single individual. We might think here, for example, of the person who knows their conscience, sees their own judgement and avoids it as much as they can, confronting it only when they absolutely cannot avoid it. They do not want to be a single individual; they would much rather go along with the moral decisions of others than have to make their own decisions. This is so even if the person does recognise that they are a single individual, does listen to their conscience and does give themselves the proper time for silence. If all of this is done begrudgingly, this too will be put before them in conscience.

The task of becoming a single individual outlined in Kierkegaard's works requires that a person have a conscience such as this. The question is, however, whether such a conscience already exists in each person by virtue of them being a human being, or whether such a conscience must be developed from scratch. When considering conscience, Kierkegaard writes:

> "There is no accomplishment (neither in the physical, like dancing, singing, etc., nor in the mental, such as thinking and the like) which requires such an extensive and rigorous schooling as is required before one can genuinely be said to have a conscience" (JP 1: 684).

The suggestion we find here is that conscience is something that takes extensive and rigorous schooling to develop. Clearly, then, it is not the case that we automatically get the kind of conscience that Kierkegaard thinks is required for the single individual simply by virtue of being human. Some work must be done in order to achieve it. But as we saw,

conscience is radically individual and for this reason it is not clear exactly how it could be learned. If developing a conscience is a task that requires rigorous schooling as stated here, the question arises as to how we should go about getting this schooling. It would seem as though the individual without a conscience does not have much choice in the matter. Either they turn inward in silence and find that we have a conscience there and waiting for them, or they do not. Any appeal outwards to a rational standard or to another person would not be sufficient to account for an individual conscience.

The problem becomes even worse when we consider the expression scattered throughout Kierkegaard's religious works "to make something a matter of conscience". How can we make something a matter of conscience if it is not already that? Unless we already have a conscience to appeal to, it would seem that the judgements we make over something would not be driven by conscience, but by other factors. One might try to make love a matter of conscience, for example, by considering the utility afforded by all through such love. This, however, would not be making love a matter of conscience as what is appealed to here is not the experience of conscience, but rather the rational standard of utility. To really make love a matter of conscience would be to turn inward to conscience, assuming that such a conscience is already there.

We can understand the problem of developing conscience outlined here is as a version of the Meno Paradox. In Plato's *Meno*, Socrates describes this paradox in the following way:

> "it is not possible for a human being to seek either what he knows or what he does not know… For he could not seek for what he knows, because he knows it and then there's no need of any seeking for this sort of person; nor could he seek for what he does not know, because then he does not know what he is seeking." (Plato, 2004: p16)

The paradox is that there are only two available possibilities and in each case seeking is not possible. On the one hand, the seeker already knows what the thing he is seeking looks like. He therefore does not need to seek it, as he already knows it. On the other hand, if the seeker does not already know what the thing he is seeking looks like, how will he be able to recognise it when he finds it and how will he know where to look? In terms of seeking conscience, the same problem arises. If we already have a conscience, we do not need to seek it. On the other hand, if we do not have a conscience, how could we recognise it when we find it? It is only by appealing to our conscience that we could know what does and does not resemble conscience. The Meno paradox puts the person who is searching for a conscience in a difficult situation: If a person does not already have a conscience, they are going to struggle to find one. On the other hand, the paradox produces a problem for Kierkegaard- namely that it becomes unclear how conscience can be understood as requiring rigorous schooling when such schooling would be ineffective if a person does not already have a conscience. One way in which we might find a solution to this problem is by considering the answer that Socrates gives to the paradox:

> "Inasmuch as the soul is immortal and has been born many times and has seen all things both here and in the house of Hades, there is nothing which it has not learned. So that there is nothing wondrous about its also being able to recollect about virtue and about other things, which it already knew before." (Plato, 2004: p17)

The answer Socrates gives to Meno in response to the paradox is that learning is a form of recollection. Because the soul is immortal, it has already learned everything. This means that the person who searches is searching for something she already knows. Because such a person has forgotten what her soul remembers, the task is to remember and such remembering can take place through searching. The person will recognise what she is searching for when she sees it because seeing it will trigger a recollecting.

Of course, as far as most people are concerned, Socrates' answer to this paradox is not going to be wholly appealing. After all, it depends upon an acceptance that the soul is immortal and has learned all things. Nevertheless, we might still find an answer to the problem of conscience here without having to say anything about the eternal soul. Through the pseudonym of Climacus, Kierkegaard states:

> "Rare as it is to come across a genuine hypocrite, so too with someone genuinely lacking a conscience" (CUP: p509).

This would seem to suggest that conscience can and does exist in most human beings, even though most human beings have not gone through the rigorous schooling Kierkegaard evokes above. If it is true that most people do have a conscience in this way, it is possible that we could find a basis from which such individuals could recollect their conscience. But why would the individual need to recollect their conscience if they already have it as Climacus suggests they do here? In relation to this question, Kierkegaard writes that

> "Here in temporality the conscience already wants to make each one separately into the single individual, but here in temporality, in the restlessness, in the noise, in the crush, in the crowd, in the jungle of evasions, alas, yes, here even the terrible thing happens that someone completely deafens his conscience- his conscience, since he does not get rid of it; it still is his or, rather, he belongs to it" (UDVS pp128-9).

The suggestion here is that at least in most cases, the conscience is already there. What prevents a person from experiencing it is rather the distractions of the crowd. Kierkegaard states that this takes place in temporality and that in temporality the conscience already wants to make each one separately into the single individual. This means that conscience does have a direct phenomenal effect on the individual in temporality. It is not some abstract force, nor does it belong solely to the eternal. Conscience has physical effects on the body, for example restlessness, impatience and sorrow. But in temporality, one is provided plenty of distractions to avoid these effects. Many reach the point where they not

only are distracted from the calling signs of conscience, but they no longer notice them at all.

When Kierkegaard suggests that getting a conscience is a task that requires rigorous schooling, we can take this to mean that, for the person who has become distracted from conscience by becoming lost in the crowd, such a rigorous schooling will be required to bring conscience out to its full fruition. This rigorous schooling is the task of recollecting a conscience that has always already been there. We should not take the suggestion to be that the person who has not developed their conscience does not have one at all.

But how would we know whether someone has a conscience if they themselves are not aware of it? On what grounds can we say that conscience has always already been there? Kierkegaard does not entertain at length the possibility that an individual may not have a conscience at all, but neither does he make conscience something necessary that belongs to all human beings. He only goes as far as to say that when an individual honestly turns inward in silence, they will most likely find that their conscience is already there. Recollecting and developing the conscience that is already there is, nevertheless, a task.

How can we recollect the experience of conscience and what exactly would we be recollecting? If we are not recollecting some knowledge that our soul has retained from a past life, it must be an event in this life that we recollect. We would need, then, an account of how conscience comes into the world, such that this discovery of conscience does not depend on an already existing conscience. If we could find an anchor point such as this, we could say that conscience is recollected from this original entering of conscience into the world. For those familiar with *CA*, such an argument may seem familiar. Haufniensis gives a

very similar account of how sin enters the world through anxiety, without such an account depending on the individual already knowing right and wrong (and therefore already being acquainted with sin). We can draw on this account to find from where conscience enters the world.

In *CA*, Haufniensis states that it is "By a qualitative leap sin entered into the world" (CA: p112). That is to say, there is no recollection that takes place in the first sin. The first sin enters the world through a leap, not depending on any particular set of steps or pre-existing experiences of sin. Haufniensis is very clear that we must understand the bringing of sin into the world as being a leap, one for which we cannot provide a causal story. This is because if we could provide such a story, the individual's responsibility for sin would be lost. Sin must be understood as being brought into the world anew with each individual through a free act. If we can find conscience entering the world alongside sin, this would provide us with an anchor from which to recollect. Such an anchor point would not require any pre-existing understanding of good, evil or conscience, since we could say that conscience came into the world through the qualitative leap into sin. The question we will now consider, then, is how the individual moves from innocence to sin and in the process, whether or not conscience is to be found in the same movement.

In order to give an explanation of how sin comes into the world through a qualitative leap, we will consider the account that Haufniensis gives in *CA.* In this book it is argued that sin enters the world through anxiety:

> "In this state [of innocence] 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. Dreamingly the spirit projects its own actuality, but this actuality is nothing, and innocence always sees this nothing outside itself." (CA: p41)

As described here, innocence, the state before sin, is not only a state of peace and repose, but contains within it also anxiety. This is because the individual in anxiety is confronted with glimpses of themselves as spirit, a state in which they are aware of themselves as a self. In *SUD,* a work that can be closely paired with *CA,* Anti-Climacus describes spirit in the following way:

> "A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself." (SUD: p13)

Spirit is a form of self-reflexivity. The self is the relation of the self to itself. In its very definition the self is self-reflective insofar as it is a relation. Anti-Climacus goes on to state that this the relation is between several sets of opposing parts

> "A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity." (SUD: p13)

What Anti-Climacus describes as "the relation" is this synthesis of the human being between each of the factors mentioned here. We can think, for example, of the human being as requiring a mix of both freedom and necessity. On the one hand, the individual has a sense of a freedom to make choices and to decide their Fate. Yet equally, the individual has a sense of necessity, that they do not choose the preferences and desires from which their choices come and that they do not decide the outcome of their choices. The individual has a sense of themselves as existing in temporality, with both a past and a future. Yet at the same time the individual experiences moments of timelessness, complete investment in the present where time is experienced as a kind of continuity. Finally, the individual has an experience of themselves as part of something larger, a oneness with God and the infinite. Yet at the same time the individual is grounded in the particularities of their body, their

particular life and relationships and all the finite factors that surround them. Much more could be said about the various relations which Anti-Climacus explores in much more detail in *SUD*[8], but we will not go in to that here.

The "spirit" is the name for this relation in which the self relates to itself. The relation between freedom and necessity for example, relates to itself. When I think of myself as spirit I think of myself as a self about which I am concerned. I am a self that I relate to, am aware of and towards which I have an obligation. The "I" that is relating relates to the "I" that I am. Both are the self and spirit is the name for the relation, the relating itself. In the case of freedom and necessity, I relate to myself as both free and constrained, having a concern for this aspect of my being. Spirit is my relating to myself as a being composed from a synthesis of freedom and necessity.[9] The same holds true for each of the relations Anti-Climacus describes.

But in the state of innocence the self is experienced only as possibility. The individual is not yet fully with spirit, does not fully have a notion of themselves as a self.

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[8] For a comparison to Hegel's account of spirit- Hannay, A. 2003: pp64-75; For an account of the relation of the self to despair- Pattison, G. 2005: pp62-66; For an overview of the structure of the self in Kierkegaard- Walsh, S. 2009: pp99-101.

[9] Spirit/ The self(B) (The relation of the self(A) to itself)

Freedom ⟵ The relation (the self(A)) ⟶ Necessity

One of the things that makes Kierkegaard's formulation of the self-relation so confusing is the conflation of the self(A) and the self(B). There are good reasons for this conflation. If we give the self(B) a name in itself this suggests a reification. The self(B) is not concrete, but rather the name of the relation of the self (A) to itself. We must also be careful not to reify the self(A), which is also the name for a relation (of freedom to necessity for example). To summarise- the self(A) refers to the relation of freedom to necessity (or one of the other dualities Kierkegaard describes) in the human being. The self(B) refers to the relation of the self (A) to itself. This relation of the self(A) to itself is what constitutes what we might call "concern"- It is the way in which a particular human being might care about the way in which they are constituted as a self (They might care about the way in which they are free or constrained for example).

There are glimpses of a relation, but the self related to is not yet an actuality- it is a dreamt possibility. This relation is a relation to nothing in particular, since the self is not yet constituted as a self. There is not yet a proper synthesis between the elements that make up the self and therefore there is nothing concrete yet to relate to. This relation to nothingness is experienced in innocence as a kind of anxiety. In innocence the nothing which is related to is experienced outside of the self. The self does not relate to itself, but relates to possibility, a kind of open nothingness in the world around it.[10] We might understand this relation as an anxiety that something is to come which one does not yet comprehend. But such a state of innocence is unstable:

> "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." (CA: p34)

In other words, it does not take much for the individual relating to nothing to find something external to relate to as the source of the anxiety they felt in relating to nothing. The word described here represents the unknown, something the individual assumes is the source of their anxiety. Once there is such a word to relate to, the individual no longer relates to nothing, but instead relates to the word. Haufniensis then gives us an example of this in the story of Adam and Eve:

> "The prohibition induces in him [Adam] anxiety, for the prohibition awakens in him freedom's possibility." (CA: p44)

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[10] Misfiring self-relation (anxiety)

Freedom ⟵ Possibility (the unknown/nothing) ⟶ Necessity

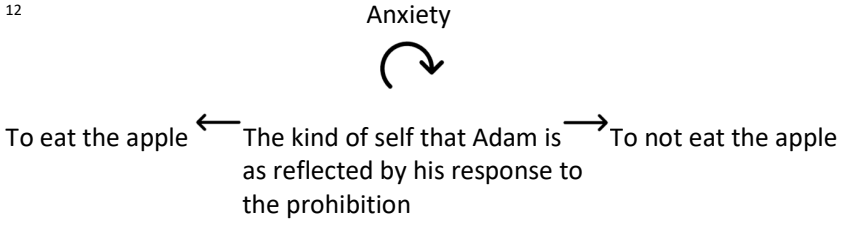
In Adam's case, the word is the prohibition, i.e. the commandment not to eat the fruit from the tree in the Garden of Eden. Adam no longer relates to nothingness in anxiety, but now has a prohibition to relate to. This awakens in him anxiety, but also freedom's possibility, namely the possibility that he could transgress this commandment. As Pattison (2005: p53) rightly points out, the anxiety comes not so much from the prohibited object, but rather from the subject's sense of their own capacities in relation to this object. It is not just that there is something unknown that causes anxiety, but rather than one can respond to this unknown in more than one way (it is a tempting and yet terrifying unknown). Furthermore, the way in which the individual relates to the unknown bares certain consequences when it comes to the kind of person one is.[11]

Anxiety is intensified by the fact that Adam does not yet have a knowledge of sin, good or evil. He has simply an anxiety about the unknown, a lack of understanding about what it would mean if he transgressed.[12] Nevertheless, Adam has a choice and anxiety is by nature tempting and yet terrifying. As we know from the story, Adam does eat the apple. This action constitutes the qualitative leap by which sin enters the world. From it, Adam gains a notion of sin, good and evil:

> "The qualitative leap is clearly actuality, and so it would seem that possibility is annulled along with anxiety. However, this is not the case… the actuality posited is

[11] Pattison (2005) puts it: "The thought of anxiety is not so much, 'Now that might be something desirable' as 'I could become the sort of person who would desire that'" (p53)

[12]



The commandment presents Adam with a mirror- it presents him with an opportunity to recognise the kind of self that he is, which will be revealed by whether he eats the apple or not. This is why he becomes anxious over the commandment.

> an unwarranted actuality. So anxiety again comes into relation with what is posited as well as with the future. Yet this time the object of anxiety is a determinate something and its nothing is an actual something, because the distinction between good and evil is posited *in concreto* – and anxiety therefore loses its dialectical ambiguity." (CA: p112)

Before, Adam was relating to possibility- the possibility of transgressing the commandment. This possibility is now made into actuality by the action of transgression. However, as Haufniensis notes here, this does not annul possibility altogether. This is because the actuality is 'unwarranted', that is, experienced as a transgression. Anxiety comes in again because the individual relates this experience of unwarranted actuality to their future, there is a recognition that it is possible for them to repeat this transgression. Now, however, the anxiety is no longer related simply to nothingness or the unknown, but has a determinate object, namely the possibility of further transgression, the possibility of good and evil.[13] Good and evil are understood as a result of this first sin. In addition, then Adam becomes constituted as spirit. This is because he now has a sense of himself as a self who can do good or evil. There is now a sense in which he relates to himself as a self.[14]

Can, however, we get a notion of conscience out of Haufniensis' account of the qualitative leap? For one thing, we can note that the original sin is recollected. We see this when Haufniensis notes that anxiety comes in again with relation to what is posited (the

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[13] Anxiety over the possibility that one could be good or evil

Good ⟵ (the self(A)) ⟶ Evil

"Conscience" is the name for the kind of anxiety that fears that one could be an evil self. "The demonic", on the other hand, is the name for the kind of anxiety that fears that one could be good. We will explore this distinction in more detail in chapter 3.

[14] For an interesting illustration of how the same process plays out in Camus' *The Fall* and also in Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, see Gammelgaard, J. 2000.

original sin) and the individual's future. That is to say, the individual recollects their sin and becomes anxious that it might be repeated in the future. This is at least one aspect of conscience, namely that the individual recollects their past wrongdoing and feels guilty towards it. Furthermore, the individual relates forward to their future and feels anxious about the possibility of future wrongdoing. It would seem, then, that the individual comes out of the original sin with a degree conscience, namely an awareness of themselves as having the possibility to be good or evil.[15]

It is fair to point out at this point that we have been speaking of "sin" rather than of "guilt" or "transgression". The use of "sin" involves the introduction of a series of specifically Christian dogmatics. One might argue that this is problematic because the notion of sin confines us to a Christian narrative and only becomes relevant in the religious stages for Kierkegaard (specifically religiousness B). It might seem wrong, therefore, to speak of conscience outside of a Christian context if we are associating conscience closely with sin. Haufnienses suggests in CA, however, that the method he is engaging with throughout the book is to be understood as "psychology" as a pose to dogmatics (CA: P14). At the point at which we begin to speak of sin, dogmatics must come in to play. This is because sin is not a matter for study, but rather for concern. The process described by Haufnienses (of experiencing transgression for the first time through anxiety), however, can be understood

[15] In Adam's case, a commandment is given by God which opens Adam up to his own freedom. Most, however, are not given a commandment from God in this way. To find the "word" that opens up the space for anxiety we instead to turn to the social world. The experience of transgression is only possible if there is something forbidden that can be transgressed. Even though they may not yet be aware of good and evil explicitly, a child in innocence may have a sense that there is an aura of caution or threat surrounding certain potential choices or ways of being. It is this ambiguous sense of dissonance that opens up the space for anxiety- the temptation that is at the same time terrifying. Although the particular choices that prompt this sense of dissonance may vary from one social context to another, the experience of transgression itself is a universal one. It is not any particular kind of wrongdoing that constitutes original sin, but rather the act of transgression itself. The structure of original sin remains the same even though the particular context may vary.

outside of Christianity through psychology. We can give an account of wrongdoing out of which guilt and conscience arise without needing dogmatics. The point at which Christian dogmatics do become relevant is the point at which we wish to speak about the meaning, implication or solution to such transgression.

As several authors have pointed out (Barrett, L. 1985: pp35-62; Kirkconnell, W., G. 2010: pp41-2; Rumble, V. 1992: pp605-625) Haufniensis' taking up of a psychological stance means that he has little to say about what it is like to transgress. He studies the movements externally, as would a psychologist and thereby does not need to deal with the question of religion. For our purposes, we can read CA in two ways. On the one hand, we can understand the process Haufniensis describes in secular terms, leading to the rise of conscience without necessarily attributing any particular religious content to such a process. On the other hand, we can understand the same process in terms of sin, where transgression signifies a break from God and redemption signifies a return. Both Christians and non-Christians can have an experience of conscience, arising from the same psychological process, but in either case the implications of such a process can be cashed out in different terms.[16]

Evans (2004) provides a particularly detailed account of conscience in *Kierkegaard's Ethics of Love* that does allow for it to be potentially recognised beyond the religious stage. Evans reads Kierkegaard as a divine command theorist, arguing that each person has within them a "natural knowledge" (P162) of God. This knowledge of God serves as a "vocation or calling" (P102)- through which we are able to become the best self we can

[16] In chapter 6 we will see in more detail how the processes Kierkegaard describes can be read outside of a Christian context through the category of religiousness A.

become; It is what Evans describes as conscience. What is good about this account is that, although conscience is cached out using Christian terminology, it allows for conscience to be experienced in a multiplicity of ways, not always reflective. We can have a sense of a natural pull without having to give this pull too much content.

The trouble, however, is that classifying conscience as "natural" might allow us to forget that it has an origin- we get a conscience through transgression, which is then recollected. This is a significant fact to remember because it allows us to free ourselves of certain metaphysical baggage that comes with Christian dogmatics. As I have already said, the process through which guilt and conscience comes into the world does not necessarily need to be understood in Christian terms as we can give a perfectly good, purely psychological account of this process. Although it can be, conscience does not need to be understood as the voice of God, nor as a mystic force. Speaking of conscience as a "natural knowledge" as Evans does might obscure this fact.

In the qualitative leap, we find an anchor through which both sin/guilt and conscience enter the world. In relation to the Meno paradox, we need only to say that in order to rediscover their conscience, the individual must recollect the experience of transgression and the possibility of wrongdoing. This is not to suggest that they actually have to remember the first time they transgressed in their childhood, but each person has a recollection of some sense of wrongdoing from their past. Such a recollection could be triggered in many ways. The individual might find themselves encountering a new act of wrongdoing, such that their discomfort and restlessness overcomes them. An example of this would be with someone like the aesthete in *The Seducer's Diary* about whom Kierkegaard writes-

> "His punishment has a purely aesthetic character, for even the expression 'the conscience awakens' is too ethical to use about him; conscience takes shape in him merely as a higher consciousness that manifests itself as a restlessness that does not indict him even in the profounder sense but keeps him awake, allows him no rest in his sterile restlessness." (EO1: pp308-9)

This is an example of a person who does not want to have a conscience, nor does he really understand what it is and yet he feels its disruptive effects on his life. We see that the seducer is stricken with a guilty conscience, an awareness of sorts of wrongdoing, but this conscience certainly does not take an overtly judgemental form. Nor do we require Christian categories to understand it. Instead, the guilty person experiences a degree of restlessness from which he cannot escape. Here conscience is also described as a "higher consciousness", something which the seducer does not fully comprehend from the perspective of his aesthetic form of existence. Conscience can have a disruptive effect on a person before they are aware of its source. It can thereby pull the individual out of ignoring their guilt and bring them to a form of life where they are more aware of conscience.

Sometimes authors characterise the fact that conscience points us towards a "higher consciousness" in reflective terms. Stack (1977), for example, writes

> "conscience is related to the concernful subjective consciousness and critical self-reflection. One may say that one of the outcomes of an examined life is the realization of the possibility of conscience" (p123).

In forms of life involving a high degree of self-consciousness, it is true to say that critical self-reflection might be involved in relating to conscience. This does not seem to be true of all forms of life, however. As we saw in the case of the seducer, conscience can manifest as restlessness. Characterising conscience as related to "concernful subjective consciousness" suggests quite a high degree of self-awareness. The individual must not only be self-conscious enough to recognise that they have a conscience, but must also be concerned

about it. Such an expression is furthermore extremely ambiguous and tells us little about what kind of concernful subjective consciousness conscience is. We might say, for example, that a person has a concernful subjective consciousness of their own happiness and that this does not necessarily have to do with conscience. Stack's later characterisation of conscience as the outcome of an examined life is problematic because it leaves aside the possibility that there could be forms of conscience that are not the result of philosophical reflection. I wish to push against this position, arguing instead that conscience can take forms involving a very low degree of self-consciousness.

Similarly, some commentators overlook the possibility that conscience might take a non-religious form. Pattison (2005), for example, characterises conscience in the following way:

> "To live conscientiously is to live as if one's life were being lived constantly 'before God'" (p123).

Whilst I agree that in the religious form of life this is the case, I do not think it is right to say that this is the only form that conscience takes. As we can see from the passage above, conscience can be recognised in the aesthetic form of life. The aesthete's restlessness does not yet seem to constitute concernful self-consciousness, nor does it involve an awareness of being before God and yet can be characterised as a kind of disruption, an anticipation of something not yet understood.

In the same camp, Walsh (2009) speaks of the 'contrite or anguished conscience' (p133) that is associated with consciousness of sin. She suggests that such a conscience openly confesses sin and seeks forgiveness. Whilst again this might be so in the individual who has a high degree of self-consciousness, I argue that it is possible for conscience to manifest in less explicitly ethical ways than this. Conscience might manifest in bodily feelings

(restlessness being one example), without any indication that these feelings have something to do with wrongdoing or sin. All it would take for a recollection of guilt to take place would be an intensifying of such feelings and a recognition that one's actions will not go unjudged (since one will be punished through restlessness and anxiety).

As we have seen, conscience can take more than one form. The aesthete experiences a form of conscience fitting to his aesthetic form of life, but one which hints towards the ethical and the possibility of guilt. The kind of conscience described in the case of the aesthete, however, is clearly far away from the sort of conscience Kierkegaard envisages for the Christian. For the Christian the conscience relationship is stretched to all areas of their life (WL: p139). The Christian consults with God in all of their actions in a movement Kierkegaard describes as the hidden being of inwardness. In order to better understand how conscience is recollected, let us now consider in what forms outside the restlessness of the aesthete conscience shows up in Kierkegaard's writings.

In the ethical stage of life, there is at least an awareness of the possibility of guilt and wrongdoing. The suggestion is not necessarily that the ethical stage of life is any closer to a level of conscience characteristic of the single individual, but rather that the ethical provides a different way in which conscience is masked. Haufniensis remarks:

> "Whoever learns to know his guilt only from the finite is lost in the finite, and finitely the question of whether a man is guilty cannot be determined except in an external, juridical, and most imperfect sense. Whoever learns to know his guilt only by analogy to judgements of the police court and the supreme court never really understands that he is guilty, for if a man is guilty, he is infinitely guilty." (CA: p161)

Here we see an example of the ethical stage of life. In the ethical stage, the individual knows his guilt, but knows it only through the finite. The aesthete, as we saw before, experiences conscience through the finite, through sensations of restlessness and anxiety. The ethical

individual too remains in the finite, but now the conscience is projected outwards onto the external and the juridical. The ethical person is able to recognise when they are guilty and fear a repetition of guilt, but only by analogy to judgements from the external. They rely, for example, on the rules set by a society or crowd. This means that guilt is conditional and dependent upon whether or not the individual is transgressing a social standard of ethics. The guilt of original sin is not yet fully recollected, for the ethical individual does not yet understand that they are infinitely guilty and that such guilt does not depend on the transgression of social ethical standards. Such an individual is at risk of becoming even more detached from their conscience, as conscience is substituted with the crowd. In this sense, the ethical individual is not necessarily any closer to being the kind of single individual that Kierkegaard discusses. If they become sufficiently lost and fixated on the crowd, they can find themselves losing track of recollection altogether.

The final stage of consciousness, that of the religious, is the stage at which recollection of guilt and original sin is most pronounced. Kierkegaard makes it clear that conscience is at this stage closely related to the God relationship:

> "For a God-relationship simply means having a conscience. Therefore a man could not have anything upon his conscience if God did not exist, for the relationship between the individual and God, the God-relationship, is the conscience" (WL p116).

Here conscience is defined *as* the God-relationship. That is to say the individual's relationship with God *is* conscience. From the Christian perspective, this is also the case for conscience in both the aesthetic and ethical stages of life. In both of these stages, conscience is still the God relationship, but that it is this only becomes manifest in the religious form of life. Not only is conscience the God relationship, but conscience also plays an important role in bringing the individual to see God. Kierkegaard states in a journal entry:

> "In [my] conscience God has found me out, and now it is impossible for me to forget that this eye sees me. God's having seen me made me and makes me see God" (SKS20, 160, NB2: 50).

Conscience, particularly in the religious stage, involves the impossibility of ignoring the fact that God has a view on one's life and intentions. Once the individual starts to live a religious life with an awareness of the presence of God, therefore, conscience becomes a central part of everything one does. This involves taking responsibility for one's actions and an awareness that one can do good and evil.

More radically, the suggestion is made in the quotation above that through recognising that he is seen by God, Kierkegaard comes to see God. This gives the conscience an important place- namely it is through conscience that one recognises for the first time that one is seen by God. This can be the case because conscience can take a disruptive form like restlessness, as seen in the case of the seducer, without yet involving an awareness that one is before God. Through an encounter with conscience such as this, the individual discovers that even when they are not witnessed by another human being, their actions are not meaningless. Through the restlessness, discomfort and anxiety that can result from sin, the individual comes to see that it does not matter whether others judge them or not, all of their actions will be judged nonetheless.[17] This can lead to a recognition that one can be seen by God and at the same time, one sees God. As we noted earlier, conscience *is* the God-relationship, and this is so because it is through conscience that one knows that God sees them and likewise one sees God.

[17] The objection might be raised that the Kierkegaardian notion of conscience here becomes too inward, at the expense of the recognition of the demands of the other. I do not want to address this problem here, as I will later go on to deal with an analogous one in a later chapter (3)- that the kind of guilt implicit in the life of the individual who follows their conscience might lead to a dangerous kind of narcissism. For a good counter-argument to the claim that Kierkegaard's inwardness leads to a lack of attentiveness to the other, see Ferreira (2001: pp87-89).

Part of the Christian task is to consult with God in all aspects of one's life. In the same way, then, Christianity involves the bringing of conscience into everything one does: "As the blood throbs through every nerve, so Christianity in the conscience-relation wishes to penetrate everything" (WL: p110). Much of what Kierkegaard says about Christianity, particularly in *WL*, can be made sense of in relation to what we have said here about conscience. Let us return to the illustration of conscience in the Christian form of life:

> "The change of infinity (which is the hidden being of inwardness, which is inwardly directed toward the God-relationship and therein is different from the inwardness directed outwardly) is what Christianity wants to make everywhere, and therefore it also wants to transform all love into a matter of conscience" (WL: p139).

Christianity wants to bring the God-relationship into all areas of one's life and therefore wants to make all things a matter of conscience. As argued in *WL*, it wants even to make love a matter of conscience. We have seen the effect that conscience can have in pulling an individual out of a crowd and making them account for their own actions and intentions. What, however, would it mean to make something in one's life a matter of conscience? For one thing, we can assume that it means standing before something as an individual and in the presence of God. This is described in the quote as "the hidden being of inwardness, directed towards the God relationship". This is what Kierkegaard describes elsewhere in *WoL* as consulting with God and one's conscience (p139), a turn inwards in which one faces one's conscience and recognises whether what one is doing is right or wrong. Honesty is required, since dishonesty will mask the voice of conscience. For example, to make love into a matter of conscience would be to turn inwards and to consult with one's conscience in matters of love. Does this love feel right? Am I being righteous and well intentioned in my love? It is to hold the love before God and in honesty before God, recognising whether or not such a relationship does indeed have the esteem to be called love.

Having given an overview of conscience at different levels of consciousness, it is now possible to see what Kierkegaard is referring to when he suggests that one can only be said to have a genuine conscience after rigorous schooling. Here he is referring to the Christian task- the task of expanding conscience to all areas of one's life. If, however, we take the suggestion to be that conscience comes in degrees, with the aesthete having very little conscience and the Christian having a lot of conscience, a problem arises. Kierkegaard writes that

> "One cannot make any individual thing into a matter of conscience; either one must make everything so, as Christianity does, or else nothing at all. Conscience has the inward power of expansiveness, like the omnipresence of God: one cannot restrict it to a single place and say that God is omnipresent in that single place, for that is simply denying His omnipresence. And in the same way to restrict the conscience-relationship to something in particular is really to deny the conscience-relation" (WL: p113).

It would seem, then, that conscience is an all or nothing thing. This is because the conscience-relationship is the God-relationship. Because God is omnipresent, it means that whether we accept it or not, God is present for all of our actions and intentions. The God-relationship has the form of expansiveness because every time we try to restrict the God-relationship to particular aspects of our lives, we find that such a restriction is arbitrary and falls away with time. The same is the case for the person that tries to limit conscience to certain areas of their life. They soon find that such a restriction is arbitrary.

Neither the aesthete nor the ethicist, however, are trying to restrict the conscience-relationship to only one area of their lives. They do not have nearly enough insight into conscience to be doing this. Rather, the conscience-relationship is present but not yet understood. To have a genuine conscience relationship in the way Kierkegaard suggests involves having the kind of conscience that extends to all areas of one's life. It is

true to say that conscience has the characteristic of being barrierless, and from the Christian perspective it is linked closely with God's omnipresence. Naturally conscience will extend to all areas of one's life. This does not exclude, however, the possibility that such restrictions to conscience might be made by the person who is not yet able to fulfil the full demands of Christianity. Of course, this would not be a restricting of God's omnipresence. Instead it would simply mean that the individual hides or shields themselves from awareness of this omnipresence. When Kierkegaard speaks of 'genuine' conscience, we should take this to mean a conscience which has reached the point of full expansion, which is not restricted arbitrarily by the individual. This does not have to mean, however, that individuals who have not yet removed such barriers do not have a conscience at all. They could have a conscience which has the nature of being expansive, but which they are not yet aware of.

When Kierkegaard suggests that getting a conscience is a task that requires rigorous schooling, we can take this to mean that, for the person who has become distracted from conscience or for the person who provides arbitrary restrictions on their conscience, such a rigorous schooling will be required to bring conscience out to its full fruition. We should not take the suggestion to be that the person who has not developed their conscience does not have one at all (although this may be a possibility). Discovering and developing the conscience that is already there is, nevertheless, a task. This is the task that we have thus far described as recollection. Recollecting conscience can start with a disruption of one's life through restlessness and anxiety. At a higher stage of consciousness, one can recollect that it is possible for one to be guilty or not guilty, appealing to a moral community as a guide. At its highest, however, conscience expands to all areas of one's life through God's omnipresence. Conscience now becomes the guiding voice of the divine. Where in the aesthetic stage conscience provided little to no direction of what one ought to

do or where the feelings of restlessness come from, in the religious stage by contrast, conscience acts as a guide through which the individual can make choices. It also allows for repentance- a genuine recognition of wrongdoing before God.

Most people, we have seen, have a conscience of sorts, even though it may not take the form found in the religious stages of life. What do we say, however, about the person who does not have a conscience at all? Such a person would have no guilt associated with the first sin, nor any sins following it. Kierkegaard does not speak much about such a person and as we saw, he strongly implies that it is very rare to come across someone like this. Even in cases described as demonic, conscience is still in play, even though it is rejected and hidden from. Kierkegaard does not, however, rule out completely the possibility of a person with no conscience. In terms of how a person such as this could ever get a conscience, it is not clear that Kierkegaard gives a decisive answer. Some kind of grace would be needed in which an individual would have to encounter guilt for the very first time. For the vast majority of others' however, they will find that such a conscience is already there when they begin to recollect.

In this chapter, I have given an account of what conscience is, what different forms it can take and from where it originates. The task of gaining a conscience is one of recollection. The Meno Paradox can be bypassed when we argue that at least in the majority, if not all individuals, conscience is already present. Conscience comes into the world with original sin through the qualitative leap and is closely tied to guilt consciousness for this reason. Conscience can become masked by the distractions of the temporal and the crowd, but also encourages its own recollection by disrupting the life of the individual. Recollection can take place through the hints given by conscience towards the higher forms

of consciousness, each stage bringing greater levels of recollection. We have seen that conscience can take different forms depending on the stage of life of a given individual. What this means is that it can both be understood as a task, and as something already existing in the individual. It should be clear at this point that having a conscience is not a choice. Even a person with no explicit interest in their own salvation might feel the pangs of conscience. The aesthete, for example, experiences it in terms of restlessness, anxiety and boredom. As we have seen, however, it is possible for conscience to develop and deepen, expanding to all areas of one's life. This is something that it may be possible to cultivate. In the next chapter we will consider the second part of the quote we began with- the claim that one must not only have a conscience but must *will* to have it. We will consider in what forms of life it is or is not possible to will to have conscience in order to determine what the conditions must be for willing conscience to be possible.

Chapter 2

Willing to Have a Conscience: Double-Mindedness

In the first chapter we saw that conscience arises through an original act of transgression. A person who already has a conscience is able to recollect it through an encounter that draws them out of the distraction of the crowd. They are then able to take up the task of developing conscience and intensifying recollection. Kierkegaard suggests, however, that it is not enough just to have a conscience:

> "What does it mean to be and to will to be a single individual? It means to have *and to will to have a conscience*" (JFY: p91 my italicization).

A further element is required for the single individual, namely that such an individual must will to have a conscience. But if conscience is a consequence of sin, an eternal recollection of guilt which never allows one to forget the fact that one has acted wrongly, there might well be obstacles when it comes to willing such a thing. This chapter will examine these obstacles. We will consider who it is that is able to have a conscience by considering the examples Kierkegaard gives us of forms of life in which conscience is not willed (the aesthetic and the ethical).

I will argue that the reason why conscience is not willed in these forms of life stems from what Kierkegaard calls "double-mindedness". Double-mindedness refers to a situation in which a person is "the servant of two masters" or has two conflicting forms or ends of motivation. Kierkegaard describes double-mindedness in two different ways. On the one hand, double-mindedness might refer to a situation in which a person is motivated by an end that is itself internally divided. For example, we might say that the aesthete wills pleasure quite single-mindedly, but pleasure is not itself one unified thing (it is made up of a variety of contingent ends). On the other hand, double-mindedness might refer to a situation in which a person wills more than one end. For example, someone might will the

good but at the same time desire rewards in the world. It is this attachment to the temporal and to ends other than the good that can lead to an inability to will to have a conscience.

Although the notion of double-mindedness takes us a long way towards understanding why the aesthete and the ethicist may not be able to will to have a conscience, we are presented with a problem: It seems possible to will to have a conscience *and yet* be double-minded. This is the case, for example, in most forms of the religious life. Even though a person in this stage may have made a commitment to willing the good, they may find that at times the good demands of them things that they cannot bring themselves to do for fear of loss of certain temporal goods. In actuality, it is unlikely that many human beings are capable of making the good the sole end of the will and so unlikely that even those who do will conscience escape double-mindedness. There are two further reasons why neither the aesthete nor the ethicist may not be able to will to have a conscience.

On the one hand, we see in both the case of the aesthete and the ethicist a lack of spirit. In both cases conscience can manifest as a contingent aspect of temporality, causing suffering but without any indication of what such suffering signifies. Both characters fail to will to have a conscience because conscience is unpleasant- it causes restlessness in the aesthete and anxiety in the ethicist. Neither character has the spirit required to recognise that the stirrings of conscience stem from the fact that they have a choice to will the good and thus it is not yet clear why they should want these unpleasant feelings.

The other potential reason is to be found specifically in mature forms of the ethical stage as well as in the religious stage. This is weakness of the will (akrasia). Some in the ethical stage may have the awareness that conscience pulls them away from the supposed morality of their society towards a higher form of the good. Letting go of the social and

potentially facing the judgement of others is, however, a difficult undertaking for the ethicist and so even though such a character might recognise the demands of conscience they may be unable to will to have a conscience. This is because conscience presents itself as inconvenient. It may cause the ethicist great suffering to recognise the limitations of their commitment to the social and they may be anxious that conscience could require them to sacrifice their hard-won reputation. We see the potential for akrasia also in the religious individual for whom conscience may demand great sacrifice. It may be so demanding that even a person who commits themselves to willing the good may find at times that they wish their conscience was not there, that they did not have to suffer.

We will begin this chapter by considering the forms of life in which conscience cannot be willed in order to examine what exactly the obstacles are. A person cannot force themselves to will to have a conscience because certain conditions must be in place for conscience to be recollected. Then we will consider the limits of the aesthetic and ethical life to see where these forms of life begin to break down- where space might arise in which conscience may be willed. This will simultaneously help us to better understand in what kind of life it is possible to will conscience. Conscience can be willed at the point at which it manifests as guilt consciousness. In the religious stage this is specifically the guilt that comes from double-mindedness- the continual failure to live with purity of heart and to commit oneself to the good. For the person with faith, the recognition of one's responsibility over one's guilt can bring forth a certain kind of hope- that one could be free from suffering and attain eternal happiness.

What is Double-Mindedness?

In order to better outline the obstacles that present themselves in the aesthetic and ethical forms of life, it will first be helpful to begin with an account of how double-mindedness relates to conscience for Kierkegaard. This will enable us to better understand how double-mindedness presents a barrier to willing conscience. Let us now consider what exactly Kierkegaard means by double-mindedness. For him, the only end that can be willed without double-mindedness is the good. This is because all other ends are either internally divided or temporal:

> "The worldly in its essence is not one thing since it is the *nonessential*; its so-called unity is no essential unity but an emptiness that the multiplicity conceals. Thus in the brief moment of illusion what is worldly is multiplicity and therefore not one thing; Then it changes into its opposite- that is how far it is from being and remaining one thing. Indeed, what else is desire in its boundless extreme but nausea?" (UDVS: p29).

Following this passage, Kierkegaard gives several other examples of worldly goals that, when taken to their extreme, become their opposite. This includes, for example wealth, which he describes at its extreme as poverty, and power, which he describes at its extreme as slavery. The suggestion here seems to be that there is a spiritual sense in which the wealthy person is no different to the poor person and likewise, the powerful person is no different to a servant. This is because, in a spiritual sense, what constitutes a genuine feeling of wealth is not found in worldly possession and what constitutes a genuine feeling of power is not found in worldly authority.

Confusingly, Kierkegaard seems to put desire alongside temporal ends such as wealth, honour and pleasure. One might argue that desire is not an end in itself, but rather the process of aiming towards an end. We always have a desire *for* something. We might

desire wealth or power, for example. One way we might interpret Kierkegaard here is as saying something about how desire is such that any worldly end we desire is made in to its opposite. In this way, desire is one way in which we can relate to particular ends. Desire, we might think, is nausea at its extreme because desire is not satisfied for good when its end is reached. Rather, desire either finds a new end or finds the fulfilment through the end to be insufficient. Desire therefore always fragments in to being for a multiplicity of ends. It has a dizzying quality characteristic of nausea at its extreme because it appears as endless, shifting and disorientating. In the case of a particular end, such as wealth, we can see how this might take place. The person who desires wealth aims to accumulate more and more. Desire, however, is not satisfied with the accumulation of wealth and instead the individual continues to feel a lack. We can say here, then, that desire is never for one thing, because one thing will always fail to satisfy it.

If the problem of double-mindedness is one of desire, we might think that there is a possibility that we could will a particular temporal end in a single-minded way if we could find a way of willing which, unlike desire, does not lead to negation. Kierkegaard also suggests, however, that the kind of end we will has consequences for the way in which we will it:

> "*In truth to will one thing can therefore mean only to will the good*, because any other one thing is not a one thing and the person willing who wills only that must therefore be double-minded, because the one who craves becomes like that which he craves." (UDVS: p34).

Kierkegaard is clear here that if the end one wills is not in itself one thing then one becomes double-minded. Willing multiplicity is therefore not simply a side effect of willing something in the wrong way (for example, desiring something rather than willing it in another way). Rather, certain ends are in themselves not the sort of things that can be willed as one thing.

Any individual that aims at these ends wills them as multiplicity. This is what Walker describes as "the principle of homogeneity":

> "This principle immediately implies that to be capable of truly willing some goal, a man must himself be sufficiently like that goal." (Walker, J. 1972: p122)

According to the principle of homogeneity, the individual who wills becomes like that which they will. This means that the individual who wills temporal ends must have a temporal will or nature. For Kierkegaard, temporal ends are divided and become their opposite through the change of perishing. This means that an individual who wills such ends can also be seen as divided or double-minded, ruling out the possibility that an individual could will a temporal end in a single-minded way.

We might ask, however, why we should think of temporal ends in this way. Why can't we, for example, find wealth totally satisfying and free from poverty? One way we might understand Kierkegaard's argument here is as simply appealing to experience. He poses it as a question "What else is desire… but nausea?" expecting an intuitive agreement from the reader. Many who find wealth, for example, might find that there is something lacking in it in such a way that they feel as though they remain poor. A more nuanced understanding of Kierkegaard's argument here can be found in Walker's interpretation:

> "Kierkegaard claims, more radically, that no 'worldly' goal can be real… This is clearly a general claim about the 'ontological status' of things like pleasure, worldly honour and greatness. It is, apparently, the claim that suchlike things have no essence at all. So what their names name are merely appearances." (Walker, J. 1972: p120)

Walker's claim here is that, in fact, there is no such unified thing as "pleasure" or "worldly honour". Such labels are in their essence empty because they describe non-essential unities. What this means is that there is nothing unified about the things we describe as "pleasure" that makes pleasure one thing. We can take Walker here as interpreting Kierkegaard as

making two separate claims together. On the one hand, it is claimed that there is no essential unity between temporal ends. This means that there is a sense in which they are divided- the individual willing any temporal end is actually willing more than one thing.

On the other hand, however, Walker also seems to want to claim here that such ends are empty or have no essence at all. This is what he means when he states that no worldly goal can be "real". The grouping of certain things together under the name "pleasure", for Walker is a subjective grouping, since there is nothing about those things which makes them one thing when taken together. Pleasure, then, is willed as a fantasy, a kind of dream in the individual for a happier life that is not obtainable. Such ends are bound to become their opposite, because when they are reached for, they reveal their emptiness and multiplicity. When one pleasure is obtained, it becomes clear that one is lacking in other forms of pleasure. The individual who seeks wealth finds that even though they may accumulate a lot of money, they never really feel as they expected to.

In order to be free from double-mindedness, the end we will must be one which does not transform in to loss. According to Kierkegaard, we can count all ends that are temporal in this way:

> "The person who has willed this (wealth, pleasure or greatness), even if he willed only one thing, must to his own torment continue to will it when it has perished and by the torment of contradiction learn that it is not one thing." (UDVS: p29).

The suggestion here is that temporal ends that perish and disappear, as all temporal things do, reveal their own multiplicity in their perishing. This is because things like "pleasure" have a non-essential unity. The term "pleasure" refers to something which is actually multiple. Pleasures in the world are diverse and dependent on the circumstances of one's

existence. This is something that becomes clear with the end of a particular pleasure where it becomes its opposite- pain of loss. As Kierkegaard puts it:

> "If a person is in truth to will one thing, the one thing he wills must indeed be of such a nature that it remains unchanged amid all changes" (UDVS: p30).

We cannot say of any temporal end, for example, wealth or greatness, that it remains the same amid all changes because, with the change of perishing, these ends transform into their opposites- loss, weakness or poverty. The same cannot be said for eternal ends, such as the good, which according to Kierkegaard, remains the same no matter what changes take place in the world. The reason why, Kierkegaard argues, only the good can be willed as one thing is that the good is an eternal and not internally contradictory end. It is thus the kind of end that can give us the direction needed for a whole-hearted commitment. What, however, does it mean to say that the good is eternal in this way? An important distinction is here made between ends that are eternal and ends that are not.

The good, for Kierkegaard, is eternal because it is something that is not divided in itself and cannot be exhausted. It is eternal because it is something that we can and ought to will at all times. How much one ought to be motivated towards different ends in the world depends on the specificity of their life. As Kierkegaard quotes from Ecclesiastes (3:11): "God has made everything beautiful in its time; he has also put eternity into the heart of human beings". There is a time, then, for temporal ends. Kierkegaard expresses in *UDVS* a deep appreciation for the beauty of the passing elements of life. One ought to live one's life in the world in such a way that different ends are taken up at the time that is appropriate for them. He does note, however, that the temporal, passing elements of life exist as much in the animal as in the life of the human being. What makes the human being so different from the animal, for Kierkegaard, is that God has put eternity in the heart of the human

being. Because the human being has a yearning for the eternal, double-mindedness stems not only from willing ends that are internally divided, but also from the will being directed on the one had towards the eternal and on the other hand to the temporal.

The implications of this division of the will can be seen when we consider the Lament of Solomon evoked in Ecclesiastes and throughout *UDVS*: "What gain does he who exerts himself have from all his striving?". There is a hopelessness to temporal ends because they expire. No matter how much wealth one accumulates, in death or loss it is as nothing. It would seem, if we are to free ourselves from double-mindedness, then the end of our will must be eternal because this is the only way in which we can guard ourselves against loss and fragmentation. In contrast to temporal ends, states Kierkegaard, "Only the eternal applies at all times and is always, is always true, pertains to every human being of whatever age" (*UVDS*: p9). While there is a beauty and a significance to the passing temporal elements of life, they come and go, having their time. Amidst all changes, however, the eternal is such that it remains the same and is always a demand.

Double-mindedness and not willing to have a conscience: the aesthete

We now have an account of double-mindedness, but why might double-mindedness be an obstacle to willing to have a conscience? The end of conscience, as we saw in chapter 1, is the good. This is the only end of the will which can be willed as one thing for Kierkegaard and so it follows that everyone for whom conscience is not the driving force of the will remains in double-mindedness. Willing only the good in truth, however, is extremely difficult. In order to be said to do this in truth and with purity of heart, a person must "will to do everything for it, or he must will to suffer everything for it" (UDVS: p78). In

other words, the pure of heart must become a servant of the good, willing to do whatever it demands of them. But the temptation of the earthly and the difficulty in letting go of the things one desires in the world can be extremely painful. We see Kierkegaard describe the demands of this lifestyle in *UDVS*:

> "The task is given to the individual in existence, and just as he wants to plunge in straightway …another beginning is discovered to be necessary, the beginning of the enormous detour that is dying to immediacy. And just as the beginning is about to be made here, it is discovered that, since meanwhile time has been passing, a bad beginning has been made and that the beginning must be made by becoming guilty." (UDVS: p526)

Here Kierkegaard describes the requirements of the religious stage. The task of willing the good is given to the individual through conscience, but a person who seriously strives to make conscience the sole end of the will may discover that it cannot yet be willed with purity of heart so long as there is attachment to temporality. In order to find purity of heart, then, the individual must die to immediacy. Such a process is characterised by immense suffering- the gradual detachment of the will from the temporal world (CUP: P499). What is more, the individual discovers that their double-mindedness excludes them from the good and from happiness and thus renders them guilty. Guilt and suffering are thus characteristic of the life on conscience. They are indications of a detachment of the will from immediacy and striving for a relation to the good that is pure of heart. If purity of heart requires that only the good be willed, then it would appear that many will not be able to will to have a conscience because they may not be able to have to contemplate letting go of other ends in the world.

At this point, one might become concerned about the possibility of willing conscience. It seems possible that there may be no one who is able to will only the good. So long as one is a human being, it is difficult to see how one could ever eliminate the will for

happiness. This is a problem we will consider in more detail in later chapters. For now, we will address one part of it. Although it may not be possible to live in double-mindedness and to will *only* the good, it is certainly possible to live in double-mindedness and yet will to have a conscience or to will the good. It is even possible to *will to will* only the good. For those in the religious stage in which spirit is sufficiently developed, it is unlikely that the good will be the sole end of the will. We can nevertheless say that conscience is willed. It cannot be the case, then, that the only obstacle to willing conscience is double-mindedness. In fact, double-mindedness may not be an obstacle at all. Whether an individual is able to will conscience depends on the form in which double-mindedness takes.

Let us now consider the two specific examples Kierkegaard gives of forms of life in which conscience is not fully willed. This will help us to better outline the forms that double-mindedness may take in actuality and where the additional barriers to willing conscience lie. Here we discover a difficulty: Neither the aesthete nor the ethicist have the required level of consciousness to recognise what it is that conscience demands of them. Whilst it might be the case in the religious stage and in forms of life in which spirit is more developed that the immense demands of conscience might make it difficult to will to have a conscience, we cannot apply the same analysis to the aesthetic and ethical stage. This is because, for the aesthete, conscience is experienced only as restlessness or boredom, with no indication of what is demanded. Likewise, for the ethicist, conscience is plastered over by the demands of the social and so conscience may provide even less guidance in such a form of life. If it is not the case that Kierkegaard's ethicist and aesthete are aware of the vast demands of conscience, it cannot be the case that this is what bars them from willing conscience. Let us now consider these forms of life in more detail in order to see what other obstacles might be.

The most acute case of an inability to will conscience is to be found in Kierkegaard's aesthete. In chapter 1, it was demonstrated that the aesthete is plagued with continual dissatisfaction and restlessness which they try to distract themselves from through an absorption in the world. They search for happiness in immediate gratification and pleasure. This might be a thrilling pleasure, in which anxiety plays a central role. We see, for example, in the case of *the seducer's diary* that pleasure takes the form of the thrill of the seduction:

> "With the help of his (the seducer's) intellectual gifts, he knew how to tempt a girl, how to attract her without caring to possess her in the stricter sense. I can picture him as knowing how to bring a girl to the high point where he was sure that she would offer everything. When the affair had gone so far, he broke off, without the least overture having been made on his part" (EO1: p307).

The seducer attempts to maintain the at once exciting and revolting aspects of manipulating a woman to fall in love with him for as long as he possibly can. The pleasure here comes from this ambiguity, the excitement that is at the same time grotesque. The seducer enjoys the thrill of the waiting expectation and the ambiguity of a not yet consummated relationship. This is reinforced by the joy he obtains from the intellectual domination of shaping someone to his will. Rather than satisfying his desire, he seems to want to maintain the enjoyment and discomfort of unsatisfied desire for as long as he possibly can. Such a life, we can say, is at heart double-minded because the seducer seeks out the thrill of contradiction. This includes, for example, the contradiction of desiring and withholding, attachment and detachment from another, openness and calculated cunning. In each of these examples, the will is divided between two ends that are in tension. The division of the will brings excitement, but also fragmentation.

In the aesthetic stage, however, pleasure need not take such a dramatic and tense form as it does in the case of the seducer. We see the aesthetic wish for a life without boredom clearly in *A Rotation of Crops*, where "A" speaks of a higher form of aesthetics where pleasure is sought after in the simple elements of life. He speaks comically of the joy involved in watching sweat bead up and drip from a man's nose as he delivers an unbearably boring lecture (EO1: p299). The aesthete of *A Rotation of Crops* is a person who has grown to know and understand boredom well. The rotation of crops itself is a method he produces to minimise boredom to the greatest extent possible. It consists, like with a rotation of crops in a field, in the movement from one form of pleasure to another in succession. Weariness of particular pleasures is minimised as they are allowed to lie fallow for a period of time. In this case, the aesthetic quest to be rid of boredom is extremely pronounced and methods are developed to maintain a constant state of distraction and enjoyment so that such boredom does not set in. The aesthete himself describes boredom as "the root of all evil" (EO1: p285). Here again we see double-mindedness in the form of willing multiplicity. The aesthete of the rotation of crops explicitly aims for the greatest level of diversity that he can in order to avoid mundanity. The will is therefore never attached to one end for longer than a short period, instead moving between different ends.

As we saw in chapter one, for the aesthete conscience manifests in the form of either boredom, restlessness or anxiety. We see now that these are precisely the kinds of feelings that the aesthete spends their time avoiding. As Kierkegaard says, it is in stillness and silence that the individual recognises the fact that they are guilty. The aesthete, although unreflective, is no exception to this. He cannot be still, for the moment he is, boredom sets in and in boredom lies guilt. Recollecting guilt, as we saw in chapter 1, is the process through which one comes in to contact with conscience. To be pure of heart and to

will only the good in truth is to will what is demanded by conscience. Aesthetes are double-minded not only because of the variety of ends they will, but also because through distraction, they exclude themselves from the only appropriate end that can truly be willed single-mindedly- namely the good.

It might be argued, however, that although both forms of the aesthetic life characterised here seem to exhibit double-mindedness insofar as these individuals will multiple ends, there is a sense in which we could understand them to be very single-mindedly committed to the end of pleasure or distraction.[18] If we take into account the principle of homogeneity, however, we must recognise that even if the aesthete is very committed to the goal of pleasure or distraction they remain double-minded because the ends they will are temporal ones. Each pleasure transforms into loss and so the aesthete must become artful in postponing this loss. Such a process requires a fracturing of the will- the aesthete must continually find new forms of pleasure to keep boredom at bay. Either this, or they must place themselves in a tension between withholding and catharsis, in which the pleasure of achieving a particular end is postponed and dragged out at long as possible.

It is clear that the aesthete is someone who suffers from double mindedness, but what exactly is the aesthete's shortcoming? What is it they are lacking that would allow them to will to have a conscience? On first appearance it might seem as though what the aesthete is lacking is self-knowledge. He is not aware that he is willing in a way that makes

[18] The forms of the aesthetic life I have chosen to consider here are those with a high degree of self-reflectivity because it is easier to illustrate where the double-mindedness lies in these forms of aestheticism. There is, however, a form that is much more immediate than that demonstrated by either the seducer or A in the *Rotation of Crops*. This form of life would be more than double-minded because, for the immediate aesthete, the will has no fixed end. For a good illustration of the development of spirit within the aesthetic stage see Connell, G. 1985: pp39-83.

him double-minded because he fails to recognise that pleasure is not an essential unity. He may not be aware that he wills multiple things and might think that, even though pleasure is internally divided, it ultimately can be related to as one thing. When we consider the examples of the aesthetic life that Kierkegaard gives us, however, complete lack of self-knowledge doesn't seem to capture exactly what is going on. We saw in the case of both the seducer and in the rotation of crops that there was an awareness that pleasure is temporal. For the seducer this is manifest in his unwillingness to release or consummate desire. Here there is some awareness that once consummated, desire passes and is replaced with loss. Likewise, in the rotation of crops, an awareness is shown that after a period of time, particular pleasures become wearisome. Pleasure is replaced by boredom and this aesthete attempts to avoid having to feel the pain of this transformation by attaching himself as loosely as possible to particular pleasures. The aesthete of the rotation of crops therefore seems to have some awareness that he wills multiplicity, even though it is not yet of a form in which conscience can be willed.

Can we really say of the aesthete, then, that his failing is lack of spirit? Although the aesthete may be aware that he desires multiplicity and also that particular pleasures are temporary, a lack of spirit is still at play here insofar as the aesthete fails to recognise that he has a conscience. This means that the alternative to a life of willing temporal ends is not recognised either. The aesthete might, therefore, recognise that he wills multiple ends, but will fail to realise why this is a shortcoming and that any alternative might be available through the eternal. We can witness from the way in which the aesthete relates to the world that a kind of apathy and resentment towards life exists within him:

> "I don't feel like walking- it is too tiring; I don't feel like lying down, for either I would have to stay down, and I don't feel like doing that, or I would have to get up again,

> and I don't feel like doing that, either. *Summa Summarum*: I don't feel like doing anything." (EO1: p20).

The numbness expressed by the aesthete belies the fact that another possibility has not presented itself to him. The only ends in the world that the aesthete sees are ones that become their opposite- the joy and enthusiasm of walking is transformed into tiredness, the rest of lying down is disrupted by having to get up again. Failing that, the comfort of lying down becomes discomfort in time. Even though the aesthete is guilty of double-mindedness, there is a degree of innocence at play here because of the very limited degree of consciousness that the aesthete represents. He does not know that there is a possibility to will something eternal like the good. The failing of the aesthete, therefore, is better characterised as a lack of spirit than it is a failure to fulfil an ethical demand. Such a person does not even feel the pull of the demand because at this stage, conscience manifests only as restlessness.

We see in the aesthete a form of double-mindedness that manifests in an attachment to worldly ends. The aesthete wills pleasure, distraction and satisfaction, having no higher end with which to direct their will. Because conscience runs contrary to the ends of the aesthetic life insofar as it causes the aesthete suffering and boredom, the aesthete attempts to continually avoid the pull of conscience. This, then, is why the aesthete cannot will to have a conscience. On the one hand they find themselves attached firmly to pleasure and on the other they cannot stomach the unpleasant forms in which conscience manifests in their stage of life. In the case of the aesthete, it is the combination of the double-minded attachment to temporal pleasure alongside the lack of spirit required to experience the demands of conscience as anything other than unpleasant (sensations of anxiety and

restlessness) that constitute the fundamental barriers to willing conscience. Let us now consider the second example Kierkegaard gives.

Double-mindedness and not willing to have a conscience: the ethicist

The impossibility of living in flux in the way that the aesthete does is observed by Judge Wilhelm in the second section of *EO*. We can take the judge to be a key example of the ethical life in contrast to the aesthetic. In a letter of reply to the aesthete, the judge writes:

> "Can you think of anything more appalling than having it all end with the disintegration of your essence into a multiplicity, so that you actually became several, just as that unhappy demoniac became a legion, and thus you would have lost what is the most inward and holy in a human being, the binding power of the personality?" (EO2: p160)

The judge observes the actions of the aesthete, including his attempts to find enjoyment in multiplicity and recognises the danger here. The danger, as he sees it, is the fragmentation of the self into several, such that there is no longer any binding element that makes the individual a personality. The judge fears such a state because it represents meaninglessness, chaos and ambiguity, all of which he sees as unnecessary forms of suffering. To an extent, then, the judge is able to recognise the double-mindedness of the aesthete. In response to this, he proposes a different option:

> "The choice itself is crucial for the content of the personality: through the choice the personality submerges itself in that which is being chosen, and when it does not choose, it withers away in atrophy." (*EO2:* p163)

In other words, according to the judge, it is through choosing that the individual is able to maintain stability in their life. To the aesthete, nothing seems more boring and therefore terrifying than stability. But to the judge, the life of the aesthete appears as filled with

unnecessary suffering in an attempt to avoid commitment to a choice. The judge demonstrates traits of the ethical life. This is a life of commitment and duty in which moral responsibility is recognised. Here, the recollection of conscience is a stage further, as the judge has accepted stillness in such a way that would terrify the aesthete. This allows him to have a degree of knowledge about what double-mindedness looks like and he produces a response to the aesthete in an attempt to remind him why commitment to one thing is important. Rudd summarises the argument given by the judge in the following way:

> "1. One can only avoid the necessity of judging one's life in moral terms by evading long term commitments.
>
> 2. But to live such a life is to be in despair; for a life without commitments is one without purpose, and hence is one that makes it impossible to develop a coherent personal identity.
>
> 3. Therefore, personal fulfilment and the avoidance of despair can only be found by taking on such commitments and by accepting the moral judgements that one's performance in these roles entails." (Rudd, A. 1993: p69)

In trying to find stability in his life, the judge commits himself to the world around him through duty. He does this, according to Rudd, because he wishes for personal fulfilment and the avoidance of despair. These are two things that can only be found through commitment and a judging of one's life in moral terms. It is in the norms and values of society, he believes, that one can find everything one needs for a happy life.

The judge does have a sense and yearning for the eternal. In *Either/Or*, we see that the judge takes love very seriously as a sphere in which the eternal can be found. He compares spontaneous erotic forms of love with the deeper kind of love that finds its eternity in a determination of the will (EO2: p22). This takes place, for him, through the

institution of marriage. The judge, then, is in many senses a Hegelian at heart.[19] He is drawn to the eternal in love but thinks that this requires two things to be genuinely eternal. On the one hand, it needs to be able to take up the immediacy of erotic love. The judge looks down on marriage, for example, made solely on the basis of rationality or utility:

> "the eternal, which, as already indicated above, belongs to every marriage, is not really present here (in marriages of convenience), for a commonsensical calculation is always temporal." (EO2: p27)

The judge is aware that commonsensical calculations on how to get ahead in the world, how to obtain the admiration of others and how to get success are temporal. He is clear that true eternity requires a determination of will. This is something he, in line with Hegel, views as being made concrete in social institutions. In the case of love, what makes love truly eternal is its being made concrete in the social institution of marriage. This must be done in such a way that erotic love is taken up into a higher form through that contains within it the eternal.

The same thing applies to the judge in terms of duty and the good. There is a desire for an eternal form of ethics in the judge, but he believes that this is made concrete in social institutions. The ethical individual decides to commit themselves to duty. This is an important foreshadowing of the kind of decision that Kierkegaard thinks is needed in the religious stage. In this stage, however, the decision is made to take up the wrong kind of commitment. Conscience is therefore recollected to a greater degree than in the aesthetic stage, but has taken a wrong turn, as the individual searches for the eternal in the

[19] I think it is clear that Kierkegaard has Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* in mind when he illustrates the ethical stage, but it is arguably a reductive reading of Hegel. I do not wish to explore such a complicated topic here. The judge represents a certain kind of social conservativism that represents an attempt to find something concrete and stable to hold on to in the social world. Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*, of course, does not necessarily provide us with such stability. For discussions on this topic see Westphal, M. 1996: pp102-8

contingent temporality of the social. The moral is therefore reduced to duty not because the judge does not desire the eternal, but rather because he thinks that the eternal is always instantiated in the social institution. The judge does will something like the good, through something like conscience, but what he wills is a temporal, social approximation of the eternal good which does not necessarily correlate to the demands of conscience.

Fear that this duty is arbitrary lurks beneath the surface, but many mechanisms exist to help the ethicist to avoid a realisation of this. The judge is self-reflective to the degree that he will punish himself if he fails to meet the demands of duty. At the same time, this duty is reinforced by all those around him. The end the ethicist commits themselves to (the good in one's society) is contingent and not eternal. Social values remain relative to a particular place and time and the social world fails to provide one clear set of values to which all abide. As we see in the judge's case, trying to relate oneself to social values as if they are eternal leads to a kind of conservativism- an attempt to preserve values which are continually in the process of decay. Due to the principle of homogeneity discussed previously this means that the ethicist who commits themselves to the good as instantiated in the social has a divided will.

One way in which this form of double-mindedness occurs is in cases where the individual wills something like the good, but does so for the sake of reward or to avoid punishment. For some, conscience may be projected outwards in to the social. As a result, the judgement of others, reward and punishment can become key markers for managing guilt. An ethicist may will success in the world and the judge cares deeply about his

reputation[20]. Living in such a way, however, demonstrates double-mindedness insofar as what is willed here is not only the good, but also the worldly recognition of others. In cases such as these, the good is actually not always willed at all. What is willed is the earthly reward and as a result, the good takes the form only of a token.

In the ethical stage there are cases in which the individual wills the good to a degree, but is not willing to give everything for it because of a lasting attachment to worldly success. In more advanced cases where what is sought after is the eternal as instantiated in the social, worldly success might even to be taken as synonymous with the eternal. Such a case, for Kierkegaard, would of course be double-minded. In many cases, this takes the form of what Kierkegaard calls "sagacity":

> "The sagacious person knows how the good must be changed a little in order to win favour in the eyes of the world; he knows how much should be added and how much should be subtracted." (UDVS: p87)

Sagacity here refers to a certain kind of worldly wisdom (common sense or cunning) and the sagacious person knows how to manipulate the good in order to continue to live the kind of life they want in the world. Here we can see two different ways in which the ethicist might relate to the eternal. On the one hand, they might see the eternal as existing solely in the social. In such a case, success in relating oneself to the eternal might be taken to be the

[20] Although the judge cares about his reputation, it would be a simplification to suggest that this is all he cares about. The judge demonstrates the stirrings of conscience and seeks to substantiate these stirrings in the social. In this section I have outlined several different versions of the ethical life. None of these apply directly to the judge who is a complex character and demonstrates aspects of all of these versions of the ethical as well as some elements of the aesthetic and the religious. It would be overly simplistic to pin the judge to just one way of being as doing so would not do justice to the literary nature of *Either/Or*.

In order to get a sense of some of the ways in which the ethical life may present obstacles to conscience, to some extent it is helpful to simplify the ethical life. It is worth remembering, however, that the judge as a character (as well as any real human being) is more complex than any of the descriptions I have given here. Probably no real human being falls in to any of the categories I have outlined absolutely, but reflecting on the caricatures may nevertheless provide us with a better ideas of some of the obstacles to willing conscience in the ethical stage.

same thing as achieving success in the world. Sagacity would then arise as a tool for succeeding in this way.

On the other hand, as suggested in the quote above, an ethicist might have a higher kind of consciousness in which the good is recognised as something freestanding from the social. This ethicist experiences the pangs of conscience but is willing to ignore them in places where conscience comes into conflict with their immediate wish for a happier life or success in the world. The temptation of double-mindedness is apparent in the case of sagacity because the kind of patience necessary for purity of heart involves letting go of worldly ends. The individual must be content with willing only the good and being patient to allow it to unfold over time. This is difficult because it demands that one must be content with not taking steps to achieve in the world the things other people are achieving, for example wealth or success, unless the good demands it. This, then, is one key reason why a person in the ethical stage may not be able to will conscience. They may recognise the demands of conscience but recognise also that the good demands of them that they let go of particular worldly ends and therefore take recourse in evasions. One such evasion is sagacity, but Kierkegaard also identifies prolonged contemplation, as well as distraction as evasions.

In contrast to the aesthete, can we describe the ethicist's failing to be a moral one rather than one of lack of knowledge? The ethicist has an awareness of guilt and therefore has a degree of conscience, but they search for its instantiation in the moral community. Even though there is some recognition of guilt here, there is still a lack of knowledge in terms of what conscience really is. The ethicist may be unable to will conscience because, through seeking the instantiation of the good in the social, they may become distracted and

attached to other ends. They may believe that they do still will the good even though what is willed is rather something temporal and contingent. Although an ethicist is aware of their freedom to choose, to transgress social ethics or not, their failing may still be best characterised as a lack of spirit because they may still have little contact with their conscience.

What, however, of cases in which the ethicist does recognise the demands of conscience as freestanding from the social? In a form of the ethical life in which consciousness has gained more of a foothold, the ethicist might be aware that the morality of their society does not capture exactly what is demanded of them by the good. For such a person, however, their attachment to worldly ends and the recognition of others might be so strong that they cannot bring themselves to will the good. In this case the failing does not seem to be one of lack of spirit. This ethicist knows what it is that they ought to do but will not bring themselves to do it. Sagacity and other evasions can be resorted to at this point to keep the demand of the good at a distance. Even though in some cases of the ethical it is apparent that the ethicist lacks spirit, we see here that there are also cases in which the ethicist has the required level of spirit to commit themselves to the good but fails to do so in weakness because it requires of them great sacrifice.

We now have two concrete examples of forms of life in which conscience cannot be willed. In the case of the aesthete, we saw that the barrier to willing conscience comes from an attachment to temporal pleasure combined with a lack of spirit and an aversion to the unpleasant feelings in which conscience manifests. For the ethicist, on the other hand, there are two different reasons for why it may not be possible to will conscience. The first of these is once again a lack of spirit. An ethicist might will something like the good, but it is a

form of the good constructed by the social which remains temporal. They will to have something like conscience, but what they will is not exactly the same- it is better characterised as duty. For a person such as this the main obstacle to willing conscience is the lack of spirit required to recognise that conscience is not the same as the social demands of duty.

The second reason why an ethicist may be unable to will conscience can be seen in cases in which the ethicist possesses a greater level of spirit. The ethicist may be aware that the social good demands of them something different than their conscience (this may happen in cases of structural oppression, for example). Someone like this is faced with a tension, however: Their attachment to worldly success and righteousness in the eyes of the community may prevent them from being able to will that which might jeopardise their reputation. The conscience is recognised in this form of the ethical stage but it cannot be willed due to a double-minded attachment to the temporal world. In both the aesthete and ethicist, it is attachment to the temporal world (and thus double-mindedness) that prevents a willing of conscience, but the way in which this manifests depends on the degree of spirit and the strength of will present.

When and how can a person will a conscience? The religious stage

Now that we have an account of what the barriers to willing conscience might be, let us now turn our attention to the question of what forms of life it may be possible to will conscience in. To do this, it will first be helpful to consider some of the factors that might push an aesthete or an ethicist towards willing to have a conscience. It will not be possible to outline what would *cause* a person to will to have a conscience nor what the *reasons* for

willing a conscience would be outright. This is because the former would be to oversimply the human being's relationship with conscience and the latter would be to too much instrumentalise it. Instead we will consider the conditions under which a person might be motivated to will to have a conscience. What exactly I mean by "motivation" is something we will explore later (in chapter 4). For now, it suffices to say that I am referring to factors that may comport one in such a way in which willing a conscience may become a possibility.

Under what conditions might an aesthete be able to recollect conscience and even begin to will to have it? At the fringe of the aesthetic stage in which spirit is most developed an awareness begins to arise that all temporal ends lead to suffering. We saw this previously in the lamentations of the aesthete who could think of nothing that they wished to do. After a time the aesthete begins to anticipate the suffering and loss that inevitably follows any form of pleasure and this leads them in to a state in which no end is desirable. Willing a divided end has consequences for the person willing. An individual who wills an end that is divided is themselves divided. Willing double-mindedly therefore represents a fracture in the self and a lack of coherency.[21] Such a fracturing can lead to a kind of lostness and impotence. Kierkegaard gives an example of this in *UDVS*:

> "When a team of horses is to pull a heavy load ahead, what can the driver do for them?... He can help them to get on the move pulling the wagon in a single instant with concentrated strength in a single pull. If, however, the driver creates confusion… if he pulls unevenly on the reins so that the one horse thinks that it is to

[21] Many authors focus on the unity of the self in Kierkegaard's writings (Connell, G. 1985; Pattison, G. 2005: pp99-102; Rudd, A. 1993: pp84-93). Unity of the self is akin to purity of heart and can be found only be willing the good in truth. The ethicist represents an attempt to find unity, as does the religious individual. It is right to read Kierkegaard in these terms, but I think it is also worth highlighting the importance of conscience here as it is often overlooked. Unity of the self can only be obtained by willing the good in truth and thus only through conscience. This means also that unity of the self becomes a goal for the individual *through* conscience. It would not be necessary to pursue a unified self if it were not the case that remaining un-unified caused us to suffer. Such suffering manifests in many forms (as we have seen, restlessness, anxiety, despair etc.), but all of these manifestations can be related to the stirrings of conscience in the individual. It is thus conscience that pushes us towards unity.

> pull and the other that the CAchman is holding it back… well, then the wagon does not move from the spot even if the horses have enough power" (UDVS: p295).

Being double-minded creates a confusion in the self like that of the horses in this anecdote. A person in double-mindedness wills one thing half-heartedly, then another. Either this or they will for a time, then shift their attention rapidly. Coherency cannot be maintained, and a kind of hopelessness can arise. No end seems valuable in itself and each end expires, transforming into its opposite. The will is as if lost, seeking direction but finding only dead ends whichever way it turns. Such aimlessness is remedied only by having a fixed and decisive end- an end to which one can commit oneself wholeheartedly. It is at the point at which the suffering of double-mindedness becomes most pronounced that the aesthete may be in a position to will to have a conscience. This is because conscience may represent an alternative- a form of willing whose end does not lead to loss and suffering. This, of course, would require a deepening of spirit in the aesthete which may never take place, but it is nevertheless a possibility.

What, however, of the ethicist? In many ways the ethicist's case is more difficult because of the relative level of stability to be found in this form of life. As much as they may try to avoid the meaninglessness of double-mindedness through commitment, however, the ethical individual may still be confronted with it through the arbitrary nature of the kind of ethics that they commit themselves to. Ambiguity still exists in the ethical stage because one's society and the duties of one's day to day life are contingent and therefore not eternal in the same way that the good is. In Rudd's account, this arbitrariness can be understood in terms of three tensions experienced by the individual:

> "(i) the inability of a social morality to do justice to the uniqueness of each individual;

> (ii) the erosion, in the modern world, of the social basis for a morality of conformity to customary roles;
>
> and (iii) the pluralism of a secular ethics, its lack of a single goal in striving towards which the moral life finds its unity" (Rudd, A. 1993: p117).

The three tensions Rudd outlines here constitute three ways in which the ethical life may fail to both alleviate suffering and match up to the demands of conscience. The first tension has to do with the individual's personal feeling of moral obligation. There are cases in which this feeling of obligation goes against what social morality demands of the individual. This is the case, for example, with unjust structural oppression. Such an uncomfortable mismatch between the demands on one's society and one's feeling of guilt is one major cause of discomfort in the ethical life.

The second tension has to do with the gradual breakdown of social morality in the modern world. As modernity progressed, it became more difficult to identify one set of moral values accepted by all. Due to this fragmentation, the kind of ethics advocated by Judge Wilhelm is dogmatic and outdated. With the fragmentation of social principles, someone like the judge who relies on clear standards of duty to commit himself to begins to feel the arbitrariness of the standards chosen. With such arbitrariness comes ambiguity, experienced through anxiety. That which calms the judge's anxiety by providing a concrete standard by which to relate to himself breaks down, leaving him once more to experience his own freedom.

The final tension leads on from the previous two and has to do with the lack of a singular, direct goal in a fragmented, secular ethics. Being a coherent self is taken by the judge to mean having a commitment to a particular choice or goal. A fragmented secular ethics does not provide one thing to which the individual can commit themselves. Increasing

secularisation thereby forces the judge to cling on to a conservative attachment to traditional religious institutions.

Rudd takes the three tensions given above as producing enough discomfort to move the individual beyond the ethical stage. He presents these tensions thus:

> "I want to examine some factors that might lead a secular moralist without any religious preconceptions to adopt a religious stance… One may then choose to affirm the purely ethical, accepting those limitations, or choose to go beyond it, in the hope of reaching past those limits" (Rudd, A. 1993: p117).

The trouble with this reading lies with the kind of language used. Rudd presents the discomforts as the ethical stage as "factors" not dissimilar from reasons, from which we can then make a choice. It seems implied that this is a somewhat informed choice insofar as the ethicist is aware of the limitations of their stage of life. I do not think that this captures accurately the phenomenology of the movement into faith. Faith is not something we choose for good reasons (that would be too much to instrumentalise it). It is also not straightforwardly a choice (Kierkegaard at times describes is as something we are "forced" into (PC: p67)). In Chapter 4 I will give an alternative account of the phenomenology of the movement to faith, describing it instead as a "motivated"- that is as neither freely chosen on the basis of reasons, nor directly caused.[22]

That said, Rudd does highlight some of the factors that might place the ethicist in a position to will a different kind of life so long as a deepening of spirit simultaneously takes place. For the ethicist, maintaining the relative degree of happiness and stability available

[22] There is a further problem with Rudd's account- that he tends towards oversimplifying the judge. Although we can characterise the judge as belonging to the ethical stage, the judge also demonstrates traits of the religious as well as the aesthetic at times. This is because the judge does have some acquaintance with conscience. Although in theory we can speak of clean shift from the ethical to the religious stage of life, in reality such a shift is not so clear cut. The fact that the judge demonstrates traits from all stages of life demonstrates this- no one belongs solely to one stage of life, but that does not mean that it is not useful to think of the stages abstractly as a tool for reflection.

may come at the cost of having to conform to social expectations. Such a curbing of individuality becomes problematic when it requires that one overlook the demands of conscience. Much of the time an ethicist may not even experience this as a problem, but there may be times at which the demands of conscience are so at odds with the demands of society that the ethicist is placed in a position in which they must make a choice. They may of course revert to sheltering in the social, unable to will to have a conscience, but it is at this point where the possibility of willing a conscience may arise.

In both the aesthetic life and the ethical life there is the potential for a deepening of spirit available through the disruptive effects of conscience. Disruption, however, is not enough for a person to will to have a conscience. In both forms of life techniques exist to manage disruption. At best, then, we can outline what factors may create the conditions under which one may come to will to have a conscience. The movement into conscience, however, cannot be understood as caused. A choice is involved. We will consider the agential status of this movement in more detail when we consider the movement into faith. Let us now turn our attention to the form of life in which conscience can be willed.

From the aesthetic and ethical forms of life we can get a sense of what must be the case for someone to be able to will conscience. A person must have the required level of spirit to recognise conscience as something more than unpleasant feeling and to understand that it is not the same as the demands of the social. A person must have the strength of will required to undertake the forms of sacrifice and difficulties that it demands.

The alternative Kierkegaard considers to the aesthetic and ethical stages of life is the religious stage. The religious stage is one that recognises that eternal happiness is unobtainable so long as one is double-minded. Conscience is thereby brought to the centre

of such a life, becoming a guiding voice. The religious stage differs from the other two forms of life in the sense that the religious individual has made a decision to commit themselves to the good as the only end of their will through conscience.

Although, in the religious stage, conscience is made central and a relation to the good is cultivated, double-mindedness is not eliminated altogether. The will is a tricky thing and double-mindedness can be found in both forms here. On the one hand, the religious individual might find themselves the slave of two masters. Despite their attempts to will only the good in truth, they might (and probably will) still find themselves pulled by temporal ends. They are also, however, not totally immunised from the dangers of a lack of spirit. At times, consciousness can drop in such a way that the individual loses sight of their own double-mindedness.[23] A commitment to the good, therefore, requires vigilance:

> "Since no human life is conducted in perfection but each one in weakness, Governance has given humankind two attendants along the way. The one calls forward, the other back" (UDVS: pp151-2).

For the individual who has recollected guilt and come in to contact with conscience, two guides are available to them. The first, of course, is conscience. This is the guide that Kierkegaard describes here as calling forward. It reminds the individual of what the good demands that they do, thereby calling the individual to action. The other guide, repentance,

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[23] There is an additional danger for the religious person- that they become "tempted" by the eternal and forget their temporality. Kierkegaard mentions such a danger in *CUP*:

> "In the sphere of the relationship with God, it [spiritual trial] is what temptation [*Fristelse*] is in the sphere of the ethical relation… In temptation, it is the lower that wants to lure the individual; in spiritual trial, it is the higher that, seemingly envious of the individual, wants to frighten him back" (CUP, pp458-9).

The danger of the spiritual trial is twofold. On the one hand, it is possible for one to become obtuse, lost in abstraction and idealisation, forgetting the importance of one's embodiment. This threatens the unity of the self as a relation between the temporal and eternal (Pattison, G. 2005: p63). On the other hand, the danger is that one loses one's selfhood in God. This involves a particular kind of agony specific to the religious person- an attempt to erase oneself in order to be closer to God. We will explore something akin to this kind of trial in chapters 3 and 4 when we consider the strain on the self of relating to a paradox. It is the pain of this kind of self-erasure that Kierkegaard hints as when he speaks of spiritual trial as that which "frightens back". For a detailed discussion of this form of spiritual trial, see Podmore, S. 2013.

is backwards looking and guides the individual by allowing them to further recollect their guilt. With each moment of repentance, the individual reconnects with conscience, re-affirming their commitment to the good. Due to the fact that no human life is conducted in perfection, the religious individual is bound to fall into distraction at times. This could be in moments, for example, where they know that the good demands of them that they give up particular possessions or other persons that they are attached to. In moments such as this, even the religious individual might take refuge in distraction and sagacity in order to avoid doing what is demanded of them. The difference with the ethical life here, however, is that the religious individual wills to have a conscience and has made a decision to commit themselves to the good that is found in God:

> "God requires of him purity of heart, and the person confessing requires it of himself before God- alas, this is indeed why he confesses sins" (UDVS: p152).

Because the religious individual requires purity of heart from themselves, they have taken up responsibility for their will and can no longer hide behind lack of self-knowledge. Moments at which conscience is forgotten or ignored in themselves constitute sins in the religious stage. The guilt that comes from double-mindedness allows for repentance of the sort that brings about a re-commitment to the good. The Christian, for example, does not have access to evasions in the same way that the ethicist or the aesthete do. The person who knows God knows that God is aware of all of their actions and intentions. This is most clearly apparent in confession, where the individual is alone before God:

> "One can see multiplicity with a distracted mind, see something of it, see it in passing, see it with half an eye, with a divided mind, see it and yet not see it; in busy activity one can be concerned about many things, begin many things, do many things at one time and do them all halfway- but one cannot *confess* without this unity with oneself." (UDVS: pp19-20)

Through confession, the religious individual sits with themselves, away from the distractions of the world and the crowd. Whilst one can recognise double-mindedness whilst distracted, it is far more vividly recognised in confession, where the individual turns inwardly to themselves. The religious individual holds up their double-mindedness before themselves and before God and in the process recommits themselves to willing the good. The failing in the ethicist who recognised the good but ran away through evasions is an inability to hold up before themselves their own double-mindedness in the way that the religious individual does. The commitment to the good is what makes all the difference here, as the religious individual who is committed to the good is no longer content with evasion. Double-mindedness is not predominantly a lack of spirit in this stage (although spirit may be lacking at times), but rather a failure of the will. This means that a great level of responsibility is accepted, and double-mindedness is taken up in to the task of confession and repentance. Guilt-consciousness, the pathos filled relation to the good, becomes central in this stage of life. Although evasions can be sought after in the religious stage, they do not show up as innocent to the religious individual, instead constituting part of sin.

The religious stage differs from the other two stages of life insofar as the religious individual makes a conscious commitment to the good through conscience. This means that such an individual wills to have a conscience and holds themselves responsible for their wrongdoing. Suffering is not eliminated in the religious stage but takes a different form. For the aesthete and ethicist, suffering manifested at the edges of their forms of life, in the cracks through which conscience revealed itself. Much energy was required to keep this suffering at bay. The religious individual, on the other hand, allows this suffering into their life. Specifically this is the suffering inherent in detaching the will from temporality and in guilt consciousness- the recognition that one has and continually does separate oneself

from the good. The taking up of responsibility intensifies this suffering- where suffering appeared as a fact of life for the aesthete and the ethicist, the religious individual recognises that they are responsible for suffering- that it is self-imposed.

If, however, conscience causes the religious individual to suffer, we might ask how it is that they find the ability to will to have conscience. Surely life without conscience would be much easier. For the religious individual, the suffering of conscience is the reminder that they relate, in actuality, to eternal happiness. This relation to eternal happiness is a key part of what allows the religious individual to will to have a conscience. Eternal happiness is a state of freedom from suffering. Guilt causes us suffering exactly of the kind that would place limits on the happiness of the aesthete and the ethicist. Climacus deals with the paradoxical nature of guilt consciousness in *CUP*:

> "But how can the consciousness of guilt become the decisive expression of the pathetic relation to an eternal happiness?... Just because it is someone who exists that is to relate to it, while guilt is at the same time the most concrete expression of existence, the consciousness of guilt is the expression of the relationship. The more abstract the individual, the less he relates to an eternal happiness, and the more he distances himself also from guilt; for abstraction places existence in indifference, but guilt is the expression of the strongest self-assertion of existence, and it is, after all, one who exists that is to relate to an eternal happiness" (CUP: p442).

As we see in this quote, eternal happiness must become something that the individual relates to in the context of their life, in existence, else they do not really relate to it. This means relating to eternal happiness with the recognition of where one is in this relation. This might mean, for example, accepting that one is far away from eternal happiness, encountering all the pain associated with that recognition. If the individual is abstract, they do not relate themselves to eternal happiness, as they are not doing so from the context of their life. This might take place, for example, through statements which universalise the individual. We might think of the excuse "but no one else is eternally happy." This would be

to relate to eternal happiness not from the context of one's own life, but through appealing to the abstract notion of the crowd. Climacus characterises this kind of abstracting thinking in the following way:

> "The suspect nature of abstract thought becomes evident exactly in connection with existence-questions, where the abstraction removes the difficulty by dropping it and then priding itself on having explained everything. It explains immortality in general and, what do you know? Everything goes excellently in as much as immortality becomes identical with eternity, the eternity that is essentially the medium of thought. But whether an actually existing human being is immortal, which is just the difficulty, this is something that abstract thought does not trouble itself with." (CUP: p253).

The trouble with abstract thinking, then, is that it does not do justice to existence-questions. These are questions which concern the actuality of a particular human being. When existence-questions are put in abstract terms, they can be solved seemingly easily. The trouble, however, is that such a solution has no bearing on the actuality of the human being. The question of whether or not this human being lives in a particular way is not properly addressed. Climacus here gives us the example of the question of immortality. In asking the question "what is immortality and do I have it?", one can abstract in to thought and here the question seems easier to answer. One can deduce an answer, as Climacus images a Hegelian doing here, substituting immortality with the eternal medium of thought and then assuming that the question has been answered. Of course this answer has no bearing on the actuality of the human being, who is no closer to knowing whether or not they live in the light of immortality or not.

The question of eternal happiness is about eternal happiness for the one, particular individual. An abstract individual does not relate to an eternal happiness because eternal happiness is a possibility that must exist in the concrete circumstances of their life. In this sense, the question of the possibility of eternal happiness is an existence question of

the form that Climacus discusses throughout the book. If a person relates to eternal happiness within the context of their life, as an existence-question, they are likely to find that they are not close to it. It hurts to think of eternal happiness as a genuine possibility because this means that one experiences a lack. This is what it is to really relate to it, to suffer as one who recognises they do not have it.

To understand the difference between a person who relates to eternal happiness through abstraction and a person who relates through existence, we can think of the example of an individual who suffers from a numbness of feelings, possibly characteristic of depression. There is a possibility, even though it seems a slight one, for such a person to be happy but in order to relate to this happiness, to will to be happy, such a person must allow themselves first to be honest about how they are feeling. In other words, they must recognise that they could be happy and at present they are not that. This involves a recognition of pain. The numbness of depression feels like a preferable option because it allows the person to avoid confronting the pain that at present they are not really happy. Even if they wanted to, they could not face this possibility, instead using distracting techniques to keep themselves far away from experiencing themselves in existence. These techniques might even take the form of abstract thought- thinking of oneself only in terms of generalisations and cold reason rather than feeling the pain of existence itself. But in not recognising that they are unhappy, the individual loses sight of the possibility that they could be happy. The cost for abstracting from the sadness of existence is an abstracting from the happiness of existence.

As Climacus suggests, in order to recognise the possibility of eternal happiness, the individual must first recognise that, at present, they are not there. A key part of this is

the recognition that one is guilty and that through this guilt, one is prevented from being pure of heart. By facing the pain of guilt, the individual opens themselves up to the possibility of salvation and eternal happiness, but at the cost of having to feel guilty. The cost for abstracting and hiding from guilt is an abstracting and hiding from the possibility of being free from such guilt. Guilt, Climacus argues, is the strongest self-assertion of existence. It is strong because it is a recognition that one is, and has made oneself, far away from happiness. But through such a recognition, one genuinely relates oneself to eternal happiness. Conscience not only allows the individual to reflect on the guilt that is already there, but also serves as a guide to help the individual avoid bringing more guilt in to their life in the future. Willing to have eternal happiness includes a will to be free from guilt and anxiety and therefore also includes a will to have conscience as a driving force.

We can say of conscience that it is characteristic of what a non-abstract relation to eternal happiness looks like. It is a relation that is honest to the context of one's life, recognising both that there is hope, but also that there are potential obstacles separating one from happiness. Eternal happiness is neither rendered abstract by defining it simply and then assuming that the individual always has it no matter what they do. Nor is it defined abstractly in such a way that makes it logically impossible to achieve. A person's relationship to eternal happiness is, however, somewhat paradoxical. The closer one hold oneself to the ideal, the more the pangs of guilt consciousness are likely to express themselves (and thus the further away from the ideal one will feel).

Now that we have an account of some of the motives of the religious stage, we can get a sense of what it is about this form of life that allows for conscience to be willed. On the one hand, we see that the religious individual has the required spirit to recognise that

they are guilty. Where the aesthete experienced conscience only as restlessness and the ethicist only as anxiety, the religious individual experiences it as guilt consciousness. This is important because it means that the religious individual recognises that they are responsible and have a choice in how they respond to conscience. This alone may be enough to will to have a conscience because it is possible for the person in this stage of life to recognise that, so long as they do not respond to the demands of their conscience, they will suffer as a result. Such a person may will to have conscience because it provides them with a guide to lessen suffering.

We see also, however, that in the specifically Christian form of the religious stage, there is an addition motive to willing conscience- namely the possibility that one could be eternally happy.[24] One may will to have a conscience not just because it provides a guide to lessen suffering in the short term, but also because it opens up the space for a kind of hope- that in the long time one might be free from suffering altogether.

[24] An objection that might be raised at this point is that there is no such thing as eternal happiness. We cannot be free from suffering no matter how desperately we desire to be. If there is no such thing, why would we want to relate to guilt in such a way that forces us to confront suffering, when there is no possibility of being free from such suffering? It might be preferable, one might argue, to compromise- to accept a degree of suffering in exchange for shielding oneself from some of the guilt resulting from conscience. The numbness of spiritlessness might be preferable to the agonies of guilt-consciousness. In relation to this question, Climacus states:

> "I would rather stay where I am, with my infinite interest, with the problem, with the possibility. For it is not entirely impossible that someone who is infinitely interested in his own eternal happiness may sometimes become eternally happy. On the other hand, it is surely impossible for someone who has lost that sense... to become eternally happy." (CUP: p17)

The possibility of eternal happiness for Climacus is a matter of hope. Climacus can relate to an eternal happiness because there is the slightest possibility that, if he is absolutely interested in it, he could actually achieve it. On the other hand, if one is without hope and is not infinitely interested in it, it is impossible for one to become eternally happy. The reason for this is as we have stated before. Achieving eternal happiness in this life requires that one achieves it in actuality, not abstraction. Relating to eternal happiness in actuality requires that one recognises where they are in relation to such a happiness. If there is not this recognition, this attempt to relate to it, then the individual remains in abstraction. We can say, then, that the reason one might want a conscience is in order to allow for the possibility of eternal happiness.

What, however, of the non-Christian or of the atheist? Is it possible for a person with no religious commitments to will to have a conscience? Although such a person may not have Climacus' hope in the possibility of eternal happiness, it is still possible for them to have the required spirit to recognise that they are responsible to the stirrings of conscience. Conscience can be experienced as guilt consciousness outside of a religious framework. It is also possible for a non-Christian to recognise that heeding the demands of conscience lessens the suffering of guilt.[25] It is perfectly possible, then, for the non-Christian or the atheist to will to have a conscience so long as the required level of spirit and the required strength of will are present.

[25] I grew up in a rural area near many farms. To the great amusement of my dogs, we would often come across cows when walking. These animals would always bring up a strange dissonance in me. I found them to be gentle and handsome creatures, but at the same time I found part of myself refusing to look at them in this way- I wanted to see them as ugly and alien. In some ways I found it difficult to give up eating meat, but in many other ways it has been an enormous relief. One part of this was no longer having to manage the divide in myself between a softer appreciation of animals and a defensive attempt to render them suitable for consumption.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered in what forms of life it is and is not possible to will to have a conscience. We have seen that willing to have a conscience depends on several factors. Firstly, we discovered that one's ability to will to have a conscience may depend on the degree of one's attachment to the temporal world. In this sense, double-mindedness was the first barrier we identified. We saw such a barrier in the case of the aesthete, whose commitment to maintaining the greatest possible temporal pleasure was at odds with the demands of conscience. The second obstacle we identified was a low level of spirit. In forms of life in which conscience is experienced only as restlessness or as anxiety, it is unclear why one would want such unpleasant feelings. The aesthete, for example, spends his time fleeing from conscience precisely because conscience manifests as suffering.

In the case of the ethicist, we saw that things were a bit more complicated. The ethicist is unable to will conscience because it is masked by a commitment to social values, which the ethicist assumes to be eternal and the appropriate end of the will. Due to the temporal and divided nature of social ends, however, the ethicist exists in double-mindedness and does not will the good in truth. We saw that there were two potential barriers for the ethicist. On the one hand, the ethicist may not be aware that conscience demands of them something other than what is demanded by social duty. In this case, the ethicist is unable to will conscience because of a low level of spirit- they are unable to recognise it. On the other hand, the ethicist may be aware that the demands of conscience differ from the demands of the social but may be unable to let go of their attachment to

reputation and temporal success. In such a case, the barrier to willing conscience is better characterised as weakness of the will than as lack of spirit.

At the border points of both stages of life, we saw, there is a potential that a deepening of spirit could take place and conscience could we willed. This can happen in the aesthetic life at the point at which the aesthete begins to anticipate the self-undermining nature of all temporal ends and reaches a kind of aporia- they become lost and unable to move from the spot. In the ethical case, on the other hand, a kind of incongruity can grow between the ethicist's own internal conscience and the demands of a structurally oppressive society. Either this or the ethicist may struggle to reconcile themselves to the constantly shifting and un-unified nature of social ethics. In both cases, however, a growth of spirit must be accompanied by the strength of will required to will to have a conscience.

In the religious stage we saw how these same factors can come into alignment such that conscience is willed. The religious individual is able to will conscience because they have the required spirit to recognise that conscience is related to guilt, for which they bear responsibility. They recognise that conscience points them to the fact that they have a choice in how to live. It can also act as a guide away from suffering. One way in which the strength of will required to will conscience may manifest itself is in the hope for eternal happiness- a kind of happiness unblemished by guilt. On the other hand, a person who wills conscience might simply recognise that conscience provides for them a guide to lessen the particularly painful suffering of guilt and may be willing to make sacrifices in other areas in order to lessen this suffering. In any case, it is the combination of spirit and strength of will that can allow and individual to will conscience even in a state of double-mindedness. Willing one's conscience and having to live with it, however, is not easy. In the next chapter

we will turn our attention to the difficulties that may arise in trying to reach purity of heart by considering a particular example in which the demands of temporal happiness clash strongly with the demands of conscience – the case of love.

Chapter 3

Perfectionism, Love and the Danger of the Demonic

In the previous chapter, we finished with an account of who is able to will conscience and why. We saw that the person who wills conscience takes on a great level of responsibility. The demands of conscience can be radical and uncompromising. They might even demand of us that we achieve the inhuman and the impossible. This then generates guilt, which has the potential to irremediably damage our potential for happiness. I will draw on a particular example that highlights clearly the danger that arises in cases in which the demands of the good clash with the demands of human happiness. This will be the case of love. Love, in its human temporal sense, implies desire, attachment and preference. For Kierkegaard, however, Christian love "teaches us to love all people, unconditionally all" (WL: p49). Further, not only does Christian love come in to tension with the pull towards preference implicit in earthly love, it is also *commanded*. Yet love, we usually think, is circumstantial, something that happens to us rather than something we do: we 'fall' in love. To be commanded to love would be to be asked for the impossible. If, then, this is what the good demands of us, it would seem as though failure and thus guilt are inevitable.

In order to see what might be particularly problematic about Kierkegaard's account of love, we will contrast it with an account that places emphasis particularly on the temporal, desirous aspects of love. According to Melanie Klein, excessive levels of guilt can lead one to have difficulty positively relating to others. By making love a matter of conscience and attaching guilt to the inevitable failure of the individual to live up to the demand, the commandment might thus become self-undermining. This is because the individual burdened by the commandment and unable to meet its demands is likely to resort to introversion, distancing themselves from others for self-protection.

We will consider the possibility that the process of separating oneself from others might, in a sense, be what is required by the commandment to love the neighbour, since the commandment demands that one love selflessly. Loving selflessly might require that we cut off object relations towards others- no longer treating them as objects of desire. It will be seen, however, that such a line of interpretation is not straightforward because according to WL, loving the neighbour involves loving the particularity of others and loving the people we see. There is a tension in *WL* between a love that is universal to all, in which we become blind to the particularities of the neighbour, and a love that takes in to account the specificity of those in front of us. Much commentary is dedicated to this tension, most commentators attempting to resolve it. I will argue instead that such a tension is likely to be intentional and serves as an example of what Kierkegaard describes as a "sign of contradiction" in *PC*. Such a sign pulls the individual in two directions at once, allowing them to become concerned about the kind of self they are and thus constituted as spirit.

The requirement to love the neighbour in *WL* is made so difficult that, in Kierkegaard's own words, it becomes an offense to the understanding, a kind of paradox. Since, for Kierkegaard, the way to the essentially Christian goes through offense, the question will be raised as to how we can successfully pass through offense without sinking into a cycle of guilt that renders us unable to love.

Christian Love and Self-Denial

Let us begin by considering what love looks like, according to Kierkegaard, when conscience is brought into it. In *WL*, he states:

> "To love yourself in the right way and to love the neighbour correspond perfectly to one another; fundamentally they are one and the same thing. When the Law's *as yourself* has wrested from you the self-love that Christianity sadly enough must presupposed to be in every human being, then you have actually learned to love yourself." (*WL:* Pp22-23)

To love oneself in the right way, for Kierkegaard, involves a wresting away of a certain kind of self-love. What are we to take it to mean when, on the one hand, Kierkegaard proclaims the importance of loving oneself, and on the other that Christianity must wrest from the human being self-love? Loving oneself in the right way involves eliminating a certain kind of selfishness. In relation to loving the neighbour, this means that loving as yourself requires an end to selfish attachment. The law is important here, for the Christian law insists that the individual must love the neighbour. The neighbour can be any person. It is not necessarily a specific, preferred person, nor a person one particularly hates:

> "Shut your eyes and remember the commandment that *you* shall love; then you love- your enemy- no, then you love the neighbour, because you do not see that he is your enemy. In other words, when you shut your eyes, you do not see the dissimilarities of earthly life" (*WL:* p68).

Loving in the way that Kierkegaard describes here involves blinding oneself to the dissimilarity between the people one loves. This is necessary because if we do not become blind to dissimilarity, others become objects to project our desires and fears in to. Kierkegaard proclaims that:

> "The one whom self-love, in the strictest sense, loves is basically the *other I,* because the *other I* is he himself" (*WL*: p57).

When we love in a purely human way, for Kierkegaard, what we love is ourselves. This is because what we love is a reflection of ourselves in the other- or a recognition of a satisfaction of our desire in another. For Kierkegaard, then, "Christian love is self-denial's love" (*WL:* p52), precisely because the individual has to break the other free from the projection of needs and desires. Suffering is a central part of the process of self-denial:

> "The essential existential pathos relates itself to existing essentially, and existing essentially is inwardness, and the action of inwardness is suffering, because the individual is unable to transform himself. It becomes, as it were, a feigning of self-transformation, and that is why the highest action in the inner world is to suffer" (CUP: p433)

What Climacus highlights here is that suffering is the power that can transform inwardly. The individual is unable to transform himself, but suffering can transform him. He contrasts this with other transformations in the world of an aesthetic kind, for example changing career or gaining status, and highlights that here, no inner change necessarily occurs. Often, instead of genuinely changing through inwardness, a feigning of self-transformation takes place, where the individual is changed only outwardly. Of course, this relates to Kierkegaard's observations that in relation to Christianity, it is not enough simply to be baptised or go to church- at most these things allow for a feigning of self-transformation. Being baptised or going to church do not necessitate any change in the way in which the individual relates to Christianity inwardly, they simply signify outwardly that one is a Christian. According to Climacus, genuine suffering is required for a genuine inward transformation to occur. But from where does this suffering arise?

Climacus states that "The meaning of religious suffering is dying to immediacy; its actuality is its essential continuance" (CUP: p499). In chapter 2, we considered what is meant by the process of "dying to immediacy". The individual who dies to immediacy detaches themselves from temporal or worldly ends and instead relates themselves absolutely to the absolute. The process of dying to is the process of letting go of worldly ends. This is necessary for the person who is double-minded, as they must wean themselves from relating in an absolute way to things in the world that divide their will. This process creates suffering in the individual because detaching oneself from the temporal is painful. In addition, the actuality of this suffering is its essential continuance. Such a suffering is not

dependent on particularities in one's life. For example, an aesthete might suffer because they have had bad luck, they have lost a job or a partner. All of these particular sufferings are brought together in the individual who dies to the world in an essential kind of suffering: the letting go of the temporal altogether.

So we see here that the reason for dying to the world is so that the individual can relate themselves absolutely only to the absolute telos (what we called "willing the good in truth" in chapter 2) and relatively to relative ends (particular ends in the world). One cannot be said to truly do this until a kind of weaning has taken place such that relative ends lose their absolute significance. Christian love, we now see, requires the same process. So long as the will is divided, selfishness exists in love because the other exists as a mirror of one's desires and fears. To recognise the other as a neighbour, as truly other, a weaning process is required of exactly the kind described in the previous chapter- through suffering and a recollection of guilt, one must come to subordinate the demands of preferential love to the universal love demanded by the good. This requires that one set aside one's attachment and preference in favour of a kind of love directed to all with equality.

For the individual with a divided will, for whom desire overwhelms the demands of conscience, suffering is required if the commandment is going to be fulfilled. This is an essential, continual kind of suffering that requires a mourning over all temporal ends. It is here that Kierkegaard's account of love starts to become problematic. Let us now turn our attention to the alternative account of love given by Klein, in which it is emphasised why it might be that suffering and guilt present fundamental barriers when it comes to love.

Love and Guilt in Melanie Klein: The Case for Happiness

In contrast to Kierkegaard, Klein emphasises that guilt and suffering are perhaps the most fundamental barriers when it comes to loving others. Although placing Kierkegaard in dialogue with Klein might seem strange, it will become clear that some of the ways that Kierkegaard speaks of guilt bear a striking resemblance to the descriptions of super-ego we find in Klein. We will also find that many of the positive elements of the Christian life that Kierkegaard describes in his work can be mapped on to some of the consequences of unchecked guilt that Klein witnessed in children. Whilst Kierkegaard seems to see these consequences as steps towards loving the neighbour, for Klein, they have precisely the opposite result. We will now turn to Klein's account in order to show how it might highlight some problems.

The origin of guilt in Klein's account can be traced back to the fundamental division outlined by Freud of the id into two sides (Freud, S. 1920). On the one side, there is the life-drive or libido (eros). This is the sexual instinct, the drive towards survival and the continuation of the species. On the other side, there is the death-drive or aggression (thanatos). This is the drive towards self-destruction or elimination. It is the desire to no longer desire, to alleviate oneself from the repetitiveness and tension of desire. The two taken together, according to Freud, account for sadism, in which sexual pleasure is found in the destruction of objects of desire. Klein takes this division and the sadism that results as a fundamental aspect of the development of young children. In order to avoid the destruction of the ego by the death-drive, the libido as the self-protecting aspect of the id forces the death-drive to be directed outwards towards objects (Klein, M. 1998: p250). Objects, on

Klein's account, are not to be understood as free-standing material separate from the subject, but are always imbued with the subject's psyche- they hold a symbolic meaning in certain inward processes. Objects can refer to anything that psychic processes can be directed towards- other people, toys, parts of the body etc.

Klein notes elsewhere that projection outward on to objects is one of the key defence mechanisms employed by the individual to avoid anxiety. The first example of this taking place is the projection of the unbearable death-drive outwards towards objects in the world to manage the anxiety brought about by the tension in the id. The ego is protected from the death drive by libido which sadistically projects it out towards objects. This does not eliminate anxiety altogether however:

> "For he (the child) perceives his anxiety arising from his aggressive instincts as fear of an external object [his parents], both because he has made that object their outward goal, and because he has projected them on to it so that they seem to be initiated against himself from that quarter." (Klein, M. 1998: p250)

The projection of the death-drive outwards on to objects may relieve some of the initial tension in the id, but now the threat of the death-drive is experienced as coming from the objects on to which it was projected. This functions in two main ways. On the one hand, the child fears phantastical attacks on themselves from these objects. On the other hand, the child holds sadistic phantasies about hurting or destroying these objects and thus fears that the objects will retaliate. Both kinds of phantastical attacks can be heavily masked behind various symbols, a process which serves as a further defence mechanism against the death drive. Rather than imagining the actual object (for example the mother or Father) harming them, the child might imagine a substitute for this object, for example wolves biting, things hiding in the cupboard or under the bed and various other phobias that children develop.

These fears can bring forth even greater levels of retaliatory aggression towards the objects in some children:

> "[The child's] anxiety will serve to increase its own sadistic impulses by urging it to destroy those hostile objects so as to escape their onslaughts. The vicious circle that is thus set up, in which the child's anxiety impels it to destroy its objects" (Klein, M. 1998: p251).

The circle Klein describes here forms because the child projects the death drive outwards towards objects in order to protect the ego. As a result, they both fear retaliation and fear phantastical attacks on themselves made by their own death-drive as reflected in the object. This creates a desire in the child to destroy these hostile objects in order to stop any possibility of the attacks taking place and remove the anxiety once and for all. Of course, the effect of this is further aggressive and destructive phantasies directed towards the objects, which bring forth even greater fear of aggression and retaliation directed back. For her, this cycle is the foundation of asocial and criminal tendencies in later life. The objects that now hold persecutory projections are what later begin the formation of the super-ego in the child. This happens, typically, through a fear of retaliatory aggression (the projected death-drive), which is then once again introjected as the super-ego. The child can no longer direct sadistic impulses out to objects without receiving internal punishment through fear and anxiety about retaliation.

For Klein, however, the process described above must be succeeded by a more stable, less sadistically driven one. This takes place through a softening of the fear of retaliation and likewise a softening of the super-ego:

> "As the child's sadism is diminished and the character and function of its super-ego changed so that it arouses less anxiety and more sense of guilt, those defensive mechanisms which form the basis of a moral and ethical attitude are activated, and the child begins to have consideration for its objects and to be amenable to social feelings" (Klein, M. 1998: p252).

Klein claims that bringing forth social feeling in children requires a softening rather than an increasing of retaliation and anxiety. In later development, the same thing can be said about persecutory guilt. Aggression towards the self through persecutory guilt brings forth aggression, as the individual may begin to have sadistic phantasies about eliminating the object involved in their guilt, or of liberating themselves from the demands of morality altogether. As such, guilt can create a cycle that produces more guilt and with it more aggression. It will be noted, however, that Klein speaks of guilt in a very different way to blame in this passage above, where she considers it in relation to the softening of anxiety. She speaks there of a form of guilt that has to do with the individual's will to restore the damage they have inflicted on their object either in phantasy or reality. To be able to experience this positive kind of guilt, the child must no longer fear retaliation, but instead fear the loss of the object. Segal, a prominent student of Klein, describes how this shift takes place:

> "The phantasy of the ideal object merges with, and is confirmed by, gratifying experiences of love and feeding by the real external mother, while the phantasy of persecution similarly merges with real experiences of deprivation and pain, which are attributed by the infant to the persecutory objects. Gratification, therefore, not only fulfils the need for comfort, love and nourishment, but is also needed to keep terrifying persecution at bay; and deprivation becomes not merely a lack of gratification, but a threat of annihilation by persecutors." (Segal, H. 1998: p26)

Moving to a point where the individual can have restorative and positive feelings of guilt involves a release of the persecutory phantasies involved in early childhood. This takes place through gratifying experiences. The child who experiences gratification, comfort, love and nourishment becomes attached to the objects of these feelings in a positive way- one that can overcome the negative feeling brought forth by the projection of the death-drive. As Segal points out here, this is highly dependent on the environment of the child. A child who experiences deprivation, suffering and pain will have a much higher chance of holding

aggressive and persecutory tendencies because these experiences feed the child's anxieties that their objects are indeed persecutory.

From Klein, we begin to see an issue with Kierkegaard's account. Klein is clear, for example, that an over-bearing super-ego may not bring forth ethical feelings towards others, but rather feelings of aggression and hatred. Throughout Kierkegaard's writing, it is suggested that one ought to increase guilt, because with the increasing of guilt comes the recollecting of conscience. With guilt also comes the process of dying to the world that we considered in chapter two. According to Klein, however, a person who experiences levels of guilt that are too high would be more likely to relate in a negative way to their objects than a positive one. To make matters worse, as Segal points out above, suffering and deprivation are likely to reinforce these feelings of aggression, as the persecutory phantasies associated with the objects gain some degree of substantiation from suffering. Suffering, in Kierkegaard's writing, is a central part of the process of dying to the world and to relating to the highest good.

When we take into account Segal's statements about suffering, this would all seem to paint a picture in which an individual burdened with an aggressive conscience and experiencing suffering would struggle a great deal with ethical feeling. It would be an issue for Kierkegaard if, from the very guilt that is supposed to help us form a conscience, we find aggression instead. Klein describes another reaction that might result from an overly harsh super-ego or from too much anxiety:

> "In a somewhat later stage of development, fear of the super-ego will cause the ego to turn away from the anxiety- arousing object. This defensive mechanism can lead to a defective or impaired object-relation on the part of the child" (Klein, M. 1998: p251).

In other words, the child who experiences their objects as the source of too much anxiety, or who experiences their super-ego as overwhelming, might take recourse in cutting themselves off from their objects altogether. This is a similar movement to the one that Kierkegaard describes as "dying to the world". For him, the suffering invoked by attachment to objects can lead to a process where one lets go of those objects altogether. This is an important and positive step towards the religious for Kierkegaard, as dying to the world is the first step towards relating absolutely to the eternal. Such a dying to the world or detachment from objects is an issue for Klein because it can lead to defective or impaired object-relations. In practice this means that the person is unable to experience positive loving feelings or negative aggressive feelings towards objects. The result of this can be severe introversion and depression.

We might also recall that for Freud, the death drive is the desire to be rid of desire altogether. We can think of the process of dying to the world as the directing of the death drive back at oneself, in an attempt to end the endless cycle of desire. In chapter two, we saw the nausea involved in the aesthetic stage of life in relation to the *Rotation of Crops* and the *Seducer's Diary*. This kind of nausea is likely to strengthen one's desire to be rid of desire. The person who experiences too much anxiety may not only have stunted object relations but may also begin to have a destructive attitude towards themselves (Segal, H. 1998: pp30-31). The fundamental ground of self-love which guides reparative feelings towards oneself begins to be overwhelmed with a wish to disappear or be rid of the anxiety in this way. Again, we can map this on to Kierkegaard's accounts of self-annihilation:

> "Religiously, the task is to comprehend that a person is nothing at all before God or to be nothing at all and thereby to be before God" (CUP: p461).

The individual is to become nothing, to recognise that they are capable of nothing at all and in the process are able to turn to God.[26] Within the religious context, then, self-annihilation is a possibility because one is able to turn to God. In a secular context such as the one Klein was writing in, such self-annihilation could be disastrous.

If we take Kierkegaard's emphasis on dying to the world and becoming nothing before God within the religious context, however, it might seem like the way to overcome this problem is simply by saying that the death of the ego through the direction of the death-drive inwardly would be positive because this would allow for space for the individual to be filled with God. If one becomes nothing, one is able to become a better subject of God. This seems in fitting with much of the Lutheran sentiment throughout Kierkegaard's writing. According to Climacus, the process of suffering and guilt are what lead up to the realisation in the individual that they are nothing before God. If this is the task of religiousness, the Kierkegaardian might be able to affirm everything that Klein says about guilt but add that, with the help of God, self-annihilation is precisely the goal. Throughout *CUP*, we see this kind of dialectic at play. The closer the individual holds themselves to the absolute telos and the more they care about it, the more guilt and suffering they will experience. However, this kind of guilt and suffering can bring forth a joyful recognition that one is relating to the absolute telos. The ultimate end of this deepening of guilt and suffering is the elimination of the divided will we considered in chapter two. Through a process of self-annihilation, one will is left- that of God and thus the individual walks away

[26] One might argue that I am here being unfair to Kierkegaard because he does stress throughout his works the importance of an appropriate kind of self-love. It is not right to say that Kierkegaard held the view that we ought not to love ourselves. The difficulty, however, is getting clear about what exactly Kierkegaard means by self-love. When we go on to look at faith, it will become clearer what I take Kierkegaard to mean by self-love. Unfortunately, to get to faith, one must pass through the suffering involved in resignation. The question is thus how one is to pass through this suffering successfully without becoming lost to a demonic way of life.

from self-annihilation with purity of heart. Thinking this way, however, reveals tensions with the commandment to love the neighbour:

> "When it is said 'You shall love your neighbour [*Næste*] as yourself,' this contains what is presupposed, that every person loves himself" (WL: p17).

From the Kleinian account, it seems like both parts of this commandment would become very difficult. If guilt leads to a situation in which the individual distances themselves from objects, including other people, who aims towards self-annihilation and who feels overburdened by guilt and aggression, then loving others with the presupposition that one loves oneself would be precluded. The problem with moral guilt, therefore, is not one that simply arises within the secular context of psychoanalysis but is one that we can say exists within Kierkegaard's writing itself. If Klein's empirical observations are correct, and guilt of this kind precludes genuine love of the neighbour, a tension would arise in Kierkegaard's writing, whether or not we take it in a religious context.

One might argue, on reading *WL*, however, that the kind of distance from objects that Klein takes to be a problem for loving object-relations is precisely what Kierkegaard intends when he speaks of loving the neighbour. Furthermore, that the process of becoming nothing before God does not preclude the possibility of some kind of love. The problem here, however, is that it becomes difficult to see how Kierkegaard's account is able to accommodate for the particularity of the neighbour which he emphasises as important. A key debate between Ferreira (1997), Krishek (2008) and Lippitt (2012) over how we should understand self-denial in relation to love of the neighbour serves to demonstrate the kind of problems that arise when we start moving away from object-relations.

The Paradox of Loving the Neighbour

The problem in *WL* is that, although he stresses the importance of blindness when it comes to love, Kierkegaard states repeatedly throughout the book that the particularity of the neighbour is also to be loved. This is exemplified by the fact that an entire chapter of *WL* is dedicated to "Our Duty to Love the People We See" (WL: p154). Kierkegaard is very clear that particularity is an important part of love, but how can self-denial and blindness to the neighbour allow for the kind of love for particularity that Kierkegaard stresses is important? More problematically, Kierkegaard speaks of marriage and exclusive forms of relationship. How are we to at once love non-preferentially and at the same time maintain these kinds of special relationships? In relation to Klein, we might understand this problem thus- Could we still be said to genuinely love someone if we have stunted or withdrawn object-relations?

In order to see why this debate is relevant to our discussion so far, we will first summarise why loving the neighbour would become very difficult in a situation where guilt is overwhelming. The first reason is that a cycle of guilt and aggression can be set up, such that the neighbour is experienced as threatening and as a source of anxiety. This could produce in the individual sadistic phantasies of wanting to eliminate the source of such anxiety. At a later stage of development, this kind of anxiety could lead the individual to disconnect from the neighbour altogether, neither loving nor hating them. Although this seems to come close to some of the statements Kierkegaard makes about loving the neighbour as self-denial, we find that an account that leads to distancing from the other in this way is unable to allow for the importance of loving the particularity of the neighbour. It becomes unclear, then, how the individual could be said to love the neighbour as a result of

guilt. If anything, it would seem as though, on Klein's account, a softening of guilt and suffering would be required.

For Ferreira, the solution to the problem of particularity in *WL* is to divide the book in to two 'rhetorical contexts'. On the one hand, we have the commandment in the abstract to love the neighbour non-preferentially. On the other, we have the context of actuality, in which Kierkegaard expresses what it actually means to do this as a human being.[27] The idea, then, is to not allow difference to get in the way of loving. This does not mean that we cannot love the things that make particular individuals unique. In fact, according to Ferreira, this is precisely what is required of us by the commandment. Rather, we must simply become blind to those elements of human beings that prevent us from loving them. We must also ensure that our love of particular people is not based solely on their particularities. For example, I must love my partner not only as a source of company and enjoyment, but also as a neighbour. Furthermore, I must not allow my love of particular people to exclude me from loving those I do not prefer. In theory, then, the commandment tells us to love blindly. But when taken into practice, particularity must be once again allowed in to love because this is the kind of love available to the human being. For Ferreira, then, the commandment to love concerns only overcoming differences in the world that prevent one from loving. As well as differences that may make certain people difficult to love, this includes differences in those we find easy to love and which encourage us to love those people more exclusively.

[27] She writes: "I… suggest that Kierkegaard prepares us to expect two different rhetorical contexts or contexts of discussion… We can describe these formal and material contexts as a context of commandment and a context of fulfilment, or, alternatively, a context that focuses on (formal) unconditionality and a context that focuses on (material) actuality. This difference in contexts accommodates the contrasting emphases on abstract equality and concrete distinctiveness and resolves the seeming inconsistency." (Ferreira, J. 1997: p73)

The trouble with this account when we consider our analysis of guilt in Kierkegaard is that Ferreira does not seem to take in to account the suggestions in Kierkegaard's other writings that one ought to "die to the world" (UDVS: p113). If we are to die to the world, surely we are to become numb or blind to the particularities of the others, since these particularities are temporal things in the world. He is clear also that this is not something one does purely theoretically, but something that must be lived. We cannot brush these aspects of Kierkegaard's work aside as belonging to theoretical rhetoric when efforts are taken throughout his works to insist on the fact that they must take place in actuality. This is particularly so when we consider the way Climacus discusses guilt. Although guilt is not explicitly dealt with in *WL* and may seem tangential to the problem of loving the neighbour, we find through Klein that guilt might nevertheless become an obstacle. We find suggestions throughout Kierkegaard's writing that guilt is what it is to relate, in actuality, to the absolute good. As Climacus puts it in *CUP*:

> "Abstraction places existence in the sphere of indifference; but guilt is the expression for the strongest self-assertion of existence" (CUP: p528).

It would seem, then, that when guilt is spoken of, it is spoken of not in terms of abstraction or indifference, but rather in terms of a self-assertion of existence. Thus, even if we accept with Ferreira that *WL* can be divided into two rhetorical contexts, we certainly cannot say that guilt belongs to the abstract. Nor can we say this of suffering, which for Kierkegaard is the process of dying to the world. When we take in to account the potentially negative effects of guilt brought forward in Klein, we find that guilt could well be a serious problem when it comes to loving the neighbour. This is because a growing inability to relate to objects can bring about *in actuality* the very blindness to particularity that Ferreira places too much on the side of abstraction. If we feel distant or numb to objects in terms of desire,

we could not be said to love them in terms of particularity. Krishek puts this by stressing that an important part of the particularity of certain loves is that what I want from them differs depending on the person:

> "I also, crucially, want something different (independently of my beloved's needs) from what I want in the case of the neighbour. This different wanting, this different quality and intensity of wanting, is precisely what constitutes my love for my beloved as preferential" (Krishek 2008: p609).

For Krishek, Ferreira simply overlooks the genuine tension that exists here. If we die to the world in such a way that we no longer direct desire towards particular objects, favouring some over others depending on the context, it would seem as though we would have lost a crucial part of what loving the particularity of others means.[28] The differences in the kinds of desire I direct at different people is a large part of what it is to love others in particular ways. To add to Krishek's objection, we have seen also that moral guilt, the negativity attached to it and the distance to others that results from it would seem to preclude genuine love for others in a temporal and particular way. *WL* contains, according to Krishek, an inconsistency because it insists on the one hand that one ought to love the particularity of the people we see, maintaining special relationships. But at the same time, it seems to preclude a significant part of what special relationships involve in the human sense- A wanting of different things from particular people. Krishek concludes that *WL* contains an inconsistency which cannot be solved within the text.[29]

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[28] As she puts it "To say that love is essentially non-preferential, and yet that one of its manifestations is preferential, is to contradict oneself. Neither Kierkegaard nor Ferreira refers to this contradiction that seems to be implied by their suggestion… If taken seriously, I claim, the 'radical commitment to equality', that *Works of Love* posits as *the ground for any form of love*, implies the exclusion of preferential love" (Krishek, S. 2009: p122).

[29] She writes, for example:

> "I suggest that we think about this tension in terms of a disharmony between *Fear and Trembling's* two movements of faith that is between the movement of resignation and the movement of faith, or affirmation. While in *Fear and Trembling* a paradoxical balance between these two movements has been achieved, in *Works of Love* Kierkegaard seems to be quite oblivious to the second movement-

Lippitt responds to Krishek by arguing that she overplays the self-denial part of the commandment to love (2012: p187). He argues that it cannot be the case that Kierkegaard thought that we should deny feelings, drives, inclinations and passions because "part of the process of Christian 'upbuilding' is that one becomes the kind of person in whom the passion of neighbour-love is manifested" (ibid: p185). In other words, it is important if our love is to be called love that it be passionate. Love must not be a name for an abstract relation to another but must involve feeling. Lippitt suggests that instead of thinking of *WL* in terms of self-denial, we ought to think of the God relationship as a kind of filter in all love- one which sifts out the parts of love that are not in keeping with conscience[30]. The idea is to allow conscience to free us from being controlled by the wrong kind of drives, inclinations and passions, or from being controlled in the wrong way (ibid: p185). The end of this process is different kinds of love (we do not end up loving everyone in exactly the same way) but the process is the same for all kinds of love. In this way, we can overcome the preferentiality problem in *WL*. We can say, on the one hand, that loving Christianly requires that we purify all forms of love to be free from the wrong kinds of drives, inclinations and passions, but that the result of this purification process can still be a form of love that looks different depending on context. In this way, we can retain special relationships.

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the movement of affirmation- and to focus on the movement of resignation… alone." (Krishek, S. 2009: p130).

In line with Krishek, I agree that faith as found in *FaT* is the key to understanding the tension in WoL and I will demonstrate this in more detail in the following chapters. Whilst, however, I agree that *WoL* pushes to the limits the movement of resignation, I do not think it is correct to say that Kierkegaard was oblivious to the second movement in this text. As we will see, if read in terms of indirect communication, we might understand *WoL* as anticipating and preparing the reader for this second movement.

[30] Lippitt does not actually use the word "conscience". He instead refers to the need to purify feelings, drives, inclinations and passions that do not fit with Christian teaching.

Lippitt's filtering metaphor captures well what might be involved in bringing conscience in to love, but there are two main problems with his account. Firstly, Lippitt confines himself to a critique of Krishek's account of *WL* itself, not the wider discussion in which she situates her reading of *WL* (p183). This approach to Krishek belies a deeper problem- that Lippitt does not read *WL* in the context of Kierkegaard's other writings. As I have demonstrated in the previous two chapters, when we take into account Kierkegaard's wider writings, we find that self-denial is a central theme throughout. Given this context, it seems untrue to say that Krishek overplays the role of self-denial in *WL*, when her reading gains much substantiation from Kierkegaard's other texts (pseudonymous or not).

The second problem with Lippitt's account (as with both Ferreira and Krishek's) is that he does not take into account performativity as an important part of Kierkegaard writings. As such, he overlooks process in favour of destination. Whilst it is the case that love filtered through conscience might be the state of the ideal Christian, the question remains as to how we are to reach filtered love- surely we must go through a process of some kind to get there. This process is the process I have considered thus far- of dying to the world in order to make the good the sole end of the will. This is a process which requires very real self-denial. In order to filter love, we must first be prepared to cut off desire and inclination as the driving forces behind the will in order to re-orient ourselves around the good in truth. The question, then, is how we are to go through this process without losing the other forever (becoming blind to them) and without sliding into a demonic relationship with the good. This is a question I will address in the next chapter, where we shall see that Krishek's reading has a major advantage- she takes in to account the importance of the movement of faith.

The Sign of Contradiction: The Commandment as Indirect Communication

There is another way in which we might understand *Works of Love*. The mistake in Ferreira's case, it might be argued, was that when interpreting *WL* she failed to recognise that there is a very real tension in the text. In the opposing camp, by thinking of this tension as an inconsistency and looking outside the text for a solution, it can be argued that Krishek underestimates the importance of indirect communication. The tension described above- namely that between on the one hand blinding oneself to particularity and on the other loving the particularity of the people we see thereby appears as a logical contradiction. This particular subject- Kierkegaard, seems to be holding both P and ¬P simultaneously. Attempts are then made to look outside the text to find a solution. Although it is right to say that the text holds a tension, I think it incorrect to say that *WL* is straightforwardly an articulation of propositions Kierkegaard holds to be true (even though it is not pseudonymous). If the text turns out to contain a tension intentionally, we must consider why it does this and what results from it.

Reading *WL* as containing an intentional tension, we will see, serves to deepen the problem of guilt as we have thus far captured it. It does this by making the commandment to love an offence and an impossibility to the understanding. If one always fails in fulfilling the commandment, then it would seem to become the source of infinite guilt. For this reason it would seem that guilt might be an outcome of *WL* that is intended by Kierkegaard. By recognising that one *cannot* fulfil the commandment, one is forced to turn to God. Of course, on our reading thus far, infinite guilt would turn out to be a barrier, rather than a help in loving the neighbour.

One might argue that resigning ourselves to the fact that WL contains a tension would be to read Kierkegaard uncharitably. There is nothing that specifically rules out the possibility that he has in mind in the text a particular way of loving that does manage to both allow for unconditionality and particularity. The charitable thing might therefore seem to be to try to find a way to interpret the text such that the tension is resolved. When we read WL alongside some of Kierkegaard's other non-pseudonymous writings, however, we find good reason to think that it might be the case that the tension is not supposed to be resolved. This is because *WL* has many of the tell-tale signs of indirect communication. In *PC* Kierkegaard is clear that tension is an important part of indirect communication. He states:

> "To begin with a repulsion is to deny direct communication… Anything that presented itself in such a way that it first of all repulses cannot be said to present itself directly." (PC: pp139-140)

Repulsion is central to indirect communication. But what does Anti-Climacus mean by repulsion here? Repulsion refers to the possibility of offence arising in response to a particular thing. The paradigmatic example of this is of course the God-man paradox. The reason that such a paradox repulses is because what is presented is a contradiction[31]. We are presented with two opposing sides, God and man which the understanding fails to think together. It is paradoxical to think of eternity coming into time in one man. Anti-Climacus describes this as a "sign of contradiction" which "draws attention to itself and, once attention is directed to it, shows itself to contain a contradiction." (PC: p125). Such signs play a very important role in the Christian context because, as he puts it, they "reveal the

[31] I do not mean contradiction in a logical sense here. What I refer to is more like an emotional tension. I use the word "contradiction" in accordance with the Hong translation of the Kierkegaard texts. In the next chapter it will be discussed exactly what this kind of contradiction amounts to.

thoughts of hearts" (PC: p126). In other words, a sign of contradiction presents the individual with an internal conflict, one from which their inner being is revealed:

> "A contradiction placed squarely in front of a person- if one can get him to look at it- is a mirror; as he is forming a judgement, what dwells within him must be disclosed. It is a riddle, but as he is guessing the riddle, what dwells within him is disclosed by the way he guesses. The contradiction confronts him with a choice, and as he is choosing, together with that he chooses, he himself is disclosed" (PC: p127)

A sign of contradiction, then, is a very important tool for a writer like Kierkegaard because it acts as a mirror in this way. If a reader is not given a clear answer, a clear way through a problem, but is instead presented with a contradiction, they must find for themselves a way through. Anti-Climacus puts this in terms of a guess or a choice because it reflects an inner movement within the individual. They must make a judgement for themselves on how to proceed. It is for this reason that, in *WL,* Kierkegaard reminds us repeatedly that "wherever the essentially Christian is, there is the possibility of offense" (WL: p198). Christianity involves a movement of inwardness and thus requires that each individual confront for themselves the essentially Christian. By being presented with a paradox, the possibility of offence and by witnessing the choice that one makes, one becomes aware of one's own individuality[32]. A direct communication on Christianity, for example, might seek to convince, to argue or to set forward propositions. A contradiction such as the God-man, on the other hand, confounds understanding. A person presented with a contradiction such as this must discover for themselves whether they believe or not.

[32] In an interesting article entitled "Ought but Cannot", Martin, W. (2009) demonstrates that there is a tradition of philosophy that articulates moral commandments in terms of infinite or impossible ideals. He draws on Luther to demonstrate this. He states "To find myself subject to an infinite demand may not directly help me in deciding what to do; but it might nonetheless serve a normative function in telling me where I stand, and so in understanding something about the kind of being I am" (p126). The commandment to love the neighbour, I argue, performs precisely this function in Kierkegaard's writing. It is an example of what Kierkegaard calls a sign of contradiction which encourages the individual to be constituted as spirit- to be concerned about the kind of self that they are. We will explore this in detail in chapter 4.

Clearly indirect communication is a method that Kierkegaard seeks to employ in his own work. In PC we get a clear insight in to some of Kierkegaard methodology:

> "Indirect communication can be an art of communication in redoubling the communication; the art consists in making oneself, the communicator, into a nobody, purely objective, and then continually placing the qualitative opposites in a unity. This is what some pseudonymous writers are accustomed to calling the double-reflection of the communication." (PC: p133)

By undermining his own authority (through the use of pseudonym, but also paradox) and by presenting the reader with opposites in unity, the reader is pulled into a tension and pressed to make a "decision" for themselves as to where they stand. By using a pseudonym, Kierkegaard's own authority as a writer is undermined such that the reader must make a judgement for themselves on how much of the text ought to be taken on face value, how much is ironic, how must is true. What, however, of *WL,* a text published under his own name? In this text, Kierkegaard states that the commandment to love the neighbour "to flesh and blood is an offense and to wisdom foolishness" (p59). We see clearly, then, the possibility of offence in relation to loving the neighbour.

As mentioned previously, the possibility of offence is one of the calling cards of a sign of contradiction. We also have a sign that pulls one in- the notion of love itself and with it the commandment that one ought to love. What we find, however, is that love contains within itself a contradiction. On the one hand, one is supposed to become blind to the neighbour. This is so that, as Ferreira argues, we are not led to exclude people from our love. On the other hand, love is supposed to allow for particular relationships and a loving of the people we see. This involves precisely a recognition of particularly unique and desirable aspects of other people. There is thus a tension between a human love for the particularity of the neighbour and a divine love for the neighbour as such.

In addition to the tension we have considered so far, WL also contains a second one for the Christian- that love is *commanded*. This is an offence to the way we think about love as circumstantial. To the human understanding, love is not something we have for everyone and all at once, but rather is something unique to particular relationships and beyond our choosing. Such a commandment to love is also an offence to the human understanding of moral commandments. If, as Kant argued, ought implies can, how could we ever be commanded to love? To the human understanding, love does not seem like something we have the power to will in to being.

We see, then, two clear examples of "qualitative opposites in unity" in this text, one centring around preferentiality and one around agency. Love is an example of a "sign of contradiction"- a sign which draws one in, appears as one thing, but when related to reveals its duplicity. Kierkegaard identifies both the sign of contradiction and the unifying of opposites as key parts of the art of indirect communication. Although *WL* is not pseudonymous, it therefore contains clear signs of indirect communication and should not straightforwardly be taken as Kierkegaard's attempt to coherently express his views on love.

Precisely because *WL* contains a paradox that confounds the understanding, each reader of the book is expected to confront this tension within themselves. The commandment is one that is supposed to be intuitive to the reader and therefore alluring. It seems good and true that one ought to love the neighbour and yet, to the understanding, impossible. The tension is not supposed to be a logical contradiction in the text, nor is it a mistake on Kierkegaard's part, but rather a description of a tension that exists in the reader. *WL* is an indirect communication because it forces the reader to feel the tension for themselves. Love is presented in the form of a commandment, one *ought* to love the

neighbour. The reader of *WL,* then, is given no way out of the contradiction. They are drawn in by the commandment to love but find that they cannot fulfil it. Yet somehow, the commandment must be followed. Such a contradiction forces the reader to fall back upon themselves and to make a judgement for themselves as to whether or not they love and whether they ought to do so. The commandment simultaneously presses the individual to assess the nature of their current loves, but also demands that they generate love for all. It also presents them with the possibility of offence and the choice to reject the commandment altogether.

Human Bankruptcy and The Danger of The Demonic

WL, then, should not be understood simply as a text that aims to explain what Christian love is. It is also not supposed to present a philosophical argument in favour of Christian love over other sorts of love. To read it in this way would be to take a distanced, objective view of the text. In this sense, there is something odd about describing the text as inconsistent in the way that Krishek occasionally does. To do this, we would have to think of the text as arguing for propositions that conflict with one another. What, however, if the text is not arguing in favour of anything? Read subjectively, what we find in *WL* is not an inconsistency, but an emotional tension. The text is one that forces the reader to ask themselves whether or not *they* love, whether or not this love is selfish and whether or not they can really say of themselves that they *want* to love. It therefore aims to bring conscience in to love. This involves witnessing through an engagement with the text the inner conflict that take place between loving everyone in a universal manner and loving the particularities of the people one sees. To the human understanding, the commandment is

an offence and its fulfilment is an impossibility. As far as reflection is concerned, to fail to fulfil the commandment, then, is simply human. As Rumble points out, even reflection on whether or not one loves, even experiencing the tension as a tension already demonstrates that one is failing:

> "Kierkegaard's insistence on the distinction between preferential and agapic love is thus complicated, first, by his claim that one who truly loves will not attend to this distinction and, second, by his admission that the difference between the two is in practice unrecognizable to the unredeemed human gaze. For how are the uninitiated to grasp it?" (Rumble 2004: p165)

For her, the aim in *WL* is to demonstrate human bankruptcy and the need for grace. Even by experiencing love as a tension, one already demonstrates that one does not truly do it, for the one who truly loves does not attend to the distinction between preferential and non-preferential love. Two options are presented to the individual in response to this. On the one hand they can flee from the commandment through offence. This option is impossible for the Christian, as it involves a renouncement of the commandment to love the neighbour, a central element of the Christian faith. But as Rumble interprets from Paul, it is difficult for anyone who is "too much enamoured of the good to love the evil that we do" (Rumble, 2004: p161). The other option is that of faith, which we will consider in the next chapter.

To contribute to the discussion between Ferreira, Krishek and Lippitt we can stress the fact that *WL* is supposed to contain a tension. Whilst the tension is treated by Krishek as an inconsistency in the text which we can take measures to overcome, and by Ferreira isn't properly recognised at all, the suggestion here is that we should think of this tension as intentional. *WL* is a text based on indirect communication, drawing the individual in through a commandment and then presenting them with a contradiction. How the individual responds to this contradiction reveals their heart. For Kierkegaard, paradox is the structure

of the essentially Christian, the clash between the temporal and the eternal in the human being. The Christian is the individual who can face the contradiction and not turn away in offence but approach it with faith. Even though one cannot think the contradiction implicit in love, one can have faith that they will succeed in loving with the help of grace nonetheless. How one responds to reading *WL* thereby serves to demonstrate whether or not one truly has faith. This is something we will discuss in more detail in the next chapters, when we go on to look at faith.

What are we to make of all of this in relation to what we have said previously about guilt and Klein? Thinking of *WL* as presenting as a contradiction makes the problem of guilt a lot worse due to the apparent impossibility of fulfilling the command. If Christian love is paradoxical insofar as it requires us to love the particularity of the other, but to at the same time become blind to this particularity, we are always going to fail this task. The guilt that results from the impossibility of fulfilling the command thereby becomes infinite. Furthermore, one cannot easily turn away from the tension without rejecting conscience, because loving the neighbour shows itself to be the right thing to do. The reader of *WL* knows that it is true that they ought to love selflessly but can see no way to successfully do it. We see another version of the Kleinian cycle set up- One fails to fulfil the commandment, feels guilty about this and thereby experiences anxiety in relation to the neighbour. This creates another barrier to loving and thus more guilt is produced. What's more, the same cycle appears in reflection. Every time one reflects on love, one becomes aware that one is failing to love (as is evidenced simply by the fact that one reflects on it). This brings forth more reflection on how to love and more failing.

Sometimes commentators overlook the radicality of Kierkegaard's version of Christianity and thus lose sight of the risk inherent in it. In *Kierkegaard's Ethics of Love* (2004), for example, Evans argues

> "God has created the human self in such a way that when humans do love God and their neighbours in this way [following the commandment], they find themselves happy and fulfilled" (p144)

Although it might be true to say that the human being who successfully fulfils the demands of the commandment could be happy and fulfilled, Evans tends to under-estimate the real strain that the process of self-denial places on the self. What is more, he does not recognise that the commandment to love the neighbour might be *impossible* for the human being to fulfil without grace and therefore a source of much guilt and suffering. The trouble with his account is that the process of fulfilling the commandment is again overlooked in favour of the destination. Evans does recognise that self-denial is difficult, but his response to this is to affirm the fact that the true meaning of self-fulfilment is to be found in self-denial (p135) and thus true happiness is to be found in alignment with conscience. For Evans, then, when we really understand what Kierkegaard is saying, the tension I have described between conscience and happiness dissolves.

It is well and good to say that human happiness is to be found in fulfilling the demands of conscience, but we must account for how we are to fulfil the demands in the first place. If what is required of us is inhuman and the consequence of failure is guilt, so long as we are human, the demands of conscience remain a very real threat to our happiness. Kierkegaard himself speaks repeatedly about the importance of the possibility of offence as a safe-guard to the essentially Christian (PC: p140). Without offense, Christianity becomes direct communication and cannot bring about genuine transformation in the

individual. Tension is an important tool for Kierkegaard. The clash between the good and happiness that recurs throughout his writings is not something we ought to try to eliminate, but instead a tension in ourselves that can transform us. If we do not face the tension head on, we are at risk of becoming abstract and forgetting what it is like to have a conscience in actuality, as a human being.

The closer one holds oneself to the commandment to love the neighbour, the more pronounced one's failure will become. If loving people preferentially is accompanied by guilt, one might begin to start distancing oneself from all people in order to stop this guilt and to stop loving preferentially. This, of course, would also preclude loving the neighbour, since loving the neighbour can only happen through loving the people we see. A person like this gives in to guilt and turns away from the commandment in offence. In doing so, they reject the intuitive pull towards loving the neighbour. The guilty person might think it better to love no-one, to distance themselves from everyone and to die to the world as a way to avoid preferential love and guilt. Of course, they'd be further away in doing this from fulfilling the commandment than the sinner who loves their husband above all else. To make matters worse, it would seem as though *WL* is designed to specifically reinforce this tension. Indirect communication is used as a method in Kierkegaard for bringing forth signs of contradiction. Has Kierkegaard therefore shot himself in the foot here, by producing a work that makes love a near impossibility and attaching a weighty guilt to the reader's inevitable failure?

The possibility of distancing oneself from others and turning inwards in the negative way described here is considered in Kierkegaard's writings both by Haufniensis in *CA* and Anti-Climacus in *SUD*. In both texts, this is the state described as "inclosing reserve"

(SUD: p63; CA: p123) and is related always to the demonic. The demonic, in Kierkegaard's authorship, refers to anxiety about the good:

> "The bondage of sin is not the demonic… The individual is in sin, and his anxiety is about the evil. Viewed from a higher standpoint, this formulation is in the good, and for this reason it is an anxiety about the evil. The other formulation is the demonic. The individual is in the evil and is in anxiety about the good." (CA: p119)

Here we see a clear distinction made between the sinner and the demonic. In the case of sin, the individual, on some level, wills the good. Yet such a person is made a sinner by the fact that they are double-minded. For whatever reason, they do not will the good with purity of heart but are disrupted by a divided will. Such a person does, however, have a conscience and as such they experience anxiety about evil (what form this anxiety takes will of course depend on the degree of consciousness they have gained). They want to be a good person, but are aware, on some level, that they are able to act in ways which separate them from the good. We saw how this relationship plays out when we considered original sin in chapter one.

The demonic, on the other hand, is different. Where the sinner essentially wills the good, but is thrown off course by their divided will, the demonic tries to flee from the good. Anxiety in the demonic, then, is not for evil, but for the good. The demonic knows that they are a sinner, but rather than fearing being this, they close themselves up with it and try to shut themselves off from the good so that they do not have to experience the pain of this fact. One might think, for example, of Lester Nygaard in the television show *Fargo* (2014), with his injured hand. The injury was sustained during a murder and as such represents to Lester his own evil. Rather than seeking out healing- going to a doctor and finding treatment, Lester rather prefers to continually run away, so that he does not have to confront the pain of admitting what has happened. As a result, he becomes increasingly

unwell and takes further drastic measures to try to remove all possibility of having to confront his wrongdoing. We might think of the demonic in a similar light. They know on some level that they possess some kind of evil, but rather than seeking the good, an action that would involve pain (not only the pain of having disinfectant rubbed in a wound, but also having it disclosed to others/God/themselves what they have done), they try to hold off the good for as long as possible. Their anxiety becomes not about wrongdoing, but about being found out and about being healed. In particularly bad cases, such a person might even seek out further wrongdoing and in defiance shun the good. As Haufniensis states, however, the demonic can never cut itself off from the good altogether (CA: p123). There remains a relation through conscience and as such suffering always remains.

Inclosing reserve as spoken of in both *CA* and *SUD* is the result of the demonic because the demonic requires a kind of shutting oneself off from the good. In fact, Haufniensis speaks of the demonic and inclosing reserve as one and the same thing: "The demonic is inclosing reserve, the demonic is anxiety about the good." (CA: p126). Anxiety about the good leads the demonic person to shut themselves off from the world, cutting off other people and any avenues that might force them to confront the good. Disclosure, according to Haufniensis, is the first step towards salvation (CA: p127) and so the form the demonic takes is as closing off.

When we spoke previously about the possibility of the person shutting themselves off from others as a result of overwhelming guilt, we can understand this as a kind of inclosing reserve. A person recognises increasingly that they have wrong in them, but the healing they are offered requires even greater pain. If one recognises that one does not love selflessly and then reads *WL* hoping to discover how to fix this, one might be quite horrified

to find that the task seems completely impossible and extremely painful. Not only this, but the more a person like this reflects on the requirement, the more guilt they feel- the further away they seem to be from the ideal. As such, the demonic might seem preferable to the cure. By forgetting the commandment, shutting the neighbour off and embracing selfishness, might one not greatly lessen the pain of guilt? Of course, the anxiety of conscience would still cry out, but when guilt becomes overwhelming, anxiety may still seem preferable. The ethical and the aesthetic stages of life demonstrate ways in which anxiety might be softened with time and a certain degree of ingenuity. Clearly Kierkegaard didn't think that a person ought to become demonic and clearly *WL* was not written with the intension of driving a person towards the demonic. The question arises here, then, as to how we should understand the alternative. How does the person who recognises the wrong in themselves find the strength to undergo the agonising healing that Christianity offers? This will be the subject of the following chapters.

A Christian Problem?: The Paradox Outside Christianity

As should be clear, the commandment to love the neighbour poses a problem for the Christian. What, however, of the non-Christian? One might argue that it does not obviously seem to be the case that following one's conscience will lead one to the demand that one love all people equally and non-preferentially. Rather, some might argue that the opposite is the case. Think, for example, of a situation in which the lives of two people are threatened. One is a close family member and the other a total stranger. It does not seem intuitively wrong, nor necessarily unjustified that a person in a situation such as this would attend to the difference between the two people in front of them, saving the family

member first. Some might even argue that it would be an offence if one were to rescue the stranger first because this would be a failure to attend to the specificity of human relationships. The same, it might be argued, is the case for love.

Why should I feel an ethical pull towards loving a stranger as much as my closest friends and family? Wouldn't loving this way in fact be an abstract form of love? The non-Christian might find that following their conscience does not bring them in to confrontation with the particular tension found in *WL* because such a tension arises out of a specifically Christian ideal of what love ought to be. Kierkegaard himself states of the commandment to love that "such a thing did not arise in any human being's heart" (*WL*: p24). The commandment to love, for Kierkegaard, is not one that arises naturally for the human being outside of Christianity but is rather a commandment given by God. It thus does not seem to be the case that the non-Christian who dedicates themselves to willing the good would necessarily find themselves at such a commandment.

Why, then, should the non-Christian worry about *WL*? The reason they should worry is that the structure found in *WL* does not belong solely to the paradox of loving the neighbour but can arise from other forms of life that pursue the good too. An uncompromising approach to ethics that piles guilt on the individual can be counter-productive because it can lead to a fleeing from the good. Intense levels of guilt lead to a high risk that one will fall in to a compromising or demonic form of life, characterised by introversion, potential aggression and a failure of love. *WL*, then, serves only as an example of a structure which exists in all forms of life that prioritise the good above all else, even those not belonging to Christianity.

The sign of contradiction is not exclusive to Christianity. We can think of secular examples of the same structure. In the sphere of liberal politics, for example, we might worry about something quite similar to the unconditionality problem- We might think it important that we treat everyone equally and fairly and yet at the same time recognise that it is important that we take in to account the real difference between people. If we see everyone as exactly the same, then we stop *seeing* people, relating to them only in the abstract and failing to attend to their particular needs. Such a demand creates a tension in the liberal perfectionist- they must find a way to recognise others as equal and yet at the same time not lose track of particularity. *WL* presents us, then, with one particular example of the kind of tension experienced by the person who wills the good. It happens to be a Christian one because Kierkegaard is specifically addressing Christianity, but it is possible for a secular tension to lead us down the same path of guilt as a Christian one. What is important is that such a tension presents the clash between two demands on the self.

Conclusion

In the previous chapters we saw how guilt becomes central to the kind of life that attempts to live in accordance with conscience. We finish this chapter, however, with a problem of several parts when it comes to guilt. Firstly, we find that guilt and suffering, both of which play central roles in Kierkegaard's writing, would seem to preclude loving others. One solution to this was to note that guilt and suffering play an instrumental role in bringing about another process- dying to the world. But we find that with dying to the world, the problem became even deeper. If we die to the world, it is no longer clear in what sense we can love the particularity of the people that we see. It was recognised at this point that

there is what seems to be an inconsistency in *WL* along these lines. It was argued that such a tension is intentional and very much in keeping with how Kierkegaard recognises the essentially Christian- as paradox. Noting that the paradox is intentional does not allow us to get out of the problem of guilt and loving the neighbour however, since it is still clear in Kierkegaard that we are expected to love. What we find is that such a task is made impossible, or at least impossible to the understanding. Guilt becomes infinite for the individual that tries to take up this task, for such an individual is bound to constantly fail. This constant failure is accompanied by further guilt which, as seen in Klein, might make the task of loving the people we see even more difficult. It would seem, then, that Kierkegaard's insistence on human weakness might make the already difficult task of loving the neighbour even more difficult by adding guilt to the equation. Two options then present themselves- either to turn away from the task in offence and to take up the stance of the demonic, trying to escape guilt that way, or to turn to faith. The tension found in *WL* is an example of a sign of contradiction, but there may well be other situations in which the individual with a conscience is pulled between the temporal and the eternal in a way that forces them to make a "decision". We will consider faith, as well as what Kierkegaard means by "the decision" in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Sign of Contradiction and the Decision

In chapter three, we looked at the paradox present in WL. The Commandment to love the neighbour demands that we love all people equally. Throughout the book, Kierkegaard stresses that achieving this requires non-preference and thus self-denial. This is because, once selfishness creeps in to love, a person is likely to avoid directing love towards those they do not find immediately desirable in favour of those they do. Genuinely loving the neighbour, then, requires that the individual learns to eliminate preference in their loving. On the other hand, we saw that Kierkegaard wants to allow for special relationships and for a love that takes in to account the particularities of the people we love. Preference is so built in to the human notion of love that it is an offence to the understanding, he argues, to consider love as non-preferential.

The paradox arises from the apparent incompatibility between a human notion of love which requires preference and a Christian notion of love that eliminates it. As we saw, a paradox such as this creates a tension in the reader by pulling them in two directions at the same time. By considering the work of Klein on guilt, we saw also how excessive guilt might become an obstacle to genuinely loving other people. It was argued that the guilt of failing to love non-preferentially might lead a person to fail to love altogether. If they do not allow themselves to love in a human way and yet cannot love in a Christian way, they may well cease to love.

It was also argued in the previous chapter that WL intentionally brings out this tension in the reader. According to Climacus in *PC*, a paradox such as the one found in WL is the calling sign of the essentially Christian. In other words, it is a defining characteristic of Christian discourse to present the individual engaging with it with a paradox. When confronted with a paradox such as this, the reader has two routes open to them. On the one

hand, they can turn away from the paradox in offense. This possibility was considered in chapter three as the case of inclosing reserve. This chapter will focus on the other possibility- that of faith. We will consider paradox as belonging to the essentially Christian and look at why it is that faith allows us to carry such a paradox without offence. We will then consider how one gets faith.

The question here will be whether faith is a choice, or whether it is something that happens to the individual. We will draw a parallel between our discussion of sin in CA from chapter one in order to demonstrate how a similar kind of pseudo-choice might be in play in both works. Where anxiety played an important role in bringing forth sin in CA, here guilt will play an important role in bringing forth faith. We will thus begin to see how guilt might be an important step in reaching the kind of faith Kierkegaard envisages. Once we have an account of faith, we will turn our attention to the paradox found in *WL* in order to see how faith can address this particular case. In order to do this, we shall draw particularly on the investigation of the Binding of Isaac story found in *FT*. Finally, we will turn our attention to the way in which faith might eventually overcome the infinite weight of guilt placed on the person who faces the paradox.

In the previous chapter, it was argued that we ought to read *WL* as containing a paradox and therefore understand love as a sign of contradiction. It was also seen that, for Kierkegaard, the sign of contradiction is the calling card of the essentially Christian. We will now consider in more detail in what sense the paradox can be understood as a paradox and how this relates to a sign of contradiction.

Paradox, contradiction and offence

The first thing we might think when we see the use of "contradiction" in Kierkegaard's writing is that he must be referring to a logical contradiction. For example, we might say that the contradiction in love is that love seems to demand of us that we maintain an appreciation for the particularities of the other whilst at the same time becoming blind to them. On deeper inspection, however, we begin to see that what is presented here is not necessarily a logical contradiction. Larsen draws our attention to what he calls "Luther's paradox" to demonstrate this:

> "A Christian man is completely free and also completely bound. This seems to assert a contradiction, yet once Luther's meaning is grasped, the contradiction collapses- the Christian is free from ethical rules but bound to every man in love. It is this …sense of paradox that seems to me to be Kierkegaard's meaning. We have seen that this paradox looks like a contradiction although it really is not" (Larsen 1962: pp40-41).

Larsen's point here seems to be that, from the perspective of a person in ignorance, Luther's paradox appears as a straightforward logical contradiction. When, however, a person deepens their understanding of Christianity, they can begin to recognise that there is another sense in which we are to understand what it means to be free and to be bound and with this shift in understanding, the contradiction is no longer. A contradiction, argues Larsen, requires that terms be clear and fixed to begin with. When there is ambiguity in language in the way that there seems to be in the Luther paradox, there is room for the possibility that what appears to be a contradiction is not actually that when one becomes clear about what is being said. The important point, however, is that the paradox first *appears* as a contradiction. It is in this sense, then, that we can understand Kierkegaard's

"sign of contradiction". A paradox, for example, that of loving the neighbour, appears like a contradiction to a person who is in ignorance.

One might correctly point out that we have separated paradox from contradiction. This, one might argue, makes no sense. It would seem to be the case that, once the contradiction is no longer experienced as a contradiction, it is also no longer a paradox. This is a position I will push against. Faith, it will be argued, opens up the space for a paradox that is not of a logical form. It is rather experiential- something which pulls a person in two directions at once. This is what I mean by "tension"- precisely this feeling of being pulled between two seemingly opposite ends of the will. It is important that this kind of paradox is not a logical contradiction because a logical contradiction would lead to a dead end. If, for example, there were a logical contradiction implied in the commandment to love the neighbour, there would be no space for one to hope to fulfil this demand. The shift from *thinking* about the commandment, where the commandment in thought seems to contain a contradiction, to trying to fulfil the commandment and feeling the tension that results is thus a significant one. This is a shift that, as we will see, takes place through faith.

In agreement with Larsen, Evans argues that Kierkegaard cannot mean contradiction in a logical sense when he uses the term (Evans 2008: p1028). He adds, however, that the kind of failing that keeps us in ignorance when it comes to the paradox is human sin:

> "There are two dimensions of human sin that are its dominant characteristics: pride and selfishness. These are precisely the characteristics that make it difficult for sinful human beings to believe in God's incarnation, for such faith requires the acceptance of what I cannot myself understand, and thus requires humility, the antidote to pride. It also requires belief in the possibility of self-giving love that I myself am not capable of, and thus in my selfishness I find the incarnation unfathomable." (Evans 2008: pp1033-4)

In other words, from the perspective of sin, the kind of perfections possessed by Christ appear as impossibilities because we cannot imagine ourselves or anyone we know possessing these characteristics. The human being, therefore, cannot square up the Godly characteristics of Christ with the fact that he is human because they are unlike anything we have encountered in a human being before. On top of this, however, human pride makes it difficult to accept that there could be a possibility which stands outside of our own experience and understanding. From our experience, a man cannot love completely selflessly and thus we refuse to accept that Christ is anything other than a contradiction. Love requires selfishness, but Christ loves selflessly and therefore paradoxically. The same, of course, is the case for the paradox of loving the neighbour. As human beings, the possibility of loving all neighbours selflessly does not match how we understand love. We cannot imagine how to appreciate the particularities of the neighbour without preference and thus we experience the commandment as a contradiction.

In relation to any sign of contradiction, there is the possibility of offense- of turning away from the contradiction. An important part of what makes Christianity genuinely Christian is the possibility of offense:

> "But take away the possibility of offense, as has been done in Christendom, and all Christianity becomes direct communication, and then Christianity is abolished, has become something easy, a superficial something that neither wounds nor heals deeply enough; it has become the false invention of purely human compassion that forgets the infinite qualitative difference between God and man." (PC: p140)

If Christianity were to become a direct communication, a simple doctrine or thesis defended by arguments, it would lose its power to reach the individual on a deeper level. As we saw with the case of love, a paradox is able to work on a person by forcing them to recognise a tension within themselves and by leaving it up to them to seek to overcome this tension.

The deep wounding and healing of Christianity comes precisely from this kind of inwardness. A Christianity that was *only* directly communicated would forget the infinite qualitative difference between God and man not only because the God-man is himself a paradox, but also because there is a sense in which all the paradoxes that Kierkegaard deals with amount to a clash between the temporal and the eternal, the purely human and the Godly[33]. This is obviously the case with the figure of Christ, a being who was at once God and man, but is also the case with love. We saw that the paradox in love was between a Christian form of love, one that is unconditionally for all human beings and requires self-denial, and a human form of love which seems to involve both conditionality and attachment. The role of the Christian teaching for Kierkegaard, then, is to remind the reader of the fundamental tension that exists within them.

As will be remembered from chapter one, in SUD, Anti-Climacus describes the self as being divided into a series of dualities: Infinite and the finite, temporal and the eternal, freedom and necessity. What was described as "spirit" was the relation between each of these dualities relating to itself. This, then, is how the essentially Christian forces the person who comes in contact with it to be constituted as spirit. It pulls into tension two parts of the self such that the relation comes to light. When the relation comes to light, the individual (the self), now relates to themselves as a relation between two parts. By trying to become such that they can love the neighbour, the reader of WL, for example, is pulled towards human love on the one hand and Christian love on the other by the paradox. As this takes place, they become aware of the relation between the temporal (human love) and the

[33] That Christian teachings must involve indirect communication to reach an individual on a deeper level does not, of course, preclude that direct communication is also part of Christianity. The gospels, one might argue, are examples of direct communication.

eternal (Christian love) within themselves and are thereby relating to this relation. This means they have become a self, constituted as spirit. It is now a concern for them in what way they love and conscience has now entered in to love.

When the relation between the two parts of the self comes forth, it is accompanied by anxiety and guilt. This is because through the relation a person becomes aware first of all that they have a choice. They are no longer blissfully unaware of the tension that exists within themselves. Alongside this choice comes the awareness that it is possible for them to act in a way that will cause them to feel the pain of guilt. The commandment to love the neighbour strengthens this awareness, as do all Christian commandments that remind a person of their duty to the eternal. This is because, as we considered in chapter 2, there is a possibility of double-mindedness. The person who wills only for the temporal (which in itself is always divided) or wills for both the temporal and the eternal is double-minded and therefore exists in tension. Pushing on a person that they ought to relate absolutely to the absolute (the eternal) reminds a person that they exist in double-mindedness.

As Kierkegaard states in WL, Christianity wants to transform “all love into a matter of conscience”(WL: p113) because by confronting the lover with the paradox, it forces them to be constituted as spirit and to relate to themselves as a duality in matters of love. It reminds them that they are double-minded. The lover, for example, who loves one individual deeply above all others will face the paradox when they come to recognise that the good demands of them that they love all human beings equally and unconditionally. Such a recognition might cause them great pain and tension because it fails to square up with how they humanly understand love. This, then, is where the double-mindedness

becomes apparent. Such a person recognises what that good demands of them- that they love all people equally and unconditionally, but at the same time they struggle to let go of the preferentiality of their particular love. It is an offence, they might think, to love their enemy to the same degree that they love their beloved. This would be like corrupting and degrading their human love. Thus, two ends of the will become apparent. On the one hand, the desire for preferentiality and the holding of the beloved above all other and on the other the good as recognised through the call of conscience.

Being constituted as spirit and recognising that one is responsible for one's own double-mindedness is no comfortable state to be in. It is therefore unsurprising that offence would always be present as a possible response to the essentially Christian. The individual could simply refuse to take on board the tension, dismiss the paradox, shut off their relation to it and thereby relapse away from being constituted as spirit. They might do this out of pride- a refusal to accept the possibility of something that goes beyond their understanding. As we saw in CA, the state prior to spirit is always accompanied by anxiety and the person who indefinitely attempts to maintain such a state despairs greatly. They do, however, avoid having to recognise that they are double-minded and doing so they hide from themselves their choice in the matter.

Faith as an alternative to offence

The alternative to offence is faith and we shall consider why this is so now. The first thing to note is that faith does not eliminate the possibility of offence. Instead it "takes up" this possibility:

> "So inseparable is the possibility of offense from faith that if the God-man were not the possibility of offense he could not be the object of faith, either. Thus the possibility of offense is taken up into faith, is assimilated by faith, is the negative mark of the God-man" (PC: p143).

In other words, what makes the God-man the possibility of offense is the fact that he is a sign of contradiction. He is both man and God in the same being- a paradox. Because he is a sign of contradiction, he can also be an object of faith. Faith, then, is a response particularly to a sign of contradiction. Like in offense, the person in faith recognises the paradox, but instead of shunning it, they take it up with the recognition that it is beyond their understanding. The offended person refuses to accept something that is beyond their understanding and therefore 'absurd' whereas the person in faith has faith precisely in that which is beyond the understanding.

Faith does not merge the two opposing sides of a paradox together through the understanding. Instead, the person with faith recognises the conflict between the two sides and yet makes a leap nonetheless. In the case of Christ, the leap is into believing. In the case of love, the leap is to venture to love Christianly. What appeared as a contradiction continues to be a paradox to such a person because the understanding is still unable to square the two sides of the contradiction. The shift, however, is that the person with faith no longer seeks to find a resolution to the paradox through the understanding, but instead begins to hope for its resolution. The understanding has been made subordinate to faith.

Why, however, is it important that certain things remain the object of faith? In order to explain this, we will consider the example of the God-man and the tentative analogy Climacus gives us with a case in which a lover decides to test his beloved on whether or not she really believes that he loves her. Instead of just asking her directly, he tests her by shutting off all direct communication. In doing so, he makes it unclear to his

beloved whether or not he is a deceiver or a faithful lover. In offering no assurance, the beloved is left to herself to believe one way or the other. Climacus then tells us:

> "The purpose of the latter method [denying direct communication] is to make the beloved disclose herself in a choice; that is, out of this duplexity she must choose which character she believes is the true one. If she chooses the good character, it is disclosed that she believes him. It is disclosed, since he does not help her at all; on the contrary, by means of the duplexity he has placed her entirely alone without any assistance whatsoever"(PC pp141-2).

Although this is a disturbing analogy, which Climacus ultimately dismisses[34], we can nevertheless begin to understand why it is that faith is important in the Christian context. In a sense, what the paradox does is open up the person confronted with it to their own freedom. This can be understood in terms of them being constituted as spirit and as being presented with a choice. How they choose discloses them. The difference with direct communication is that it remains much more on an intellectual level and thereby can involve a greater degree of coercion. When the lover reassures the beloved that he loves her, he does not provide her with the space to discover for herself whether she really believes him since by using his words, he plays a role in affirming her belief. If Christianity were presented as a philosophical teaching, communicated with the intention to convince, the question would be whether it is in fact convincing:

> "What modern philosophy understands by faith is really what is called having an opinion or what in everyday language some people call 'to believe'. Christianity is made into a teaching; this teaching is then proclaimed to a person, and he believes that it is as this teaching says. Then the next stage is to 'comprehend' this teaching, and this philosophy does. All of this would be entirely proper if Christianity were a teaching, but since it is not, all this is totally wrong" (PC: p141).

If we compare the process described in the passage above to the process described between the two lovers, we can see the different levels on which each case operates. In the

[34] He states: "Christianity has never understood by faith anything like this." (PC p142).

case of the teaching, a person is presented with it and then checks whether it accords with their experience. Once they have discovered that it does accord, they set out to comprehend the teaching. What happens here remains at the level of reflection. On the other hand, when we look at the case of the two lovers, there is something much more emotional taking place. The beloved is faced with the potential loss of their beloved as a figure they can rely on. They cannot simply check with their experience whether or not the beloved loves them, since the lover gives no clues whatsoever as to the fact of the matter. The beloved is thereby thrown back on themselves to move in one way or the other. Either they have faith that they are loved or they do not. No amount of evidence they amass from the behaviour of the lover will be enough to make up their mind for them. If they do have faith in the beloved, the task is not then to comprehend this faith. They know for themselves that their faith is not based on evidence and is not there to be comprehended. In this sense, Christianity is not a teaching.

When Climacus states that Christianity "has never meant by faith anything like this", I think we can understand him here as referring to the human deception that takes place in this act between the two lovers. This is backed by him repeatedly reminding the reader how awful it might feel to do something like this- "He perhaps bitterly comes to regret that he allowed himself to do such a thing- I have nothing to do with that" (PC p142) and then later "No one has the right to make himself into an object of faith for the other person" (PC: p143). What makes Christ different from the case of the two lovers, however, is that when it comes to denying direct communication, there is no other option:

> "he cannot do otherwise and, as qualitatively different from man, must insist upon being the object of faith. If he does not become this, he becomes an idol" (PC: p143).

So whilst the lover wants something from the beloved and sets out to test her, Christ is not testing us by denying direct communication. In Christianity, direct communication is denied because it could not be otherwise. Christ is qualitatively different from man, something which cannot be witnessed in the world. No amount of evidence drawn from the behaviour of Christ or his deeds would be enough to demonstrate that Christ is God. Of course, one may point to miracles and events from Christ's life, but there exists a kind of double-distance from these events. On the one hand, we are not first-hand witnesses to Christ's miracles and so require faith to believe that they happened in the first place. On the other, even if we were contemporaneous to these miracles, it would be a leap to go from witnessing a man do something miraculous to believing that this man is God[35]. Instead, each individual is forced to consider for themselves whether or not they have faith. If this were not so then Christ would become an idol because He would be a direct representation of God.

From our exploration of faith in the case of Christ, we can state more clearly how a paradox operates in Christianity and how faith provides a response to it. Engaging with a paradox brings a person to be constituted as spirit and it leaves the person to respond to it either through faith or offence. It does this not just in terms of the intellect and it does not require that a person search for evidence but leaves them with the question of whether or not to embrace something which escapes the understanding. Again, though, this isn't a question to be answered through the intellect, but rather involves a turning inward. The

[35] Climacus writes "It is easy for the contemporary learner to become a historical eyewitness, but the trouble is that knowing a historical fact… by no means makes the eyewitness a follower" (PF: p59). The difference between the eyewitness and the follower is that the follower relates to the teacher existentially- is absolutely concerned with the teacher because the teacher represents to them their eternal happiness. It does not matter how many facts the eyewitness gathers about the teacher, this will never be enough to constitute an existential relationship.

individual must ask themselves whether they have faith or not. There is therefore a kind of passivity to the person's response to the paradox. Rather than deciding whether to have faith, a person discovers that they do or do not. We will consider some of the difficulties that arise here in terms of agency later.

The question remains as to how faith overcomes the paradox. One answer is simply that it doesn't, instead allowing a person to hold together the uncertainty of the paradox without offense. But if faith goes no further than this, how could it ever overcome double-mindedness? It would seem that in a case where a person is made aware of the tension within themselves between the temporal and the eternal, faith would get the person no further than accepting the tension as a tension. Such a person would remain double-minded. This is something we will explore now by looking at how faith can deal explicitly with the paradox involved in loving the neighbour.

Faith and love

We might remember from chapter two that purity of heart can only be reached through dying to the world, so that one learns to will only one thing- the eternal. Faith, then, as the paradoxical holding together of the temporal and the eternal, is the mechanism that allows the individual to die to the world, whilst still remaining within it. Kierkegaard provides us with one really lucid example of how faith could operate in such a way as to hold the paradox together, whilst still allowing a person to overcome the temporal in favour of the eternal. This example is that of the Binding of Isaac, which is dealt with in FT. Johannes De Silentio describes the story in the following way:

> "He climbed the mountain, and even in the moment when the knife gleamed he had faith- that God would not require Isaac. No doubt he was surprised at the outcome, but through a double-movement he had attained his first condition, and therefore he received Isaac more joyfully than the first time" (*FT*: p36).

It is the double-movement described here that is important when we consider the process of dying to the world. Abraham makes the movement of resignation- he lets go of Isaac, just as we might let go of temporal things in the world. Nevertheless, throughout the process of resignation, Abraham makes a second movement, and this is the movement of faith. By faith in the absurd, Abraham believes that Isaac will be returned to him, not in another life, but in this life. He therefore attains his "first condition", the condition of looking forward to the receiving of Isaac, as he had done prior to Isaac's conception. By faith, he believes that Isaac will be returned to him. Likewise, in the movement of dying to the world, we are not to despise the world, or separate ourselves from it once and for all. What Johannes De Silentio finds particularly impressive about Abraham is that this is precisely what he does not do in relation to Isaac:

> "To be able to lose one's understanding and along with it everything finite, for which it is the stockbroker, and then to win the very same finitude again by virtue of the absurd- this appals me." (*FT:* p36).

What is so appalling about this movement is the mockery of it. A great loss is agony enough, but the absurdity of receiving back again the thing that was lost forever, to which one had closed oneself off in mourning creates an appalling shock. This is made even worse by the fact that the thing lost is received back in a way that confounds understanding. The fluidity by which Abraham makes this movement is what makes him stand out to Johannes De Silentio as the Father of faith:

> "If Abraham, the moment he swung his leg over the ass's back, had said to himself: Now Isaac is lost… then I do not need Abraham… This he did not do, as I can prove by

> his really fervent joy on receiving Isaac and by his needing no preparation and no time to rally to finitude and its joy" (FT: pp36-7).

The amazing thing about Abraham, then, is that he is able to let go of Isaac, but in such a way that Isaac is never fully lost. He does not close himself off to Isaac, but neither does he delude himself. Isaac is lost through the movement of resignation, but at the same time, Abraham does not numb himself to Isaac because he has faith that Isaac will be returned. This means that no transition time is needed when Isaac is returned to him. He can immediately return to the joy of the temporal. What is it, then, that Abraham lets go of when he resigns himself to Isaac? He lets go of his choice in the matter and with it, desire is given a secondary role. Abraham would not choose to lose Isaac, because he desires to have Isaac. Yet to make a temporal thing in the world one's absolute end would be to live in double-mindedness and Abraham has a higher telos in God. Therefore, what Abraham lets go of is not Isaac as such, but rather the having of Isaac as his absolute end in the world. By following God's commandment, he demonstrates purity of heart because he is willing to sacrifice particular temporal ends for the sake of the absolute telos. At the same time, Abraham demonstrates humility because he is willing to believe in a possibility that escapes his understanding. His faith is seen not only through his letting go of worldly things, but also through his letting go of his worldly understanding.

When considering what Kierkegaard means by dying to the world, it is worth bearing in mind the Abraham story as the paradigm of faith. This is because, when we speak of dying to the world, we can understand this as the movement of resignation. But it is not to be forgotten that the second movement of faith is that of receiving back the thing that one has lost through resignation. The temporal is to be let go of, but not in such a way that one numbs oneself to, or closes oneself off from it altogether. One must wean oneself from

it in order to learn to relate to it relatively and to relate absolutely to the eternal. Once the temporal has been released through resignation, one can relate to it differently. Joy can still be found in the temporal, but now it is accompanied by an awareness that it is only through God and in a way that one will never understand that one is graced with the temporal. We could think of this as akin to how, in a relationship, one may have to really understand the possibility of losing the other in order to appreciate their presence. With faith, one goes further than this by actually losing the other, or dying to the other, only to receive them back again. This happens inwardly, through dying to the world, but not through a rejection of the world. One does not have to push away or shut off the other, but goes through the inner movements of losing the other, always with faith that they will be returned. This frees up space for the absolute commitment to be made to God with purity of heart.

Think, for example, of a jealous lover who continually takes measures to ensure that his beloved does not leave him. He makes sure that she is financially and emotionally dependent on him and manipulates her so as to soothe his anxiety that she might go. Such a state is bound to cause him and his beloved great pain, as anxiety is only ever faintly patched over with a semblance of control. What would happen, however, if he were to just let go of his control over her? To him this would seem like losing her forever because in his anxiety he is convinced that he must take measures to ensure she stays. What he needs, in order to let her go, is faith. To his understanding, letting go of her means that she is lost forever. On the other hand, he feels the pangs of conscience (through anxiety), and knows on some level that he must let her go. He exists in a paradox, on the one hand pulled by his human desire to keep the beloved and on the other by his conscience. If he has faith and the bravery needed to let go of his control, he returns to her her freedom and in doing so, she may either stay or leave. With faith, he really believes she will stay, though he doesn't

understand how or why. When (if) she does decide to stay, her presence becomes miraculous. A new gratitude is found, alongside a softening of anxiety. He no longer needs to cling to her, because she stays without him needing to be in control. He lets go of the temporal in favour of the eternal and miraculously finds that he receives the temporal anyway. The difference is that his priorities have shifted and conscience is given a role greater than desire. The process that Abraham has to go through in relation to Isaac is akin to this. Abraham is forced to recognise that Isaac is not *his*, and in being made to recognise the fact that he could lose Isaac, he is able to come to appreciate Isaac's presence.

When taken in conjunction with *WL*, *FT* gives us one way in which we can understand the self-denial involved in loving the neighbour. Krishek highlights this in her reply to Ferreira's article. The problem with Ferreira's account, she argues, is that it fails to recognise the fundamental contradiction that exists between a form of love that includes the particularity of the other, allowing for special relations to particular others and a form of love that is based on self-denial and temporal blindness. Her solution to the problem is to draw on the double-movement of faith found in *FT*. The double-movement of faith is a paradox- that of letting go and getting back. For Krishek, then, faith is "the only religious-existential attitude that allows for the realization of these loves, which are presented as *impossible* loves" (Krishek 2008: p613). Love is presented as paradoxical or impossible in *WL* because it requires simultaneously that one lets go or dies to the particularities of the beloved, but also that one love the people they see for their particularities. Faith allows for both movements to take place simultaneously, that of letting go through resignation and that of getting back or appreciating:

> "On the one hand, I indeed *deny* myself by focusing my entire attention on the neighbour. I thus see him as an equal and discern the infinite value pervading him by

> virtue of his being a human being with a whole world of his own… However, a relationship of love cannot amount to only this (self) emptiness: something further is needed. This is the second movement, the fully concrete return to finitude that makes room for a self who can genuinely *love*, a self who is allowed to feel and be emotionally involved." (Krishek, 2009: p152)

As Krishek explains here, the movement of dying to the particularities of the neighbour involves recognising them as a human being with freedom and value. But as she points out, this is not enough for love because a human being is both temporal and eternal. To get to love, the temporal needs to be reinstated and this is what faith allows us to do. Faith is the movement that allows for the fully concrete return of finitude. In one sense, Abraham dies to Isaac- he lets Isaac go. But in another sense, Isaac is never fully lost. It takes Abraham no transition time to gain Isaac back again, because there is a sense that he never really lost Isaac. What he gained from the experience, however, is a recognition that Isaac is received from God. The same can be said for our relation to the temporality of others. When we blind ourselves to the particularity of others, we don't shut ourselves off from them altogether. Rather, we put ourselves in a position in which we can recognise that we are graced with their particularities, but that our love is not dependent *only* on those particularities. There is something we still love, even when we become blind. We recognise also that the other cannot be the absolute end of our lives without double-mindedness. Only the good can be willed absolutely.

Faith and guilt

In addition to solving some of the problems that arise in *WL*, faith gives us a way out of the pain of moral guilt. With the movement of dying to the world, the temporal is released altogether, in such a way that desire and other kinds of object-relations are

released. When we think, then, about the destructive cycle Klein describes between guilt and aggression (discussed in chapter three), we can see how dying to the world could cut this off. If we no longer relate so tightly to the object of our guilt, we no longer fear its retaliation upon us and the narcissistic cycle is broken through withdrawal. But with faith, withdrawal is not absolute and need not lead to stunted object relation in the way that Klein suggests, because there is the second movement of returning to the object. With the return to the object, it can be experienced as new, its presence only being possible through the absurd. There is a sense, then, in which dying to the object reinstates its otherness thereby breaking through narcissism.

If we go back to our example of the jealous lover we can see how faith could break the cycle of narcissistic guilt. The jealous lover feels the pangs of conscience and therefore guilt about his manipulation of the beloved. But he experiences these as coming from the beloved herself because they are projected out to protect the ego. The beloved thereby becomes a persecutor- someone who continually puts before him his own guilt. Produced from this is resentment for the beloved, followed by more guilt over the resentment and an increasing need to control the situation. We thus see the cycle of guilt set up and such a cycle has the possibility to lead increasing levels of domestic or emotional violence. When the jealous lover summons the faith needed and lets go of his control altogether, however, the guilt cycle is softened or even killed. This happens because he returns to the beloved her freedom and ceases to project on to her the aggressive guilt he feels assaulting him. It does not mean, however, that he becomes detached from her altogether. He releases her in a way which, to his understanding, means that she will be lost forever, but he has faith that she will not leave and so remains related to her as an object of love.

What would it mean for Kierkegaard's notion of faith, however, if the beloved were to leave? One might argue that faith seems to rely in the examples we have given on a naïve assumption about what the other might do. Isn't it just unrealistic for the abusive partner to believe that his beloved will stay once he releases his control? An objection such as this allows us to clarify a little better what exactly faith involves. It is important for faith, if it actually is to be faith, that the one with faith is wholeheartedly prepared to lose the beloved. If they make the movement of faith only because they want the beloved returned to them, then they are not making the movement of faith. The movement requires an actual letting go of the beloved, in such a way that it would not come as a shock If the beloved were to leave. This is why the second movement of faith is miraculous- it takes place without the understanding predicting it. We can already see the way in which faith resembles a leap in to the unknown. The lover who makes the leap in to faith does not understand what will happen as a result.

Faith, then, is quite a powerful inner movement. It is the movement that allows for a person to reach purity of heart, but in such a way that they remain within the temporal. The question arises here, however, as to how we are supposed to get faith. From the examples we have looked at so far- that of Abraham and Isaac and that of the jealous lover- it is clear that having faith is not easy. In both the examples we have considered, it involves recognising that one's actions will lead to the loss of the other and yet acting nonetheless with the hope that they will not. How does one bring about a paradoxical hope such as this? We will now go on to consider whether it is a choice or whether it is something we are graced with. When discussing how we are to approach a paradox without offence, Climacus states:

> "It does not take place, as in direct communication, with CAxing and threatening and admonishing... No, a very special kind of reception is required- that of faith. And faith itself is a dialectical qualification. Faith is a choice, certainly not direct reception- and the recipient is the one who is disclosed, whether he will believe or be offended." (PC: pp140-1)

From this passage it would seem clear that faith is a choice. It's not something we are pushed or manipulated in to, nor something we are persuaded of. Faith is not direct reception because it is not passive. There is a point at which we can either embrace it or resist it. When we think back to the account of faith given earlier we can recognise how and why this plays out. The individual is presented with a new possibility which opens up to them, but which they are not yet in a position to understand. This possibility presents itself in a way that makes the individual aware of their own freedom and as such, Kierkegaard describes it as a choice. It is not a choice in the same way that we might choose between two different propositions (For example "There is an eternal happiness" or "There is not an eternal happiness"). Instead, it feels as though one can continue with a process that has already started, or one can resist said process. It is important that a person feels presented with a choice in this way because this is what allows for them to be free in choosing. In the choice, they are constituted as spirit and the way in which they choose discloses the individual to themselves.

We might nevertheless question at this point how much of a simple choice this really is in practice. After all, rarely is there a situation in which a person feels explicitly that they are choosing between two options in this way. This is made worse in this particular situation by the fact that there is no direct communication. The person choosing does not fully understand what they are choosing because the understanding is limited when it comes to the paradox. Often when we are presented with a paradox, we just find we are

offended by it or not. It seems, then, that there are determining factors that help to push us in one direction or the other. Elsewhere in PC, Climacus states:

> "But if the essentially Christian is something so terrifying and appalling, how in the world can anyone think of accepting Christianity?" Very simply and, if you wish that also, very Lutheranly: only the consciousness of sin can force one, if I dare to put it that way (from the other side grace is the force), into this horror" (PC: p67).

When discussing becoming a Christian, the language has changed here from active to passive. Here, instead of there being a choice, it is the consciousness of sin that *forces* one into accepting Christianity. One might argue here that accepting Christianity is different from having faith, but if we think about what it means to accept Christianity we will recognise that this is not so. Accepting Christianity involves accepting the paradox of the God-man without offence, an act that clearly requires faith. So is it, after all, the consciousness of sin that forces one to have faith?

Faith, sin consciousness and choice

The reasons why Christianity is so terrifying and appalling as Climacus states it is here are numerous. Firstly, Christianity is terrifying because it requires the bringing of conscience into everything one does. With this comes the recognition of sin and double-mindedness, causing great pain. But what makes this worse is that the prescription Christianity gives to the problem of double-mindedness is dying to the world. Letting go of the temporal altogether is extremely difficult and to most, an appalling prospect. Why, then, would one become a Christian? As Climacus states here, the consciousness of sin forces one to do it. The pain of being double-minded and the anxiety of an unchecked conscience press upon a person until they recognise that they no longer have another option open to them.

In a sense, then, the pain of not being a Christian becomes worse than the pain of being one and it is at this point that the shift takes place.

Now, however, it would seem as though there is no choice at all. We have a kind of quantitative scale of pain and when one side of the scale gets heavier than the other, a shift takes place. This process is indeed part of the dialectic of faith. It is true that the individual who moves towards faith experiences the pangs of conscience, feels the guilt and double-mindedness and begins the process of dying to the world. If, however, the process can be quantified in terms of degrees of suffering and the movement into faith can be described as a result of force, in what sense can we realistically say that one is choosing?

One way to think of this is as akin to how we thought of the first sin as resulting from anxiety in chapter one. According to Haufniensis, there is an anxiety in innocence- a recognition of the unknown and a misfiring of the relation of the self to itself. This anxiety builds up in innocence and then the person is presented with a choice. But importantly, this is a choice that is not fully understood. The story of Adam and Eve was used to demonstrate this- Adam recognises the unknown before him and has a commandment not to eat the apple, but he does not really understand what it would mean to do so, as he does not yet understand good and evil. He makes a choice to eat the apple, motivated by a kind of psychic pressure- the pressure of anxiety. Nevertheless, we still say that he makes a choice, just one that is motivated by pressure. It is important in this context that we think of Adam's actions as a choice because this is the only way in which we can say that Adam is responsible for his sin.

When it comes to the choice to accept faith, I think we can say something similar to what we said about anxiety and sin. There is a psychic tension that builds up in a person-

the tension of sin-consciousness and guilt. The person is then confronted with a choice- make the leap into faith and dying to the world or not. Importantly, however, such a person does not truly understand the choice they are making. The paradox of dying to the world and receiving it back is an offence to the understanding and the person confronted with the choice does not understand how to bring together the two sides of the paradox. They are therefore presented with a choice between offence and something else. It's not yet clear what this something is and so what they take is a leap in to the unknown. This is the movement that many would call a leap of faith.

The leap is made from choice, motivated[36] by the pressure of sin consciousness. Even though there is pressure, there is a moment in a person undergoing the choice's experience where they feel they must make a decision. They can go on in the way they have been, sinking back into the monotonous anxiety of double-mindedness and potentially inclosing reserve, or they can try something new. We might say that such a person's actions were determined by the psychic pressure they are undergoing, but it is enough to understand what Kierkegaard means by choice here to say that such a person *feels* they are making a decision. Kierkegaard is not giving a metaphysical account of whether or not a person actually has a choice in reaching faith. Instead, he is giving a psychological account of what it is like to be in the position of one who needs or has faith. As such, the question of whether or not a person really does have a choice falls into the background and what becomes important is the fact that an individual, although motivated, feels they must decide. What Climacus describes as grace in the passage above is the opening up of this new possibility- that there is another way to live, and as he suggests, this arises as a result of sin

[36] As the notion of motivation plays an important role in the account I give here, I will explain in more detail what I mean by motivation a little later.

consciousness. This is because, with recollection of sin comes a recollection of conscience and although they may not understand how to live in the light of conscience with purity of heart, a person might nevertheless make the decision to try with faith.

It is important, when giving an account of the movement of faith, that we do not remove either the active nor the passive part of it. Faith needs to be an active movement, because it needs to be a choice in which the individual is disclosed to themselves. On the other hand, faith needs to be passive because of the great level of pain and suffering involved in Christianity. This is because the movement into Christianity is a paradoxical movement. The solution it gives to worldly issues appears on first reflection as a counter-productive one- namely that of dying to the world. If what we desire is worldly satisfaction and our suffering comes from the failure of our experience to meet this desire, it would seem strange to many that the solution to this should be resignation rather than further striving. What it more, Christianity demands a high level of suffering and guilt, which one ought not to pick up lightly. As Kierkegaard says, offence acts as a kind of safe-guard for Christianity. It is only those that have need enough for Christianity that are able to overcome offence and only those who have experienced the pressure of guilt consciousness are ready for the movement to faith.

These are the passive elements of the movement of faith- the build-up of guilt-consciousness and the intensification of suffering. The possibility of making the movement into faith shows up once these elements have matured. I suggest, then, that instead of describing the movement of faith and either active or passive, chosen or not, we opt for a middle way between the two. Such a middle way has been considered by Han-Pile in relation to Nietzsche's notion of amor fati.

Han-Pile describes this middle voice as “medio-passivity”, drawing on the grammatical middle-voice found in the ancient-Greek language (Han-Pile, B. 2011: p233). There are many day to day examples we could draw on that illustrate what kinds of actions we might describe as medio-passive ones. One might think, for example, of love. On the one hand, we say that love is passive. We *fall* in love with someone and we say that this is not of our choosing. On the other hand, we can certainly put ourselves in a situation in which falling in love is more likely to happen. We can opt to spend more time with a person, concentrate on seeing their positive traits and decide to try to fall in love with them. Although our actions alone will never be enough for us to fall in love, we might say it opens up the space in which falling in love might happen. In other words, we comport ourselves in the right way for love to fall upon us.

Kierkegaardian faith is a candidate for a medio-passive movement. On the one hand, it is active, involving a moment of decision in which the individual “chooses” to make the jump into it. On the other hand, it is passive, involving a great deal of psychic pressure. The person experiencing faith participates in their own faith insofar as they make a kind of choice, but this is a choice they are not entirely in control of. In comparison to the love example above, however, in faith, the active and passive parts are reversed. In the love case, the chosen part of the movement was the context-giving part. The person who wills to fall in love actively places themselves in a context in which love might passively happen. In faith, we have the opposite situation. The person is passively, through guilt and anxiety, put in a situation in which the possibility of the active choice opens up to them. In fact, the choice appears as a kind of affirmation of a process that has already begun to manifest beyond their control. The process of dying to the world, of confronting conscience and of experiencing the guilt that results from it already presses a person towards faith. It is

nevertheless right to use the language of choice here because an individual could (and with good reason) resist the process that has begun by turning away in offence. Faith, then, is neither caused, nor is it something we rationally choose. Instead, I will argue, we ought to see faith as "motivated" in the sense described by Wrathall:

> "A motive… does not blindly and mechanistically produce the motivated because it only gives rise to it in virtue of its significance. The motive often only tacitly guides or gives rise to the motivated… however, so that it functions as an 'operative reason'- a prepredicative basis according to which phenomena are organized and made sense of- but not a justification. Thus, the motive also does not provide the sort of inferential or justificatory connection that a reason gives to a thought… we can say that the fundamental workings of motivations are found in the way that our environment and body work together to dispose us to particular ways of acting and experiencing" (Wrathall, M. 2009: pp 121- 122).

A motive, for Wrathall, is different from a cause because it does not automatically produce the motivated. A particular event might follow motivation, but it does not necessarily arise and it only arises in virtue of the motive's significance. We use the word "motive" often in the context of criminal justice. There are good reasons for this because when we speak of a criminal being motivated towards a particular action, we neither want to take away their responsibility altogether by stating that their actions were caused, nor do we want to assign too high a level of rationality on to them by stating that they had reasons for their action (or that their actions were rational).

Think, for example, of a serial killer, motivated by their desire for domination. Perhaps as a child they were made repeatedly to feel powerless and now whenever that feeling arises again, they use manipulation and violence as mechanisms to cope. We don't want to say of such a criminal that their actions are caused by their past because we (and perhaps they) have a strong intuition that they could do otherwise. On the other hand, even though we might recognise that there is a kind of rationality to their actions (killing reduces

the feelings of powerlessness), it seems wrong to understand the moment of action as a purely rational, chosen one. Rather, we recognise that the killer is to some extent pulled towards their action by their history.

If, however, we speak of the action in purely causal language, it loses its significance. Not only does describing the action as caused remove responsibility from the killer, it also renders the situation as amoral. Unlike causal language, then, the language of motivation sustains the existential and moral significance of an action and in doing so preserves responsibility. On the other hand, it does not eliminate the passive element altogether, incorporating the pull involved in motivated actions.

In what sense, then, can we understand Kierkegaardian faith as motivated in the way Wrathall describes? As we saw, there is a psychic pressure behind faith- that of guilt and anxiety. Climacus describes this pressure in detail in CUP:

> "Then when the eternal happiness, because it is the absolute telos, has become for him absolutely the only comfort, and when in existential immersion the relation to it is reduced to its minimum, since the guilt-consciousness is the repelling relation and continually wants to take it away from him, and yet this minimum and this possibility are absolutely more to him than everything else- then is the appropriate time to begin the dialectical. It will, when he is in this state, give rise to a pathos that is even higher." (CUP: pp559-560)

In other words, it is in the individual with a conscience, who makes the good the aim of their life, but in guilt recognises their separation from it that the move to faith becomes needed. As Climacus states here, guilt-consciousness is the repelling relation and this is what is so difficult about conscience. The more one wills eternal happiness and a relation to the absolute good, the greater is one's awareness that one's own double-mindedness is what separates one from achieving it. As the relation to the absolute telos increases, guilt

consciousness increases and so it seems that one grows further and further from eternal happiness. It is at this point that the pull towards faith arises.

Faith, then, is motivated by this pressure. It would be incorrect, however, to say that the pressure causes faith because faith must arise out of the significance of a person's existential relation to the absolute telos. Meaning and significance are important here. If we were to confuse the spheres and describe faith in terms of causality (For example as a natural and automatic human response to increased levels of guilt), we would lose all of the significance of the movement. It is because the movement is a significant and meaningful one that the individual is disclosed to themselves. On the other hand, it'd be wrong to describe the guilt that motivates faith as a reason for faith because the person who makes the movement to faith is not aware that faith is a solution to the problem of guilt. As we saw previously, faith is an unknown, into which we must leap. As such, it isn't well characterised as a rational movement. Furthermore, Kierkegaard is clear throughout his writings that Christianity should not become a doctrine. If our faith is to be based on reasons, it would not be faith. Faith involves an acceptance of the paradoxical and so the kind of motivation that drives it cannot be understood in the language of reasons.

At this point, it should be clearer how we might think of faith as a medio-passive, motivated movement. It is neither a choice, nor caused and yet it is motivated. In relation to medio-passivity in Nietzsche, Han-Pile describes two possible motives that might dispose one towards amor-fati. The first of these is a thought experiment in which the reader is asked to consider whether they would affirm living their life over and over again. This thought experiment, according to Han-Pile, is designed to put Nietzsche's reader in a state of mind in which they can genuinely contemplate what it would mean to have amor-fati.

The second is suffering and the various ways in which the right kind of suffering might dispose one to amor-fati (Han-Pile, B. 2011: p235). There are analogues to both of these motivators when it comes to faith.

On the one hand, we have the sign of contradiction as the thought experiment. One is drawn into a sign of contradiction and asked to come to a decision about how one will respond. Love was an example of such a sign of contradiction, but we might think also of the binding of Isaac story as a way in which to encourage the reader to contemplate their own relationship with faith. One might think of the engagement with the paradox as a kind of test- Is the individual sufficiently motivated and ready to make the movement? If they are sufficiently motivated, this will show up in how they engage with the paradox. Rather than turning away in offence, they will see the possibility of a new way and will thereby be presented with a decision.

Suffering, on the other hand, is one of the key ways in which the individual is motivated towards faith for Kierkegaard. The pain of recognising that one's double-mindedness separates one from eternal happiness is what prompts the need for an alternative way of life. In a sense, what the paradox does is test the individual on whether or not their suffering is sufficiently mature and their relation to the absolute good sufficient to make the movement.

For Wrathall, "The way we are ready for the world and acting in the world readies us to experience particular kinds of things." (Wrathall, M. 2006: p114). In the case of faith, we might say that the processes of dying to the world, experiencing suffering and encountering the paradox are what ready us to experience faith. Faith is medio-passive because, although it is not in our power to bring it about, we participate in it. Before such a

participation is possible, however, one must be correctly disposed to the world such that the possibility of experiencing faith shows up. It is the processes described above that puts the individual in a position in which they might experience faith. These processes on their own, however, are not enough to bring about faith because faith is a meaningful movement that involves the individual's participation. For this reason, it is more correct to speak of these processes as motives than as causes.

Conclusion

We began by seeing how faith overcomes a paradox. It does this, it was said, by holding the two sides of the paradox together beyond the understanding. In other words, the point is not to dissolve the paradox in thought, but to accept that the paradox cannot be understood and yet to believe nonetheless. The God-man example as well as that of love served to demonstrate this. In addition to overcoming a paradox in this way, faith is also the mechanism that allows one to become pure of heart, but in such a way that one remains in the temporal. It does this once again through a release of the understanding and with it a letting go of control. The case of Abraham and Isaac, as well as that of the jealous lover, served to demonstrate this. In both examples, a person is made to recognise that it is not up to them whether or not the object of their love stays or leaves. By putting the good above temporal ends in the world, such people accept that they may have to lose these temporal ends if the good demands it of them. Here faith brings together two sides of another paradox- between the temporal and the eternal. It does this because the temporal is not rejected altogether and yet one's relation to the temporal is entirely shifted.

We saw through Krishek's writing on the subject how this can overcome the tension that exists within WL. By dying to the particularity of the other, we detach ourselves from them in such a way as to be able to see them as an equal human being, no longer just an object of our will. We can then return to the particularities of the other, but now with the background knowledge that this other is a neighbour and that they ought to be loved as such first and foremost. Such a person stays attached to the world in a way where object relations are not withdrawn once and for all, but in a way in which relating to the absolute telos becomes more important than worldly goods.

It was argued that faith can be understood neither as a choice, nor as something totally caused, but rather as something motivated. Faith is medio-passive because it involves some participation from the individual, but it is not totally in the individual's power to bring about faith. A person must be motivated in the right kind of way to experience faith. In other words, they must be disposed to the world is a way that opens up the possibility of experiencing faith. This, it was argued, takes place through dying to the world, guilt, suffering and the paradox. We have seen that faith alleviates much of the pain of a burdened conscience. A person who recognises how far they are from the absolute good might sink down under the weight of their sin because the understanding can see no way for them to reach the good. With faith, however, one can go beyond the understanding and in doing so discover hope. In the next chapter, we will consider what it is like to live with faith and how it might make the heavy burden of the Christian light.

Chapter 5

Kierkegaardian Faith and The Highest Good

In the previous chapter, we explored the phenomenology of the movement into faith, recognising that the movement is a medio-passive and motivated one. The aim of this chapter will be to give an account of what the life of faith is like for Kierkegaard so that we can better see how faith might allow us to overcome the problem of double-mindedness. To do this, we shall examine the account Kierkegaard develops throughout *UDVS* of a form of faith that both empowers and brings joy. At first, faith will be presented as a solution to the Kantian problem-that the good is not always met with happiness in this world. For Kant, this problem shows up as a logical one. If it is the case that one ought to aim for the highest good, it must be possible for one to achieve it. He then turns to practical reason to examine what kinds of things we must assume to be the case for the fulfilment of the highest good to be possible. In previous chapters, we have explored how a similar problem unfolds in Kierkegaard's writing. It was seen that a commitment to the highest good involves a deepening of suffering and guilt. A motivation problem thus arises. The individual must find a way not to lose hope in the face of worldly suffering.

It will be seen in this chapter that Kierkegaard views faith as the way in which one can live a life in which one commits oneself to the good, without sinking down into despair. Having faith allows an individual to focus on the task ahead of them, with hope. It gives them a knowledge that it is wonderful to be a human being and teaches a person to be contented with the present moment. It allows a person to carry suffering lightly and importantly allows them to be reassured that no matter how intense suffering becomes, it will always be outweighed by the eternal happiness promised. With all these goods in hand, the Christian is armed in such a way that they are able to be meek, to carry their own suffering alongside that of others, to stand up to the scorn of the world when necessary and to strive for the good when needed. For Kierkegaard, faith acts as a kind of binding power

that holds the human being together and makes them strong enough to weather all difficulties.

Once we have outlined the great benefits of faith that Kierkegaard sets out in *UDVS*, we will turn our attention to some objections that may be raised against the account given here. At times it seems as though Kierkegaard aims to convince his reader to have faith by stressing the important benefits that having faith has. If this is what Kierkegaard is trying to do, it is problematic for two main reasons. On the one hand, thinking of faith as a solution to a problem (the Kantian problem) renders it instrumental. It becomes a tool that we might use in order to make our lives better. On the other, it seems implied throughout the text that one ought to try to bring faith about. But as saw in the previous chapter, the movement into faith is a medio-passive one and there must be certain conditions in place if we are to move into faith authentically. If we are to try and voluntarily convince ourselves of faith without these conditions, wouldn't this be a form a despair and self-deception?

The chapter will aim to overcome these problems by offering an alternative way to read UDVS. Instead of assuming that Kierkegaard is trying to convince us to have faith, we will assume instead that it is taken as a starting point in the text that the reader already implicitly has faith. The aim of the text, then would be to demonstrate/ remind the reader that faith is already there. It will be demonstrated that reading the text in this way forces us to approach the Kantian problem in a different way. We no longer see a need to build a bridge over the motivational gap because we recognise that such a bridge already exists. The Kantian problem, then, becomes one that we ought to engage with for the sake of our upbuilding- it reminds us what life would be like without faith. Reading *UDVS* in this way provides us with the opportunity to recognise more clearly what a text on faith looks like. It

makes no sense to speak of faith in terms of reasons alone because doing so fails to acknowledge medio-passivity. If we are to understand what Kierkegaard is doing in *UDVS*, rather than reading it as philosophical argumentation (as we would a text by Kant), we are better off thinking about how such a text might position a reader so that a recollection of faith may come about. Even though, then, *UDVS* is not a pseudonymous text, just like *WoL*, we must read it as an example of indirect communication.

Happiness and the good: Kant and Kierkegaard

For Kant, happiness is necessarily a desire for every human being. At the same time, however, for the will to be pure in following the moral law, one's undertaking of moral actions must be motivated only by the law and must not be dictated by a desire for happiness. If the following of the law is motivated in any way by desire for happiness, the individual is not acting in accordance with the moral law. However, as Kant states, because relying on the moral law as the ground for determining our will results in a "thwarting of our inclinations", it produces pain (Kant, I. 1976: p181). It is thus not the case that our desire for happiness sits in parallel with the moral law. The individual who follows the moral law possesses virtue, or deservedness to be happy, but they are likely to be unhappy as a result of the thwarting of inclinations that following the moral law requires. A problematic situation thus arises- that those who deserve happiness are likely to be those who suffer as a result of following the moral law. In response to this, Kant considers the limitations of the absolute good (the object of the moral law) when taken alone. He argues that, for a good to be the highest

> "Happiness is also required… For to be in need of happiness and also worthy of it and yet not to partake of it could not be in accordance with the complete volition of an omnipotent rational being, if we assume such only for the sake of the argument" (Kant, I. 1976: p215).

We might put this in other terms- Following the good and deserving to be happy is good but following the good and actually being happy is even better. Thus, for the good to the be *highest* good, it must include an alignment of the good with happiness. What is more, as Kant states at the end of the passage, it would not be in the complete volition of an omnipotent being (namely God) that those who deserve to be happy do not get to partake in it. But there is a sense in which a human being could not even achieve the good were it not the case that the good aligns with happiness. This is because, even for the human being who is able to subordinate their will to the highest good, there remains an aspect of them that wills happiness, simply as a consequence of the fact that they are a human being. A being, then, who follows the moral law, who deserves happiness and yet does not experience happiness would always remain to some extent divided. This is because, simply by virtue of the fact that they are human, a person will retain a desire for happiness. It is this desire for happiness that sustains double-mindedness and is thereby the basis for sin. Thus, for a person to will the moral law absolutely, without some volition being left behind with happiness, there must be an alignment of the good with happiness. A problem then arises because, as Kant tells us, empirically, the good does not always accord with happiness in this world. He turns to practical reason to find a solution to this problem.

It is here that we might leave Kant behind and return to Kierkegaard. It is clear that Kierkegaard was motivated by very similar problems to Kant. We have seen that, for Kierkegaard, double-mindedness is the greatest obstacle to purity of heart. For the human being who knows what the good is (either through conscience in Kierkegaard case, or the

moral law in Kant's) and who commits to making the good the ultimate end of the will, there remains a bit left behind- the desire for happiness. This is a desire intrinsic to all human beings for both thinkers and it is the reason that the human being is inherently sinful (Fremstedal, 2012: p112). The trouble is for Kierkegaard as for Kant, that the good does not seem to be met in this world with happiness. Kierkegaard pushes this point even further, arguing that following the good is in fact often met with scorn and humiliation in the eyes of the world. The problem then is this- If the individual is not to be double-minded, they must find a way of incorporating the desire for happiness intrinsic to all human beings in to their following of the good.

For Kant, we solve the highest good problem by making several practical deductions. If it is the case that we *ought* to will the highest good, it must be the case that we can will it. This is because, argues Kant, ought implies can; It makes no sense to speak of a moral imperative that we cannot fulfil. Practical reason therefore requires us to deduce that several things must be the case. First of all, it must be possible for us to actually achieve the good. The trouble here is that the law requires "complete fitness" of our intentions with it. Aware of the difficulties involved in aligning one's will with the moral law, Kant states that

> "Complete fitness of the will to the moral law… is a perfection of which no rational being in the world of sense is at any time capable. But since it is required as practically necessary, it can be found only in an endless progress to that complete fitness; on principles of pure practical reason, it is necessary to assume such a practical progress as the real object of our will. This infinite progress is possible, however, only under the presupposition of an infinitely enduring existence and personality of the same rational being; this is called the immortality of the soul. (Kant, I. 1976: p226).

Reaching a point at which one's intentions meet completely the moral law would require, argues Kant, more than one lifetime. Given that this is the case, we must assume that infinite progress is possible, such that requires us more than one lifetime. For this reason,

we must postulate the immortality of the soul. Kant's argument here might seem a bit suspect. Why, for example, couldn't we just deduce that complete fitness to the moral law is impossible? Kant takes himself to already have demonstrated by this point that the moral law is the highest principle.[37] He also takes himself to have successfully demonstrated that ought implies can- that if we are obliged to do something it must be possible for us to actually do it. It therefore follows that we must postulate the truth of whatever propositions necessary for the complete fitness of a human being to the moral law to be possible. The claim that complete fitness of the will to the moral law is not a perfection possessed by any rational being is not just an empirical one. The inclusion of the phrase "at any time" suggests that there is something about the human being as temporal that inherently prohibits complete accordance with the law. I think we can take this to refer to the human being's desire for temporal happiness, which can never be completely eliminated so long as we are alive. The possibility of achieving complete fitness with the moral law, then, rests on the requirement that the human being has a temporality that stretches beyond their life span. This, of course, is the immortality of the soul.

In addition to immortality, which allows us the possibility of actually achieving the good, we must assume that there is some way in which the good is put into correlation with happiness. This must be the case if we are to be able to achieve the *highest* good. As we have seen, it must also be the case if we are to will the good with the entirety of our will anyway, as we must find some way to bring the desire for happiness into our will for the good. For this, argues Kant, we must postulate the existence of God. This is because,

[37] Whether or not the moral law is the highest principle of ethics is not something we will discuss here because, for Kierkegaard, it is conscience rather than rationality that dictates to us what we ought to do.

> "the highest good is possible in the world only on the supposition of a supreme cause of nature which has a causality corresponding to the moral intention." (ibid: p228).

In other words, for it to be the case that the good is matched with happiness, it must also be the case that our moral intentions match the laws of nature. We must assume that nature is governed by a being who harmonizes nature with its will (a will which is purely moral and in line with the moral law). If such a being were to exist, it would indeed be the case that the good would be met with happiness. Again, however, one might begin to think that Kant's argument becomes suspect here. Kant himself claims repeatedly that the good is in fact *not* met with happiness in the world. This is a fact we can observe empirically. Wouldn't Kant, therefore, be contradicting himself by asserting the existence of a God who correlates the good with happiness? This would be akin to saying that the good is not met with happiness and yet that it is. To avoid this kind of contradiction, we need to include the first postulate of practical reason alongside the second. We must assume the immortality of the soul in order to understand how it is possible for God to correlate the good with happiness. The point is not for the belief in God to mask the reality of temporal life, but rather to demonstrate the possibility of a happiness the stretches beyond this life- eternal happiness. Both this and the immortality of the soul, we will see, are major concerns for Kierkegaard.

We have seen in brief, then, how Kant aims to overcome the highest good problem. For him the fact that the moral law is a duty implies that it can be fulfilled. For it to be possible for it to be fulfilled, he argues, the soul must be immortal. What is more, unless the good is reconciled with happiness, a person's will always remains somewhat divided. There must be, therefore, some way in which nature is brought into alignment with the moral law. This is the role of God, who, according to Kant, practical reason dictates the

reality of. There are, of course, many more complications with Kant's position that could be explored, but we will not do so here, in favour of moving on to see how it relates to Kierkegaard's writing.

Kierkegaard's answer to the highest good problem

For Kierkegaard, to have purity of heart is to will only the good in truth. All other ends must become subordinate to the good. The problem of double-mindedness therefore arises- that it does not seem to be possible for a human being to completely subordinate their will to the good in this way. Kierkegaard therefore brings out a similar problem to the one Kant does- namely that happiness must somehow be included into the will for the good in order for the will to not be divided. This is accomplished through faith. We will now turn to the notion of eternal happiness to see how, for Kierkegaard, it acts as a bridge between the will for the good and the will for happiness.

For Kierkegaard, the good is not something we discover through reason and the moral law, but instead something we are brought to by our conscience. It might reasonably be argued that the conscience (possibly unlike the moral law) can pull us towards certain things that we *cannot* do. Due to the fact that conscience is not so closely tied to rationality, it can be argued that "ought implies can" does not apply in the same way here[38]. This may be so, but the important point is that we are left with a motivational gap similar to the Kantian one nonetheless. For Kierkegaard, following the good inevitably leads to guilt and suffering. This is because subordinating one's will to the good requires that one "die to the

[38] Debates surrounding the potential limits of the Kantian "ought implies can" principle are outside the scope of this project. For an account that opens up the space for exceptions to it see Martin's *Ought but Cannot* (Martin, W. 2009).

world". On the other hand, the human being inherently desires happiness in this life. How, then, is the person who follows the good to avoid being double-minded? In *UDVS*, Kierkegaard specifically demonstrates how faith in eternal happiness and faith that God is love provide a person with the strength requires to will the good. He quotes Paul:

> "hardship **procures** an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure. But if *hardship* at every moment, that is, also when the temporal suffering presses down the most, *precures a weight of glory such as that, then the eternal happiness certainly does have an overweight*." (UDVS: pp311-2)

As we can see, Kierkegaard uses the language of weights, with eternal happiness having a weight over suffering. If, then, a person believes that the hardship and suffering one undergoes during this life procures an eternal weight of glory, then hardship is overweighed by the promise of eternal happiness. This is so even when hardships are at their worst because one is able to remember that no matter how difficult things can get in the world, the eternal happiness promised is so great that the suffering amounts to little in comparison. In fact, because eternal happiness is eternal, it is incomparable to any earthly happiness or earthly suffering (UDVS: pp318-9). This means that eternal happiness will always outweigh any amount of earthly suffering or joy. We can think of this as akin to comparing any number with infinity. No matter how large a number we pick, infinity will always be infinitely larger than that number. The same goes for suffering. No matter how large the joy we give up for the sake of the good is, we can be sure that the eternal happiness we procure is infinitely more. Belief in eternal happiness, then, reconciles the good with happiness by promising a form of happiness that correlates with the good and yet outweighs any potential suffering that might arise from willing the good.

Not only is it the case that suffering is outweighed by the promise of eternal happiness for those who believe, but it is also the case that suffering is made light for the

Christian. In UDVS, Kierkegaard gives us an analogy to demonstrate how a heavy burden might become light:

> "When in distress at sea the lover is just about to sink under the weight of his beloved, whom he wishes to rescue, the burden is most certainly heavy, and yet – yes, ask him about it- and yet so indescribably light…How does this change take place? I wonder if it is not because a thought, an idea, intervenes. The burden is heavy, he says, and he halts, but then a thought, an idea intervenes, and he says, "No, oh no, it is actually light" (UDVS: p234)

At first, the weight of the beloved seems unbearable. A person in a situation like this might begin to doubt that they have the strength to continually hold the beloved and as this negativity and doubt begins to gather in their mind, they start to despair. Then they do indeed begin to sink under the weight. In the case Kierkegaard describes, however, a thought intervenes which makes the burden become light. In this case, the thought is the idea of love, an idea which provides the lover with extra strength. It is not just extra strength that the loved finds, however, but alongside it hope. What seemed impossible suddenly becomes possible because they need it to be- the lover sees a way through and so the despair is lifted and the burden becomes light.

The focus of the lover shifted from the weight of a despairing understanding that cannot think a way through, towards the idea of love. In what way, however, does this work in the case of the heavy guilt and suffering that is involved in relating to the highest good? For Kierkegaard, a heavy burden is made light with the recognition that that burden is beneficial (UDVS pp234-5). In other words, the heavy burden of guilt and suffering on the shoulders of the Christian is made light by the thought that both of these things are beneficial. We can think here back to CUP, in which we saw that guilt and suffering are the signs that one is relating to the highest good. For the individual who keeps the goal of purity

of heart in mind, has faith in the possibility of this and knows that guilt and suffering are steps on the path to this goal, these steps would become easy and light.

Rare, however, is it the case that a person has all of these factors in place. Instead, for most guilt and suffering weigh heavily and the goal of purity of heart seems far out of sight. This is why faith is very important. The individual must believe that the suffering is beneficial, even when they cannot see how (UDVS: p235). In the moment of suffering, however, it is very difficult to see how such suffering can be beneficial. Part of the reason for this is because of the somewhat paradoxical relationship between suffering and the highest good. It seems, as one relates more and more to the highest good, that one is moving further and further away from it. This is because as one becomes aware of conscience, more and more obstacles to reaching the highest good show up. These obstacles of course were already in place, but through conscience, they come in to awareness. To believe that the suffering is beneficial, then, one must once again put aside the understanding in favour of faith as it is faith that allows one to take up a paradoxical relationship such as this. If this faith is in place, the suffering becomes light and miraculously the weight is lifted:

> "The happy ending can fail to come, but the believer believes that the suffering is beneficial to him- thus the benefit cannot fail to come- when it is." (UDVS: p238)

There is a kind of irony built into the structure of faith. The moment that Abraham gives up Isaac, Isaac is given to him in a way more miraculous than before. The moment the lover lets go of the beloved, they truly receive the beloved in all their individuality and freedom. Likewise, the moment the sufferer accepts that they must suffer, for their suffering is beneficial, the suffering becomes light and is lifted. This, then, is the way in which faith moves mountains. If one yearns after a happy ending- an end to the suffering- the suffering

intensifies and the distance from the ending seems to grow. Yet if one accepts the suffering whole-heartedly as beneficial, the suffering becomes light and is lifted. The benefit of the suffering is thus already present the moment one begins to believe that it is beneficial.

We have seen, then, one of the key ways in which the highest good acts as a counterweight to suffering. Kierkegaard sets up a kind of scale with eternal happiness on the one side and hardship on the other. Not only does he aim to demonstrate that eternal happiness is as heavy as possible, he aims also to show that hardship becomes as light as possible. As such, the person who believes in eternal happiness will always be able to carry hardship lightly. This ability to carry a heavy burden lightly is a virtue that Kierkegaard describes as "meekness" (UDVS: p240). The scale, then, is always tipped in the direction of eternal happiness, no matter how heavy suffering becomes. For Kant, it was the existence of God which ensured a bridge between happiness and the good. This is the case for Kierkegaard too. For the Christian, it is faith in God's goodness which allows for the hope of eternal happiness.

One might, however, recognise the potential value of eternal happiness and at the same time lament the great level of faith required to believe. Empirically, it is clear that living in accordance with the good does not seem to be in accordance with happiness in this life. What is worse, the world seems to be filled with much needless heavy suffering such that might seem incompatible with the possibility of there being a God who ensures our eternal happiness. We might recognise the potential value of faith but when faced with the reality of the world around us, such faith might not seem like a possibility. A large obstacle to believing in the promise of eternal happiness, then, might be what is often described as "the problem of evil". There are several formulations of this problem, but in brief it refers to

the problem that there being unnecessary evil in the world appears at odds with the possibility of there being an omnibenevolent, omniscient and omnipotent God. I do not wish to get into the details of the problem of evil here. Instead, we will look at what I take to be Kierkegaard's formulation of the problem. This formulation focuses more on the emotional side to what it means to doubt God's love than it does on the rational:

> "Humanly we speak of unhappy love as the heaviest suffering, but in turn there is the heaviest, the most agonizing suffering in an unhappy love when the object of love is such that it essentially cannot be loved; yet the only thing the lover wishes with all his heart is that the object of love be loved. If, namely, the object of love can still essentially be the object but only the possession is denied, then the unhappy love is less unhappy, less agonizing. Then the possession is denied, but the object is not lost." (UDVS: p266)

The suffering of unhappy love arises when what was the object of our love turns out to be unloveable. This might happen, for example, if the beloved turns out to be a deceiver who has hidden their true identity, or a deeply immoral person, who has misled the lover, or even a person who one discovers does not actually exist. As Kierkegaard states, it is far more painful to be confronted with a situation in which the object of love becomes no longer loveable than it is to not be able to possess the object of love. In such a situation, he notes, the lover would much rather be in the wrong themselves than for the beloved to be in the wrong such that they can no longer be loved. We can begin to see here how this relates to the problem of evil. For Kierkegaard, the individual who loves God would much rather find fault in themselves than to find out that it is the case that God is such that He cannot be loved. It might, of course, be the case that God turns out to be the cause of much pointless suffering, in such a way that He ought not to be loved. The individual with faith, however, ought always to turn to themselves before they turn to a conclusion such as this if they can really be said to love God. When confronted with extreme hardship, a person is confronted with the problem of evil. Kierkegaard highlights that for the individual who goes through a

hardship such as this, it sometimes feels as though they have to make a choice between, on the one hand, finding wrong in God and, on the other, finding wrong in themselves. To choose the latter would far less painful than the former because it means to retain God as an object of love. He goes on to demonstrate why the latter is preferable:

> "It would truly be better if they made the love blaze just by the thought of paganism's horror: that he who holds the fate of everything and also your fate in his hand is ambivalent, that his love is not a Fatherly embrace but a constraining trap, that his secret nature is not eternal clarity but concealment, that the deepest ground of his nature is not love but a cunning impossible to understand." (UDVS: p268)

There is a kind of horror, then, in recognising that fate is ambivalent, that one cannot make sense of the universe and that suffering is aimless. Faced with this kind of agony, it is preferable to believe that God is love. This is preferable too to the belief that God does not exist, for the same horrors found in Paganism will arise for the atheist. Why, one might ask, does Kierkegaard speak of the problem as a choice in this way? If the world contains unnecessary evil, we might think that it does not matter whether or not we ourselves are in the wrong or not. What matters is whether it is feasible to believe that God exists and that He is love in the light of this.

Kierkegaard's point here seems to have to do with the order of investigation. When presented with hardship, leaping to the question of whether or not God can be the object of love should not be the first movement. The Christian, before questioning their love of God, ought first to examine themselves to make sure that they aren't themselves guilty. If they are themselves guilty, they are, according to Kierkegaard, not yet in a position to pronounce judgement on God. Of course, a person who asks themselves if they themselves are guilty will always find more than enough to work through to keep them occupied and away from the question of whether or not God is love *(UDVS:* pp268-9). A person, then,

always suffers as guilty and as such never reaches a point at which they can pronounce judgement on God. This means that they can preserve everything for the best and can preserve their love from the doubt that suffering can bring about. To see how this works, we can refer back to the example of the two lovers given previously. It is preferable for one to find fault in oneself than to question if the beloved can be loved. In a sense, the question of whether or not the beloved is indeed loveable is held at bay.

One might argue that there is a kind of avoidance going on here when we focus on our own guilt rather than on the question of whether or not God is love. Perhaps, for the sake of the truth, it'd be better to confront the question head on rather than deceive oneself in to believing that God is love. Couldn't it be the case that we are indeed guilty, but so is God? Kierkegaard's point here seems to be that, unless we are pure of heart ourselves, we would not be in a position to know of God's guilt:

> "If doubt is to have the least show of a foundation, it must have innocence to appeal to, not Innocence in comparison with other human beings, not innocence in this or in that, but innocence *before God*. If it does not have this, which is an impossibility, then it is promptly shattered, destroyed; it is reduced to nothing- alas, this is the very opposite of beginning with nothing." (UDVS: pp274-5)

Kierkegaard does not go on to explain why we must be innocent to doubt God. The clue here, however, is likely to be in the cryptic end of the quotation. Doubting God from a position without innocence is, for Kierkegaard, the opposite of beginning with nothing. True scepticism, or what it would be to doubt validly, would require that one begins without presuppositions, for otherwise one is not really doubting. There must be a sense, then, in which Kierkegaard believes that having guilt is akin to beginning with presuppositions. One is beginning with *something* if one is beginning with guilt. It is true that we could imagine a whole series of propositions which we might have to assume to be true to believe that God

is not love. We must believe that there is no good reason for the suffering we witness in the world. We must assume that we know enough about the good to be able to pronounce judgement on God and we must therefore assume that our own knowledge of the good is not clouded or inaccurate. If, however, we are guilty, how could we ever be sure that we are not mistaken? The fact that we are guilty would seem to make it extremely likely that our judgement about the good might be clouded or inaccurate. We could, of course, judge God nonetheless, appealing to certain norms we subject ourselves to and which God seems to be lacking. The fact would remain, however, that our judgement might be inaccurate. Unless we are omniscient, we do not have a complete understanding and so long as this is the case, there is space for our judgement to be incorrect.

Acknowledging all of this might indeed demonstrate that there are presuppositions required to believe that God is not love, but believing that God is not love is not the same as *doubting* that God is love. In doubting, we do not have to buy in to propositions either way. We can hover, stating that we do not know whether or not God is love, but that we still doubt it. We can say that, given what we do know, it is extremely unlikely that God is love. For Kierkegaard, however, it is precisely this uncertainty that allows for the possibility of faith. If it were a matter of investigation to discover whether or not God is love, faith would not be required. When, however, investigation gets us no further than wavering doubt, we are left to move one way or another- to believe or not. So long as we are not omniscient, there remains space to believe that God is love.

It is interesting to note that, if it were Kant defending the goodness of God, he might have recourse to practical reason. He could argue, for example, that it is necessary that God be love for it to be possible for us to obtain the highest good because, if God were

not love, there would be no correlation between the good and happiness. The Kierkegaardian, however, is left in a much more precarious position than this. For Kierkegaard, the belief that God is love does not arise from the moral law. Instead, he reminds us of how terrible it would be if God were not love. We are left again with what seems like a problematic decision- to believe or not. The problem is that it is not in a person's full control to make themselves believe that God is love. Even though this is the case, Kierkegaard aims to show us why we should take every measure in our power, including investigating our own guilt, to help to cultivate the belief that God is love. To believe would be to find the motivation to follow the good. It is thus of great importance for the individual to fix it so as to know as deeply and securely as possible that God is love. This is what Kierkegaard seems to aim to achieve in the upbuilding discourses:

> "the discourse has only one aim, what I venture to call the best aim; it wants only one thing, what I venture to call the best: in every way to make it eternally certain that God is love. Truly, to want this is really to think everything for the best! In whatever way this becomes certain, even if at first glance the way seems difficult and hard- if it nevertheless is achieved, and a greater certainty that God is love- that, then, is the joy." (UDVS: p282)

It is clear from the passage that it is not of great concern to Kierkegaard how the individual becomes certain that God is love. The important thing is that they do become certain. We can see why this is so. If the individual is able to become certain that God is love, they will be able to will the good without fearing for their happiness. With the knowledge that God is love, they can be sure of an eternal happiness that outweighs all suffering. They can hope to be liberated from the guilt of double-mindedness and can find a way of life in which despair is replaced with genuine hope. It is, then, for the best to believe that God is love.

Happiness and guilt

We have seen thus far how the belief in an eternal happiness can make the burden of suffering light. What, however, of guilt? Guilt is different to other forms of suffering as it distances us from eternal happiness. The guiltier we are, the more obstacles we have to being happy and the less deserving we feel of our happiness. Guilt would seem a far heavier weight to carry than other forms of suffering because it calls in to question our worthiness to receive eternal happiness. Forgiveness acts as faith's solution for this weight:

> "Let us first ask this question: Of all burdens, which is the heaviest? Certainly, the consciousness of sin; that is beyond dispute. But *the one who takes away the consciousness of sin and gives the consciousness of forgiveness instead*- he indeed takes away the heavy burden and gives the light on in its place." (UDVS: p246)

As Kierkegaard describes in this passage, Christ takes away the consciousness of sin and gives forgiveness instead. In doing so, he takes away a heavy burden and replaces it with a light one. Kierkegaard is clear to emphasise that forgiveness is a burden because it is not something we should take for granted. Forgiveness is given only insofar as the recollection that the wrongdoing is forgiven is not forgotten. It is this continual recollecting of the fact that one is forgiven that constitutes the light burden. It is important that a person does not forget forgiveness, nor that they forget their own guilt. The weight of forgiveness and of guilt becomes a useful weight, however, as it gives a person tasks around which to structure their life. As we saw previously, it is the recognition that a burden is beneficial that makes it light. In relation to guilt, the suffering of it becomes light because we recognise that, so long as we are guilty, there are always tasks to perform and things we can do to better ourselves (UDVS: p275). Furthermore, our attention is taken away from the question of whether or

not God is love and focussed on the improvement of ourselves. As a result of there being tasks, there is always hope. Kierkegaard considers the alternative situation:

> "If in relation to God a sufferer could be in the right, if it were possible that the fault is with God, well, then there would be hopelessness and the horror of hopelessness, then there would be no task." (UDVS: p277)

If it were the case that God were not love, that the fault was with the world, then there would be no hope for eternal happiness. There would consequently be no tasks we could perform to remedy the situation. If, instead of finding fault with God, we find fault with ourselves, the hope is that the fault we find in ourselves can be worked on- we can improve. The good, and with it, eternal happiness, therefore become orientation points around which one can structure one's life. Joy, then, can be found in guilt because out of guilt we find tasks to complete- ways in which we can bring ourselves in to greater alignment with the good. We avoid being crushed by guilt by recognising that we are forgiven, but we do not hide from guilt, allowing it instead to be a guide by not letting it become forgotten.

It would be easy here to underplay just how uncomfortable it is to carry the remembrance of forgiveness. Living with guilt consciousness is, of course, difficult. No one said the life of the Christian would be easy. Although it might be difficult to carry the weight of guilt and forgiveness, however, Kierkegaard reminds us that having no real tasks would be a far worse form of suffering. For the person who has reached a depth of consciousness in which they recognise the limitations of temporal goals, the agony of being unable to find any one task to define one's life by begins to show up.[39] Although the Christian carries what might seem to be an agonising weight, comparably this weight is said to be light. What is more, Kierkegaard presses on us that the particular task of the individual who aims to die to

[39] Such an agony can be witness in "A"'s writing in *Either/Or*.

the world and commit themselves to the good give a kind of stability rarely found in the world:

> "When hardship is the road, this is the joy: that as a consequence it is **immediately** clear to the sufferer what the task is and he **immediately** knows this for sure; therefore he does not need to spend any time or waste any energy on deliberating whether the task should not be something else." (UDVS: p293)

The point here is that usually, when we commit ourselves to a task and suffer as a result, we begin to question whether the task we are undertaking is really the right task. We ask ourselves whether it might be possible that there is another route we could take that does not lead us to suffer so. This is especially so for the human being who is double-minded. What Kierkegaard draws our attention to here is that the task for the Christian is itself suffering. On the one hand, this is the suffering inherent in dying to the world and on the other, the suffering inherent in carrying guilt and forgiveness. When one knows that one is supposed to suffer- that suffering is beneficial and that it is the task, the will becomes fixed clearly on one goal. The normal decision process involved in choosing a task is undermined. Instead of considering which task might lead to the greatest happiness temporally, we recognise that the task is to distance ourselves from temporality altogether. In doing so, we learn that temporal suffering is the task. This makes the Christian task different from most in that hardship no longer presents itself as an obstacle, but rather constitutes the road itself (UDVS: p303). Recognising that hardship is itself the road is therefore a way to overcome double-mindedness. Instead of willing the good on the one hand and willing to be free from suffering on the other, everything is brought together under one goal- the highest good and eternal happiness. One recognises that suffering is itself the road and energy can be directed efficiently towards the achievement of eternal happiness.

Eternal happiness in this life

So far we have seen the various ways in which belief in eternal happiness and the highest good function, according to Kierkegaard, in such a way as to bring a person's will in to sharp focus on the good. The belief in eternal happiness allows doubts about the role of suffering, the goodness of God and about one's guilt to drop away. The Christian is therefore primed to commit themselves to the good. It might concern a reader of Kierkegaard, however, that we seem to be giving up partially on happiness in this life in favour of eternal happiness. It is odd to speak of eternal happiness as starting *after* this life, whilst in this life we suffer misery.

If happiness is truly to be eternal, it surely must not have a beginning or an end. We can't speak of something eternal coming after this life, because it we did so, it would not be eternal. Aside from the joy we can find in this life that comes from knowledge of forgiveness, of hope for eternal happiness and of having tasks to complete, there are several other attributes Kierkegaard describes the Christian as learning that can make this life a joy. Importantly, these joys are already there to be discovered. If they were not already there, eternal happiness would not be eternal. If we are to open ourselves to the happiness already given to us in this life, we must focus our gaze on the world in a particular way. These joys come from the belief in the existence and love of God rather than from the belief in an eternal happiness. Kierkegaard uses the analogies of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air in order to demonstrate these goods:

> "If the heavenly Father feeds him, then he, of course, is free from worry about making a living, then he lives not only as the tame doves do with the rich farmer but lives with him who is richer than all. He actually lives with him, since heaven and earth is God's house and property, and thus the human being is indeed living with him. This means: to be contented with being a human being, with being the humble

> one, the created being who can no more support himself than create himself." (UDVS: p177)

The person with faith recognises that the earth is God's house. This is what it means to really believe that God is love. Observing the birds of the air serves as a reminder that the birds are taken care of- they find enough to eat, places to shelter and are in general supported. We are to recognise that we, like the birds, are supported. We are provided with what we need to survive. Of course, this does not have to mean that we find all of our food on trees, or that we, like the birds, should sleep outside. The point is for us to recognise that we can never fully support ourselves. Having enough to survive involves not only that we work, but that the opportunities are presented to us from which to get the things we need. The individual who believes that God is love keeps an eye out for such opportunities. Instead, then, of becoming anxious and stressed about making sure that one has secured everything for oneself, the believer is able to trust that that which they need will present itself to them.

Recognising that one is cared for by God is one aspect of learning to be content with being a human being for Kierkegaard. Another element involves recognising one's own inherent beauty. We can do this, he argues, by paying attention to the lilies of the field:

> "In exactly the same sense as the lily is a lily, absolutely in the same sense, this person, despite all his worries as a human being, is a human being, and exactly in the same sense as the lily, without working, without spinning, without any meritoriousness, is more glorious than Solomon's glory by being a human being." (UDVS: p165)

If one observes the lilies of the field, one can learn to recognise that creation is, in itself, beautiful. This applies no less to ourselves as human beings as it does to the lilies. We therefore do not need to do anything to be beautiful because we are already that by virtue of being human. This then, is another part of what it means to be content with being a

human being. The consequence of experiencing the world in this way is that comparison drops away. We do not feel jealous of others that they are better dressed, considered more attractive or are more successful because we recognise that more beautiful than all these things is the fact that we are human beings. In fact, we can mask and forget our inherent beauty by trying to be more beautiful and by trying to compete with others. Like the lily, all we have to do to really be beautiful is to just be with the knowledge that God has created us. Furthermore, by learning to be contented with what we are at present, we draw our gaze away from the future and into the present moment. With this, worry about the future is replaced by appreciation.

Of course, it is not always easy to be appreciative, especially when one's life is particularly difficult. For the individual who is mocked by everyone, who lives in poverty and who struggles to find enough to live on, it is almost insulting to speak of learning to be content with being a human being. When the difficulties mount up, one's gaze is often drawn towards the future, towards worry and the temptation is to try one's hardest to remedy the situation. For a person undergoing hardship the lilies and birds might not even be reassuring. Nature contains as much that we might find appalling as it does beautiful and even though we might turn outwards towards creation, we might struggle to find God's love there. The Christian, however, must learn obedience:

> "One learns something even more glorious by learning obedience in the school of sufferings- learns to let God be master, to let God rule... what other connection and harmony are possible between the temporal and the eternal than this- that God rules and to let God rule!" (UDVS: p257)

Kierkegaard was a writer well aware of the degree of suffering a human being could be subjected to. He draws on Christ as the archetypal example for suffering and points out that even Christ had to learn obedience from what he suffered. From the school of sufferings, we

learn to let God rule. We do this through the process of dying to the world- a process that can only take place through suffering. Through suffering, we learn to subordinate our will to the good, to recognise that it is not in our control to completely stop suffering and we learn to trust the process that God has us undergo. By doing this, we obtain a harmony between the temporal and eternal. We learn to accept all of life, whatever may come, as a gift from God. We still expect happiness, but we expect eternal happiness. We subordinate the temporal to the eternal, but do not lose hope for happiness. In doing so, we stop resisting and worrying about the future and learn to find peace in suffering. We do this by recognising that suffering is the road to eternal happiness, that it is an opportunity for us to learn obedience and to learn to let God rule. Ironically, the moment we soften our worries about future happiness, we begin to experience a more permanent, more profound kind of happiness that exists in the present. This is the happiness Kierkegaard describes as eternal.

The problem of quietism

It is likely that many would find Kierkegaard's ideas in *UDVS* quite disturbing. The kind of passivity and obedience that the Christian is asked to display here is immense. One might object that it would be better to stand up to suffering, to reject it and to try to fight for a better future. By learning obedience, one might argue, we are learning to be complicit with the sufferings of the world. If only we were to resist, we might find that our own and other people's suffering is lessened. Kierkegaard, however, reminds us that as human beings, we are not exactly the same as the birds of the air. In fact, we possess perfections that far exceed the birds in our ability to work with God:

> "Is it a perfection on the part of the bird that in hard times it sits and dies of hunger and knows of nothing at all to do, that, dazed, it lets itself fall to the ground and dies? Usually we do not talk this way. When a sailor lies down in the boat and lets matters take their course in the storm and knows of nothing to do, we do not speak of his perfection. But when a doughty sailor knows how to steer, when he works against the storm with ingenuity, with strength, and with perseverance, when he works himself out of the danger, we admire him... To work is a human being's perfection. By working, human beings resemble God, who indeed also works." (UDVS: pp198-9)

Like the bird, we are to recognise that we are looked after by God, but unlike the bird, we are able to strive and to work. When in hardship, then, we need not be passive. We can be like the sailor Kierkegaard describes here, who uses his ingenuity to improve the situation. But how are we to reconcile the future looking ingenuity of the sailor with the bird-watching appreciation of the present moment that Kierkegaard also prescribes? We do this, he argues, by working *together with* God (UDVS: p199). We exceed the bird insofar as we can be God's co-worker in this manner. To work together with God means to recognise medio-passivity. It is to recognise that opportunities are presented which one can take to improve the situation, but always to have the knowledge that it is not totally in one's power to create the future that one wants. It is also to find joy in the striving itself. The suffering sailor can recognise the glory inherent in the fact that their fight for survival is together with God and can find joy even in the moment of greatest distress. Like the bird, then, we can appreciate the assistance of God and can find reassurance. Unlike the bird, however, we can work hard together with God to bring about the kind of future we want. We do this not by projecting forward in worry, but by identifying opportunities presented by God in the present. Knowing that one is following one's conscience and knowing that it is the good that one directs one's will towards gives the individual the "bold confidence" required to stand up to the world and to others when it is necessary to:

> "But when he is reassured that he does not bear the guilt and is reassured that from now on he bears the responsibility if he does not act, then bold confidence rises up in him with supranatural power, then he reverses the relationship and marvellously transforms shame to honour, places his honour in being scorned by the world in this way,' boasts of his persecutions and his chains,' praises God that 'it has been granted him to suffer this way.' *This reversing is the reverseness of bold confidence.*" (UDVS: p330)

Once a person has made the good their absolute telos, the scorn of other people becomes a lesser consideration. This means that, when the good requires of a person that they act in a way that is mocked or hated by others, the person can find a great deal of strength from the knowledge that they are acting for the good and that they do not bear the guilt. This kind of bold confidence can be genuinely transformative as it gives an individual the energy they might need to stand up to oppression or to push against injustice. It is far from being the case, therefore, that the Christian must become passive in the face of the world. The important point is that they remember that they must always be working for the good and alongside God.

One might argue that again, there seems to be a kind of delusion at work here. Whether or not one believes that one is working with God seems, in the world, to make very little difference when it comes to how successful the cause one fights for will be. The atheist who fights for a cause seems just as likely to succeed as the Christian. To think that Kierkegaard is talking about a greater chance of victory for the Christian here, however, is to misunderstand what he is saying. The person who makes the good their absolute telos is not focussed on victory, they are focussed only in the process of doing the work that is required of them by the good. They can find a joy in knowing that the path they are taking, even if it is loaded with suffering, is the right path:

> "We are not saying that the good person is eventually victorious in another world, or that his cause will eventually be victorious in this world. No, he is victorious while he

> is living; suffering, he is victorious while he is still alive- he is victorious on the day of suffering. If all human opposition mounts up, yes, if a world rises up against him, he is the stronger." (UDVS: p331)

As Kierkegaard explains here, the victory is in the task itself. As a temporal being, a person cannot know whether or not the cause will be victorious. This is why the human being has to work together with God. The focus, then, ought not to be on the victory itself, but with the knowledge that one is performing the right tasks. Even if the victory of the cause seems impossible and the obstacles become insurmountable, the joy comes from the fact that one is walking the correct path.

Thus far we have seen how faith that God is love and that there is an eternal happiness in store for those who will the good in truth can provide much strength and joy for the religious person. Importantly, this faith bridges the gap between happiness and the good and allows for the possibility of purity of heart. Without the belief in eternal happiness, there would always be a motivational gap in a human being who willed the good because a part of them would dividedly yearn for happiness. The promise of eternal happiness makes room for the hope that this situation can be remedied. In doing so, it gives the human being the strength required to overcome any temporal suffering that results from willing the good in truth. It gives a person tasks to complete, alongside the strength to stand up to the world even when doing so produces great suffering. Faith in eternal happiness outweighs any potential suffering a person might encounter in the world and thus can secure a believer's commitment to the good.

The upbuilding discourses as indirect communication

To some, it might seem that faith acts as a kind of self-deception. We need faith in order to bridge the gap between happiness and the good and so we bring faith about. If there were not faith, there would be a gap and this is our motivation for having faith. We don't do this, as Kant does, through a rational movement, but instead through a highly interested leap. But Kierkegaard does not guide us to seriously consider the possibility that there might not be an eternal happiness in *UDVS*, nor the possibility that God is not love. Instead, he reminds us of the danger inherent in not believing these things and presses us on the joys of faith. The trouble with this is that it may seem as though our motivation for belief would come from desiring a certain state of affairs rather than from a knowledge that this state of affairs is actually the case. We might think of this as akin to how a deluded writer might convince themselves that they are the greatest philosopher ever because of the great joys and thrills they find in such a belief. Wouldn't faith be equally problematic?

Honestly recognising our wavering doubt and then trying to push oneself to believe because doing so is beneficial could be a kind of self-deception. This is so whether or not we genuinely doubt because it is possible to genuinely doubt and then to try to force oneself to believe even though deep inside one does not. At times, it might seem that this is exactly what Kierkegaard is trying to convince us to do in *UDVS*. He seems to give us reasons to believe and to almost pressure us in to doing so. If it were the case, however, that I were to force myself to believe simply because I recognise that practically it improves my life, I may well be in despair. What is more, faith becomes something totally instrumental when we approach it in this way. In fact, it becomes difficult to see how we can still call it faith. If I am to manipulate myself in to having faith in order to make my life better, my will is not directed only towards the good, but also to my own happiness and well-being. By trying to avoid the suffering of double-mindedness through self-imposed faith, I have ironically

imposed a new kind of double-mindedness upon myself. I have attempted to make the suffering or relating to the good bearable and in doing so, I have placed my own happiness and well-being alongside the absolute good as an end of my will. To make matters worse, such an attempt to manipulate oneself in to willing the good might not even be effective. This is because there are bound to be moments where the suffering of the world gets the best of a person, in which they are no longer able to hold to eternal happiness and indulge in short term pleasure or distraction instead. No matter how good or uplifting one might understand faith to be, it is no simple matter to translate such understanding in to real, unwavering belief.

Kierkegaard was a writer very heavily concerned with self-honesty and the potential for self-deception. It seems incredible that he would encourage double-mindedness in his reader in the way described above. I propose, then, that we take a slightly different approach to reading *UDVS*- one which recognises the text as a form of indirect communication[40] and thereby takes in to account the medio-passive nature of faith. There are many passages in which Kierkegaard seems to be trying to convince his reader to have faith. Take, for example:

> "The tasks of faith and hope and love and patience and humility and obedience- in short, all the human tasks, are based on the eternal certainty in which they have a place of resort and support, the certainty that God is love. If it had ever happened to a human being in relation to God that the fault lay with God, there would be no

[40] Valérie Roberge, a friend and colleague of mine whilst I was at St Olaf college suggested to me that *UDVS* can be read not only as indirect communication but actually as ironic. There is much in UDVS that is cliché and could be labelled bad poetry. As she puts it- We know that Kierkegaard can write better this, so we need to ask why he is presenting himself in this way. There are places in Kierkegaard's other authorship where he ridicules and expresses scorn for the kind of sickly romantic, poetic-religious language that is present throughout *UDVS*. I am not sure I would take my reading of the indirect communication in *UDVS* this far because I think it is equally possible that this happens to be what Kierkegaard sounds like when he tries his best to be earnest. I am, however, indebted to her for the revelation I experienced when it occurred to me that this text might not be all that it seems.

> task…then it is foolishness and futility and soul-deadening pernicious laboriousness to believe, a self-contradiction to work, and an agony to live." (UDVS: p277)

Thus far we have examined many passages similar to this, in which Kierkegaard demonstrates to us how terrible it would be to be without faith or to not believe that God is love. So far, we have read these passages as defences of faith because we have been focussed on the Kantian problem. We recognised that there is a motivational gap that must be filled and we demonstrate how faith fills this gap. The trouble with reading this way, one might argue, is that faith is instrumentalised, becomes a tool to fix the Kantian problem and, what is more, seems like something that we rationally choose for the sake of our own wellbeing. Here, for example, we might understand Kierkegaard to be arguing that we ought to believe that God is love because if we don't we have no tasks and life becomes agony. This passage, however, is particularly useful in demonstrating another way we could read this and all similar passages in *UDVS*. We might, instead of reading Kierkegaard as attempting to convince us to have faith, read him as trying to remind us that we do in fact already have faith. There would then be a kind of implicit modus tolens argument at play throughout the book. We could understand the argument thus:

> Premise 1: If you do not believe that God is love, life becomes an agony, there would be no tasks, there would be no reason to suffer for the sake of the good and many of the things we consider to be virtues would be rendered meaningless.
>
> Premise 2: For me, Kierkegaard's reader, life is not simply agony. I do feel like I have tasks to complete. I do see the value in suffering for the good and I do strive to acquire theological virtues.
>
> Conclusion: It therefore must be the case that I at least implicitly believe that God is love.

If we read *UDVS* in this way, it becomes an upbuilding text not in the sense that it gives us solutions to problems in our lives, but rather in the sense that it helps to cultivate that which is already there- to fan the flames of faith. Such a reading still acts as a solution to the

Kantian problem, but it does so by demonstrating that, after all, there is no motivational gap. It isn't the case that we, as human beings, must convince ourselves to be good by finding some connection between happiness and the good. Instead, we already are convinced to be good. So long as a person has a conscience, they already feel the pull towards the good and on some level intrinsically recognise its value. As Kant shows us, this kind of motivation towards the good cannot be based solely on a person's desire for temporal happiness, but must be grounded in some other desire. Kant is studying a subject who acts in a way that demonstrates that they already implicitly will something like eternal happiness and already implicitly believe in something like God. The same is the case for Kierkegaard.

Here Kierkegaard reminds us that if God were not love, life would be agony. This is because all that would exist to motivate us would be temporal ends. As noted previously, Kierkegaard shows us why all temporal ends become their opposite and eventually lead to suffering. If this is all we can hope for in life, why will anything at all? After a time, there would be no tasks left to complete. Like the Aesthete in *Either/Or*, a person without the eternal would trap themselves in inaction and misery. Suffering would weigh heavily (in fact it would be crushing) because there would be no purpose to it. Belief that God is love overcomes these miseries because it opens up the possibility of their being an eternal goal-one which does not disintegrate into its own negation and bring suffering. There become tasks to complete because the human being always remains in guilt in relation to God, but alongside this comes the genuine hope that one can grow and improve towards something worthwhile. The reader of *UDVS*, then, is not to be convinced to have faith for the first time, but rather confronted with what it would mean not to have faith and asked to recognise that their way of life already presupposes that faith is there. The text is designed to

motivate us to have faith by creating the conditions under which we may affirm a process which has already begun within us. In chapter 4 we considered what it means to engage with a text on faith. It is not sufficient to think of faith as a choice and so it makes no sense to think of a writing on faith as presenting arguments or reasons. Instead a text on faith must position us such that the conditions may arise for a recollection of faith to take place.

What, however, of those who read *UDVS* and do feel as though life is meaningless agony? What of depression and the deep suffering that human beings do actually experience at many times in life? There are many ways in which we might lose our zeal for life. Kierkegaard accounts for some of this kind of suffering through double-mindedness. If it is to be the case that we are to be free beings, we must feel as though we have a choice. It is out of our attempting to choose, to remind ourselves of our freedom, that much suffering arises. There is a sense, though, in which Kierkegaard recognises such choice to be a façade:

> "In weighing there must be two magnitudes; therefore the person deliberating, simply in order to be able to weigh, must be so composed that he has two magnitudes that are to be weighed… This is the choice: he weighs, he deliberates, he chooses. Here, however, there is never any chance that the two magnitudes weigh equally much, which can of course happen with a scale, that it indicates the relation as one of equality. No, praise God, that can never happen, because properly understood the eternal already has a certain overweight and the person who refuses to understand this can never begin really to deliberate." (UDVS: p307)

The despairing person weighs- they agonise over the question of whether or not God exists or whether or not God is love. Through doubt, a person can cause themselves great suffering. Here, however, Kierkegaard points us to the fact that, for such deliberation to be possible, it needs to feel like there are two weights to compare to one another. This needs to be the case for human beings to be free. It is, however, always the case that the eternal has the heavier weight. The person doing the weighing, then, is akin to the third ticket

inspector checking your plane ticket as you board the aircraft. There is no chance you could have reached the point of ascending the steps had it not been the case that you had a ticket. The inspector checks nonetheless. Like the redundant ticket inspector, we check to see whether or not God is love, all the time ignoring the fact that we already live in such a way that demonstrates that deeply we know the truth of this proposition.

It is possible to mistake Kierkegaard's encouragement as argumentation. Instead of recognising that one already lives in such a way that demonstrates that the eternal has the greater weight, one deliberates over the eternal and tries to convince oneself of its' importance. Such an exercise, however, gets one no closer to faith. The deeply suffering person represents the person who has become lost in the weighing process. Instead of dwelling amongst the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, they postpone recognition of the implicit weight of the eternal until such a time that the eternal can be known for sure- can be demonstrated and proved. Such procrastination rests on the fact that a person forgets or loses track of the faith that is already present. It stems from an unwillingness to be constrained and an attachment to freedom of choice. The aim of *UDVS*, then, is not to give the reader faith through persuasion, an act which would only fan the flames of double-mindedness but rather to feed the faith that already exists within.

All of this might seem quite problematic though- Wouldn't reading Kierkegaard this way force us to say that all people for whom life is not meaningless agony are, to some extent, religious? Not only does this seem incorrect to say, it also does not correspond with Kierkegaard's wider project of having those who call themselves Christian reconsider whether they really have faith. There are times where Kierkegaard suggests that the vast majority of people do not even achieve the pagan, Socratic level of resignation, let alone go

further. Although this may be true, it is still the case that we can say that, implicitly, faith is present in those who act for the sake of the good but for whom there is no worldly reward. This doesn't necessarily mean, however, that everyone who behaves in this way is a Christian or even religious. Although it might be minimally present in most, like conscience, faith requires rigorous schooling to grow. In chapter 1, we saw how the majority of people can be said to have a conscience and thus do not need to find one from scratch. This doesn't mean, however, that schooling is not needed to develop conscience and to expand it into all areas of life. The same is the case for faith. Although faith may be implicit to some degree in most, this does not mean that most have the kind of faith that is required for Christianity or religiousness. For the religious person, faith takes a more central role in life and becomes more explicit. The extent to which faith becomes explicit depends upon the degree to which the demands of conscience are felt. It is in those with a developed conscience, for whom the highest good and eternal happiness feel most out of reach as a result of a guilty conscience that faith will be of utmost importance.

Conclusion

At first reading it would seem as though the problem Kierkegaard aims to overcome through faith is the Kantian problem- that the good is not rewarded with happiness in this world. This is a problem because it presents an obstacle to purity of heart. Because the human being to some extent always desires happiness, a person who wills the good but recognises that no happiness is in store for them will always be double minded, part of their will being left with the desire for happiness. What we find in *UDVS*, however, is that the problem only arises as a problem so long as one forgets that one already behaves in

a manner that demonstrates that one implicitly already has faith. The fact is that most people do not need to convince themselves to be motivated towards the good- they are already this way motivated. The problem of motivation only arises as a problem in moments of double-mindedness. This applies to the non-Christian who has a conscience as much as it does for the Christian. To remedy the situation, the Christian turns to the eternal happiness promised by the gospel. This allows them to recognise that commitment to the good in this life might not be met with earthly reward, but to nonetheless believe that they are rewarded. Whilst it is explicit in the Christian, the same relationship to the eternal can be present in the non-Christian. Even though the non-Christian may not proclaim hope for eternal happiness, it is possible that they already relate to the world in such a way that presupposes such a hope. Through comporting ourselves to the world through this hope, we receive a kind of joy through faith that makes suffering light, allows us to appreciate beauty and all around makes life happier. These goods are not goods that Kierkegaard gives to us in *UDVS* but rather goods we implicitly already know the existence of and are to find within ourselves. It does not make sense, then, to reader Kierkegaard as arguing in favour of faith because doing so fails to recognise the medio-passive nature of faith.

So far we have considered how one may come to will to have a conscience. Along the way we discovered that there is a danger- that the extreme demands of conscience might threaten one's ability to will the good and as a consequence risk one falling into a demonic way of life. The demands of conscience could be related to either through a turning away in offence, through double-mindedness (a compromise), or through faith. Through engaging with Kierkegaard's texts, we discover that faith serves as a way through the potential danger posed by the overwhelming demands of conscience. We have explored how one gets faith and what exactly it means to live one's life with it. In the time since

Kierkegaard was writing, however, there have been great changes in the spiritual landscape in the West such that faith may not appear in exactly the same way in which it is captured in his texts. In the next chapter, we will turn our attention to the question of what role faith plays in the contemporary world in order to what faith might look like now and whether Kierkegaard's account can still be considered relevant. We will do this by putting Kierkegaard in dialogue with contemporary studies in the sociology of spirituality.

Chapter 6

Faith and Contemporary Spirituality

In this chapter we will consider, with relation to contemporary sociological research on spirituality, to what extent Kierkegaardian analyses are still relevant. We will ask whether it is still possible to find faith in the contemporary world. Kierkegaard's writings are largely directed towards a Danish public of churchgoing Christians. His critique is designed in many ways to bring those who already consider themselves Christians to re-consider what this means. What impact can Kierkegaard's writings have, however, in a context in which most would no longer describe themselves as Christian? What, if any, are the relations between faith and contemporary 'spirituality'? In the time since Kierkegaard was writing there have been great changes in the way people approach spirituality. This is seen particularly in the sharp decline in church attendance. Alongside this has been a rise in alternative forms of spirituality. In particular, we will focus on the rise of what has been described in some Sociological literature (For example Heelas, P. & Woodhead, L. 2005) as a 'holistic milieu', arising as a result of a 'spiritual revolution'. This revolution refers to a shift away from more traditional forms of congregational religiousness, towards new forms of spirituality that favour subjectivity.

A shortcoming in Heelas and Woodhead's account of the 'spiritual revolution' is that they do not provide an adequate account of what 'spirituality' is, nor how those activities they describe as spiritual deserve that designation. It is here that we might turn to Kierkegaard's writings to get a better sense of one way in which we might distinguish the genuinely spiritual from the non-spiritual. This will simultaneously help us to clarify exactly what role faith plays in the contemporary world.

The chapter will have two aims. Firstly, I will demonstrate that it is possible to have faith outside Christian dogmatics and that such faith may well be found in some of the

forms of subjective spirituality Heelas and Woodhead describe. Secondly, I will demonstrate that faith can function not only as a response to the demands of conscience, but as a response to other situations in which the temporal and the eternal come into tension. In particular, I will show that contemporary forms of spirituality involve the holding together of some "positive" dogmatics alongside what we might call "negativity"- that which the dogmatics attempts to capture, but which escapes the understanding.

We will draw on Kierkegaard's categories of religiousness. It will be seen that some of the activities that Heelas and Woodhead describe as "subjective spirituality" may well fall into the category Kierkegaard describes as religiousness A and therefore there are reasons to describe these activities as spiritual. On the other hand, the same exact activities might fall in to either aesthetic or ethical practices depending on the individual practicing them. A key point, then, will be that whether or not an activity can genuinely be considered to be spiritual ought to depend on the subjectivity of the individual practicing that activity. This is so whether we study newer forms of alternative spirituality or more traditional forms of congregational religion. What will determine whether an individual engages in these activities in a genuinely spiritual way or not has to do with faith. Faith, it will be demonstrated, is required for any relationship to The Eternal and as such will prove foundational to religiousness A (and thus spirituality).

The Spiritual Revolution and 'subjective spirituality'

A standard story is often told about the process of secularisation that begins with what is described as the "enlightenment" and progresses through modernity, culminating in the state of affairs that is present today. There is disagreement, however, over what exactly

this new state of affairs is. Some suggest that we are now living in a secular, disenchanted age[41]. Church attendance is down, comparatively few people would still describe themselves as religious and many of the revelations of Christianity and other religions are increasingly approached with scepticism. Others, for example Heelas and Woodhead (2005), would suggest that the new state of affairs is not well characterised as simply secular, but also as re-sacralized. In other words, they suggest that there has been a rise of a new approach to spirituality, one which they describe as "subjective". It is to what they call they "spiritual revolution" that we will first turn our attention.

Heelas & Woodhead describe the state of the spiritual landscape which existed long before the subjective turn and which continues to exist alongside it, one dominated by what they describe as "congregational religion". By congregational religion, they refer to various institutions in which

> "What matters is obeying, heeding, pursuing ways of life which stand over and above the individual self and bestow meaning upon life. These higher authorities serve to direct one's life and accord real value to it when one performs one's duties of fulfils one's obligations." (Heelas, P. & Woodhead, L. 2005: p3)

In other words, in congregational religion the meaning of one's life is taken in from the external world. One turns to the institutions surrounding oneself to be guided in how to live and one's identity is defined by the kinds of roles one plays within the surrounding social institutions. An obvious example of this is the institution of the church itself. The churchgoer lives their life *as* a Christian, perhaps participating in the various institutions of the church (marriage, communion, charity work etc). Authority, then, comes not from the individual themselves, but rather from a higher power, either characterised by God or by the church

[41] Weber, M. 2015 for example.

itself. It is this higher power, outside the individual, that guides them in how to live a good life.

When people speak of the secularisation of Western culture, what is often referred to is the decline of congregational religion, according to Heelas and Woodhead. Such a decline takes place in the context of what they describe as a "subjective turn". The subjective turn refers to a cultural shift in which the subjectivity of particular individuals has begun to be given much more credence. We can observe, for example, that education has become 'student centred', health 'patient centred' and religion has arguably followed suit (ibid: p5). The result of the subjective turn in the sphere of religiousness is the rise of what Heelas and Woodhead call "subjective spirituality". It is characterised with a looking inward. It is believed that the path to one's individual growth and to a fulfilling life can be found inside and through certain practices can be brought out. It is often believed that the human being has particular spiritual instincts, which historically have been channelled in to mythological stories, grounding the world religions that used to structure so much of people's lives (Corbett, 2007: p207). It is suggested that we can extract these spiritual instincts without the need for the particular forms of social authority found in religious organisations. Heelas and Woodhead characterise the difference between congregational "life as" religion and subjective-life spirituality as follows:

> "If, for example, I have slotted myself into the role of a dutiful daughter and a loving and caring wife and mother, and tend to disregard my own feelings of exhaustion, unhappiness and periodic disgruntlement because that is not what I (in the role I ocCUPy) ought to be feeling, then I am living according to external expectations. But if I decide to heed those subjective states, to listen to what they are telling me, and to act on their prompting by altering my life in ways that better suit my own unique needs, desires, capabilities and 'relationalities', then I am turning away from life lived according to external expectations, to life lived according to my own inner experience. The subjective turn is thus a turn away from 'life-as'… to 'subjective-life'" (Heelas, P. & Woodhead, L. 2005: pp 2-3).

Whilst the life-as way of living requires a degree of sacrifice when it comes to the importance of the particularities of one's subjectivity, the subjective-life gives utmost respect to inwardness. Rather than promoting scepticism towards the whims of one's feelings and inner life in favour of an external higher power, in the subjective-life these feelings are understood as substantial parts of what following a higher power involves. In subjective-life spirituality, rather than being an authority who directs the student towards a better way of living, the teacher becomes a guide- someone who helps the particular individual to recognise and act on their own inner voice. The individual is deemed to be the expert of their own spiritual journey and the teacher's job is simply one of facilitation. In other words it is the inner life of the individual that becomes sacred in subjective spirituality. This is why Heelas and Woodhead describe the shift from congregation to subjective spirituality not simply in terms of secularisation but also as a "re-sacralisation". We can find this kind of subjective spirituality, they argue, in many institutions- for example yoga classes, meditation classes, various forms of massage therapy etc.

Problems with 'subjective spirituality'

It is in this notion of subjective-spirituality, however, that the cracks begin show in Heelas and Woodhead's account. Listening to one's inner, subjective states of being does not seem enough to count as spirituality. If this were so, we would have to allow for almost any form of introspection to be a form of spirituality. Given that this does not seem to be the case, for Heelas and Woodhead's account to accurately capture the ways in which we normally speak of spirituality, they must account for what is it that makes certain kinds of inward looking practices spiritual and others not. This is a critique that bites even deeper

when we consider the kinds of activities that Heelas and Woodhead do include under the category 'spiritual'. In a critical response to Heelas and Woodhead's *The Spiritual Revolution*, Bruce and Voas note:

> "It is hard to not be struck by how few activities listed here are clearly spiritual. Half of all involvement is in what most people would view as leisure or recreation- yoga, tai chi, dance, singing and art. Add in pampering (massage, bodywork) and one has covered nearly two-thirds. Not all the 'healing and complementary health groups' are obviously spiritual or even unconventional… A fair proportion of the healing activities are based on distinctive beliefs, but even these (for example homeopathy, Reiki) seem pseudoscientific rather than necessarily spiritual." (Bruce, S. & Voas, D. 2007: p50)

As Bruce and Voas point out, it seems intuitively wrong to group the whole myriad of activities that Heelas and Woodhead designate as "spiritual" together. Some of these activities have no obvious relation to spirituality and others can be better characterised as pseudo-scientific systems that aim to heal the body and mind in a holistic way. Although Bruce and Voas' critique might seem problematic insofar as they presuppose what spirituality looks like and then criticize Heelas and Woodhead on the grounds of failing to meet their definition (thus begging the question), there is some substance to it. The problem for Heelas and Woodhead is that they do not demonstrate that a re-sacralisation has taken place. Although they might have identified a shift in which more people attend the kinds of activities they describe than they do church, they do not successfully account for why this shift counts as a re-sacralisation. They also do not account for why these activities ought to be grouped together and the movement towards them described as a "revolution".

The trouble here arises from the overlap between what is described as "spiritual" and what we might call "holistic wellbeing". Anticipating this kind of objection, Heelas and Woodhead situate the subjectivisation of religion within the rise of a wider "subjective

wellbeing culture" (Heelas, P. & Woodhead, L. 2005: p85). The aim of this culture, they argue is to bring about "good feelings" and to help individuals to feel "good about themselves" (ibid: p85). There is, however, no clear line between what is to be called spiritual and what is to be called subjective wellbeing. In fact, Heelas and Woodhead describe a kind of priming process- it happens that the kinds of practices that define for a large number of people the structure of their subjective spirituality also serve as subjective wellbeing practices. This includes, for example yoga, meditation, aromatherapy, massage etc. (ibid: p89). What causes the slide from a craving for wellbeing into some kind of spirituality is a "want to go *further* along the path towards subjective wellbeing" (Ibid: p88). In other words, people are drawn in by activities that promote a holistic kind of wellbeing, but once they have taken the bait, if you like, there is a chance for them to slide deeper in to a lifestyle that might be better characterised as subjective spirituality.

Recognising a spectrum containing within it both holistic wellbeing and subjective spirituality, however, is not enough to help us to identify what does and does not count as genuinely spiritual. There is another way we might understand Heelas and Woodhead's definition of spirituality. As Bruce and Voas point out, the data gathered in *The Spiritual Revolution* is taken from testimony of the *practitioners* of certain "spiritual" practices. These practices are deemed to be spiritual because those who provide them describe them to be so. Given that this is how Heelas and Woodhead identify spiritual practices, we might deduce that the kind of definition of spirituality at play here would be something like "The spiritual is that which is described as spiritual by those who practice it". Such a definition, we might argue, is rather empty. What's more, it is circular ("Why is it spiritual?", "Because people call it spiritual", "But why do people call it spiritual?", "Because it is spiritual", etc.) It would help to know *why* practitioners describe their practices as spiritual, particularly in

cases where the practice engaged in does not immediately seem to be a spiritual one. It might well be the case that practitioners call their practice spiritual because other people do. We might also think that practitioners themselves do not necessarily understand what spirituality is. Maybe a practitioner has never engaged with genuine spirituality to know that their own practice does not make the cut.

The term 'spiritual' has become trendy- a useful marketing tool and so there is reason to believe that some might even use such a term for reasons of marketing, without giving much thought about whether what they are doing is really spiritual. In addition, as Bruce and Voas point out, it does not necessarily follow from the fact that the practitioners call the activity they promote as spiritual that their clients also understand the activity to be so (Bruce, S. & Voas, D. 2007: p48). This is because the same exact practices might serve two different ends. On the one hand, one might engage with a practice in an attempt to obtain some kind of holistic wellbeing (a goal that isn't necessarily spiritual), or on the other hand, in an attempt to obtain some kind of deeper spirituality. It is this ambiguity over what practices ought to be considered spiritual that allows Bruce and Voas to make their deeper point- namely that the secularisation of Western culture is to be found in the fact that

> "the spiritual is being hollowed out; the label may be used to flatter anything from earnest introspection to beauty treatments, martial arts to support groups, complementary medicine to palm reading" (ibid: pp43-4).

In other words, the word "spiritual" is now used so broadly and unreflectively that it is unclear what the term designates. For them, this fragmentation of terminology is itself a sign of a deepening process of secularisation.

The claim made by Bruce and Voas, however, holds little sway unless we can demonstrate that the term "spiritual" had some original meaning or significance that is has

been stripped of. Even though they stress that "In a volume on the sociology of spirituality it is important to be clear- or as clear as one can be- about the term 'spirituality'" (ibid: p43), criticising Heelas and Woodhead on this point, Bruce and Voas too fall far short of giving us a satisfactory definition of "spirituality". This is not a problem when it comes to their critique of Heelas and Woodhead, as it is true that Heelas and Woodhead also fall short of this. It is, however, a problem if we want to suppose that the term "spirituality" ever had any significant meaning for it to be stripped of. Bruce and Voas give several hints that point to factors they consider to be relevant in deciding whether something is genuinely spiritual. They suggest "that it involves non-natural forces", that is has to "do with the supernatural or even the sacred" and that it is "esoteric" (ibid: p51). All of these suggested criteria seem merely to be associations of things we generally relate to "spirituality". They fall short of being defining characteristics. As sufficient conditions, they would fall short, including belief in ghosts, fairies, leprechauns or other superstitions we wouldn't necessarily call spiritual. Whilst, then, the suggestions made by Bruce and Voas are an improvement on Heelas and Woodhead's reliance on the word of the practitioner, they do not give us a firm enough basis on which to track the secularisation of spirituality.

Kierkegaard and 'subjective spirituality': Religiousness A

It is here that I propose we turn to Kierkegaard's writings. What we are missing is a clear sense of what ought to count as spirituality and what clearly does not. We might gain from him a way to understand in what the shift to "subjective spirituality" consists. I think we can also gain a much clearer understanding of what kind of phenomenon subjective spirituality is. In order to do this, we will turn our attention to one of the two forms of

religiousness Kierkegaard describes in *CUP*, namely religiousness A and B. The reason, I will argue, why many of the practices described by Heelas and Woodhead can be described as spiritual will be the same reason why those practices might fall under the sphere of religiousness A. Likewise, those practices that are better characterised as belonging to the aesthetic or ethical stage of life will be those better described as non-spiritual or secular. Understanding spirituality in this manner will allow us to make a distinction amongst participants of any practice. Central to the question of whether or not a practice is a candidate for religiousness A will be the question of whether faith is involved. We will, therefore, turn to the question of faith.

Faith can be taken to have three separate but overlapping meanings in Kierkegaard's writings, each of which we have encountered in the preceding chapters. We will deal with these again in more detail later. Firstly, faith might refer to the leaving open of a space beyond the understanding. This involves, for example, accepting that there are certain things which one will never and cannot understand. Secondly, faith can be understood as the ability to hold together two sides of a paradox without offence. This is a kind of faith that we have discussed previously in relation to the sign of contradiction- It is the faith required, for example, in venturing to love unconditionally (and therefore bringing together both the temporal and eternal aspects of love). Finally, faith can be understood in the specifically Christian sense as referring to the belief in the historical event of the birth, death and resurrection of Christ as the son of God.

In *CUP*, Kierkegaard provides us with two categories of religiousness- A and B. Whilst all three forms of faith are present in religiousness B, religiousness A can be built solely on the first two forms and thus does not require the specifically Christian form of

faith. This, then, is where we might find a definition of spirituality that is not intrinsically tied to Christianity. The third form of faith (the faith involved in relating to Jesus Christ) is not present in most forms of subjective spirituality (although there are some specifically Christian forms of subjective spirituality in which it might be included). For the moment, then, let us set aside the category of Religiousness B, as it requires this Christian form of faith.

Kierkegaard is clear that it is possible to express one's relation to the eternal (The Good and eternal happiness) outside of Christianity (CUP: p559). Relating to the eternal is a possibility universally open to all human beings. What exactly would such a relationship look like however? Throughout the previous chapters, an account has been mapped out, much of which can be followed within the sphere of religiousness A. In Kierkegaard's account of religiousness A, one has conscience- a relation to the good experienced through its negative- guilt. This comes through a recognition that it is possible for one to behave in a way that distances one from the good. We might describe this relationship with the good through conscience as the God relationship (as does Kierkegaard), but we need not do this. As stated, one can express one's relationship with the eternal outside of a Christian framework. In fact, it is possible to relate to the eternal in many ways in religiousness A, not necessarily only in terms of the good[42]. The important thing is that the person living in religiousness A lives with a continual recognition that there are limitations to their

[42] There is a confusion in Kierkegaard's writing when it comes to religiousness A. On the one hand, at times it seems as though he wants to leave religiousness A open and separate from any specific set of dogmatics. This version of Religiousness A involves some kind of relation to something beyond the understanding, but it isn't clear how we are to understand this "beyond". Different forms of spirituality have different ways to cash it out. On the other hand, Kierkegaard sometimes gives specific content to religiousness A, describing it specifically as involving guilt as the pathos filled relation to eternal happiness. I will argue that religiousness A can be better understood in the former, broader sense and that the latter sense constitutes just one example of religiousness A. We will return to this a littler later.

knowledge of the world. This recognition brings forth an experience of powerlessness. Kierkegaard states that:

> "In Religiousness A, The Eternal is *ubique et nusquam* [everywhere and nowhere] but hidden by the actuality of existence." (CUP: p571)

The eternal is hidden behind existence. Around us, all we perceive and engage with are things within temporality. We ourselves are temporal beings. We can thus only know of the eternal negatively. We discover the eternal in ethics when we experience guilt, in human thought when we experience its limitation and in love when we recognise that true love requires that the lover be free (thereby undermining the attachment of erotic love). the eternal becomes a kind of set-aside space. It is that outside of thought which we cannot think, but which, through recognising thoughts limitations, we reach humility. the eternal is at once everything, implicit beyond the boundary points of temporality, and yet at the same time nowhere- invisible and only recognisable dialectically in relation to the temporal. To live in relation to the eternal in this way is to live in a continual process of becoming:

> "Every subject is an existing subject, and therefore this must be essentially expressed in all of his knowing and must be expressed by keeping his knowing from an illusory termination in sensate certainty, in historical knowledge, in illusory results." (CUP: p81)

In other words, the subjective individual who relates to the eternal recognises that there is always something which escapes them, always something that is in the process of becoming. A negative space is always maintained- the recognition that one does not know, and that one is continually growing. Here we see the first form of faith I have mentioned- the leaving open of a space beyond the understanding. It is tempting to reach out for stability and to create the illusion that one has reached a kind of certainty in thought. The job of the subjective individual in religiousness A is to disrupt this illusory termination and to

once again remind themselves that they are aware of the negative- that which is beyond their understanding. Kierkegaard gives us the example of Socrates as the exemplar of this form of life:

> "Socrates says somewhere that it is remarkable that the skipper, after transporting passengers from Greece to Italy, upon arrival walks calmly back and forth on the beach and collects his pay as if he had done something good, although he cannot know whether he has benefited the passengers or whether it might not have been better for them to lose their lives at sea" (CUP: pp83-4).

In this humorous anecdote we can see what is meant by maintaining a relation to the eternal through the negative. Socrates imagines that the skipper knows nothing about his passengers. He does not know whether they ought to live or not or what results will come from their arrival on the shores of Italy. Socrates points out to us that, if we were to imagine that the skipper believes that he has done something good, as his behaviour seems to indicate, he really has no grounds for doing so, for how does he know that what he has done is in fact good and not instead a great evil? Socrates' words are at once comic and filled with pathos (CUP: p88). This is because they express the contradiction between the temporal and the eternal. The person, living temporally, is forced to recognise continually the limitations of their knowledge whilst at the same time having to make decisions that would seem to require knowledge.

One might accuse Socrates of cultivating an unhelpful kind of hyper-reflectivity here. By encouraging unnecessary reflection, we might think, Socrates renders us unable to move from the spot. If the skipper were to sit down and endlessly contemplate whether transporting the passengers to Italy is after all the right thing to do, we would see action replaced with reflection. The comic situation, however, is precisely that in which one recognises that one does not know and yet acts nonetheless. We see illustrated here the

kind of uncertainty that living negatively produces. Socrates forces us to recognise the limitations of our knowledge and in doing so he points us, negatively, towards the divine. This need not, however, lead to complete inaction. Living with this kind of negativity requires a continual process of surrender in which one acknowledges that one does not know and that one is not in total control of one's existence. One must live in a way humble enough to keep the "wound of negativity" (CUP: p85) open at all times. This means that one must remain aware of the uncertainty of one's actions and the limitations of one's thought at all times and yet live a human life.

For Kierkegaard, Socrates is the exemplar of the life found in religiousness A. Such a life requires a continual recognition of the limitations of one's wisdom. Socrates also demonstrates to us the universal potential for religiousness A in all human beings. We see this in his approach to teaching or 'midwifery':

> "The ultimate idea in all questioning is that the person asked must himself possess the truth and acquire it by himself. The temporal point of departure is a nothing, because in the same moment I discover that I have known the truth from eternity without knowing it, in the same instant that moment is hidden in The Eternal, assimilated into it in such a way that I, so to speak, still cannot find it even if I were to look for it, because there is no Here and no There, but only an *ubique et nusquam* [everywhere and nowhere]" (PF: pp12-13).

Socratic questioning aims to bring out what the individual already knows. It is therefore described as recollection. The job of the teacher is simply to prompt the recollection of knowledge to come about. This is why Kierkegaard states that the temporal point of departure is nothing. The bringing about of knowledge could have happened at any time and could have been prompted by anyone. There is nothing particularly important about the teacher who does prompt an individual to recollect such knowledge, nor about the occasion. The moment of recollection dissolves into the eternal with the recollection that

one has always known, yet without knowing, the knowledge which is recollected in the moment. It was not a knowledge brought into existence at the moment of discovery, but rather one that, as it shows up, reminds the individual that it has always been there. This 'everywhere and nowhere' that Kierkegaard speaks of is the eternal. In dialogue, then, Socrates prompts his interlocutors to recollect and in the moment of recollection brings them in to contact with the eternal. As a teacher, however, he is relatively insignificant. He repeatedly reminds us that he himself knows nothing and teaches nothing. Instead, he stimulates a process already implicit in his interlocutor.

We have, then, a brief account of Religiousness A. This is a form of religiousness that need not belong to any specific religious denomination, but which is available to all. It involves a relation to the eternal negatively, through recognition of the limits of human thought and through recollection.

One might recognise at this point, however, that there seems to be a kind of confusion between the positive and the negative in Kierkegaard's account of The Eternal. If the eternal is something we relate to only negatively, why do we speak about it as if it were something positive (for example as *the eternal* or even as God or the good)? Although it might seem natural to give a name to this negative space, doing so signifies a big shift that involves introducing a range of dogmatic assumptions. If we speak of the negative, for example, as God, this would imply several things about what this negativity is and about how we ought to relate to it. For example, we might relate to God through sin consciousness, through worship and prayer, etc. In fact, at times, Kierkegaard speaks of Religiousness A in moral terms, as relating to guilt consciousness. As he puts it in *CUP*:

> "Here the upbuilding is quite properly distinguishable by the negative, by the self-annihilation that finds the relationship with God within itself, that suffering-through

> sinks into the relationship with God, finds its ground in it, because God is in the ground only when everything that is in the way is cleared out, every finitude, and first and foremost the individual himself in his finitude, in his cavilling against God." (CUP: pp560-561)

In other words, religiousness A is here characterised by a certain kind of surrender to the divine. It is guilt consciousness that prompts an individual to set themselves aside in order to find God. This guilt consciousness comes from a recognition that one is double-minded- a slave of two masters. So long as this is the case, the individual is not prepared to sacrifice all for the divine. In fact, so long as one is a single individual- a self with free-will, distance already exists from the divine. This is because one exists not simply as an agent of the good but instead remains at a distance. This distance allows for freedom, but at the same time requires a separation from God. A proper relationship with God, then, requires self-annihilation because it requires that one gradually subordinate one's will to the divine. This is the process Kierkegaard describes above as a "clearing out" of finitude. It is in this clearing out that tension is to be found because, without self-annihilation, one is always stuck at a distance from the divine. We need not understand the God of religiousness A as anything specifically theological. Instead, we might replace the word 'God' with "the good" and relate to it in exactly the way we would relate to God. It is distance from the good which brings guilt consciousness and through such guilt consciousness that we recollect our relation to the good.

Here, however, the problem of mixing the negative and the positive is clear. There is a shift from thinking of a negative space outside of the understanding, which need not necessarily be thought of in moral terms, towards a moral conceptualisation of what this negative space entails. When we call the negative "God" or "the good" we take a particular stance towards it, one that is filled with deference and even guilt. In the way Kierkegaard

describes religiousness A, then, we can see the introduction of a range of dogmatics. Why, for example, could we not understand such a negative space as pure flux, as the un-realised or as the unground? Why isn't the relation to this negative space something closer to the Dionysian expression of Will than guilt-consciousness?

All of this poses a problem if we wish to find a way to understand spirituality that is not confined to a particular set of dogmatics. One might argue that the Kierkegaardian notion of faith, even within the sphere of religiousness A, seems to be tied to Christian theology (and through it, Greek paganism). If it is the case, for example, that guilt is to be the way in which the subjectively-spiritual individual relates to the eternal, we are likely to have a problem describing many of the more popular practices Heelas and Woodhead describe as belonging to religiousness A. Although not documented by Heelas and Woodhead, guilt is likely to be a very unpopular concept in the sphere of subjective spirituality because of its associations with the church and the notion of sin. A rejection of institutional authority often involves a rejection of the power mechanisms perceived as being involved in sustaining that form of authority. Guilt could well be understood as one such power mechanism. If we are to understand spirituality as something that extends beyond Christianity introducing this kind of dogmatics might well be problematic.

All is not lost, however. Let us consider for a moment the way in which faith functions in religiousness B. Doing so will allows us to bring dogmatics to the forefront. Although Christianity may only be implicit in the guilt consciousness of religiousness A, in B, the Christian narrative is central. Kierkegaard speaks of an "absolute paradox"- namely the paradox of basing one's eternal happiness on a particular historical event in time. This paradox is expressed in Christ, who is himself paradoxical- both man and God, the eternal

and the temporal in one being. The absurd thought is the idea that the eternal could come in to and find its basis *within time* in the form of a man and a historical event. In religiousness B, then, faith fulfils all three of the roles I described previously. First, faith involves the specific belief that this particular historical event- the life of Christ- is the grounding for one's eternal happiness. When we consider what exactly this kind of faith involves, however, we see that implicit within it are the other two forms of faith. Holding to this specific historical event involves that one accept a paradox without offence. This is the paradox just mentioned, of bringing eternity into time. We have seen previously that whenever an individual is presented with a paradox, two options are opened up. Either a person becomes offended and turns away, or they approach the paradox with faith. Accepting this paradox involves that one set aside a space outside of the understanding. The final form of faith, then, is implicit in the previous two forms.

Religiousness B, like religiousness A, involves a relation to the negative because it requires that we open up a space for the paradox to come in. At the same time, however, this negativity is given positive content through the specific narrative of the Christian story. religiousness B involves a relation to the negative through the positive. It is through engagement with Christ that one (through confrontation with the paradox) is forced to leave open a space beyond the understanding. In religiousness B, however, the relationship to Christ never becomes a purely positive one because this would annul the paradox. religiousness B, as we have seen, provides us with a paradigm for how one might maintain negativity and yet at the same time relate to it as something positive. It shows us how one can relate to the positive without completely annulling the negative. We do this precisely through faith- through the setting aside of a space beyond the understanding in which we

can hold together paradox without offence. Let us now return to religiousness A to see if we might find faith in a similar way there.

When Kierkegaard speaks of religiousness A, the negative (that which is outside of thought) is given positive content simply through the fact that it is spoken about. Even my own attempts to speak of "the negative" give this space some kind of content. The problem is therefore that one cannot speak of the negative whatsoever without implicitly introducing some positive in order to do so. One big difference between religiousness A and B, however, has to do with what exactly this positive content is. As we have seen, in religiousness B, we relate to the negative specifically through the story of Christ. This is not necessarily so in religiousness A. A person living the religiousness A kind of life might relate to the negative through any number of other potential positive expressions. We might think, for example, of Socrates, who relates to the eternal through continual recollection, or of Patanjali who relates to Purusha through posture, meditation and concentration. The important point is that in both cases, what is related to is an unknown space, beyond the borders of the understanding. The way in which particular individuals relate to this unknown space depends largely on what kind of positive expression it is given. If we relate to the eternal in the Socratic way, the appropriate relationship is recollection. If we relate in Patanjali's way, then the appropriate practices are those dictated by the yoga-sutras. Likewise, if we relate in the Christian way, the appropriate relationship might involve repentance or worship. All of these different ways of relating of course have very different implications for what this negative space is- they all give it different kinds of content and sometimes tie ontological claims about the existence of various forces or beings in with this relating. Positivity arises out of the relationship with the negative but it is important, if we are really to be speaking

of religiousness A, that negativity is maintained *alongside* such positivity- a recognition that one's knowledge of and expressions for this space are limited.

Faith is required at the point at which powerlessness is experienced as powerlessness in the face of *something*. That which lies outside of one's 'power' or outside of one's understanding is given a positive expression, allowing for a relationship to that thing. Some of the positive expressions that might be found in forms of subjective spiritualities are things like "the universe", "the negative", "the eternal", "the good", "God", "Mother Nature" etc. In religiousness A, the paradoxical nature of relating to one of these positive forces comes from the fact that what lies beyond this positivity is a 'nothing', a continual slipping away that undermines continually one's ability to comprehend.

In terms of reading Kierkegaard, however, the trouble with understanding religiousness A in the broad way I have above is that he does seem to give religiousness A specific positive content at times. This is so, as we saw, when he speaks of guilt consciousness and of the good. Kierkegaard is clear that religiousness A involves a turn inwards, as a pose to the outward relation to Christ found in religiousness B. This is potentially problematic for our account because even speaking of "the eternal" as something found "inward" suggests that Kierkegaard has in mind a particular set of dogmatics which he associates with religiousness A. If religiousness A necessarily involves a relation to the eternal through guilt, this excludes a whole range of practices which might involve relating to the negative through the positive. The problem is that we would lose flexibility from the religiousness A category.

One way we could read these passages, however, is as providing examples of a particular way of relating to the negative, but not necessarily as the only way. Kierkegaard

concerns himself primarily in *CUP* with the relationship between Christianity and paganism (specifically Greek), not with other potential forms of religiousness A. In this context, it is right to say that a key difference between Greek paganism and Christianity has to do with whether or not one relates to the eternal inwardly or outwardly. Religiousness A can be taken, however, to describe a kind of structure that underlies many different ways of relating to negativity, but which, in itself, cannot be expressed outside of any particular positive expression. It need not refer only to the Greek pagan way of relating. The kind of relationship that one has to the negative, the kind of practices that one might engage with to express this relationship and the 'flavour' of this negativity will depend on what kind of dogmatics one buys in to. Recollection is different from repentance, which is different again from meditation. All of these activities, however, could potentially express a relationship to the negative (or whatever other positive expression we want to give for it).

At this point, we have an account of what we are looking for when we seek out faith in religiousness A. Faith refers in this context to the ability to hold the positive *together* with the negative. Specifically, this means that the person with faith is able to relate to something like "the eternal" without reducing this space to *only* positive contents. A set aside space is left open- in particular the paradoxical recognition that what is related to goes beyond what one can express. This involves leaving room for that which is outside the understanding, that which is paradoxical and yet not turning away in offence.

Let us examine a specific example to clarify how this works. "the good" can be related to in more than one way. As we saw in the exploration of religiousness A, the good can be taken as something beyond the understanding, the correct relation to which is guilt-consciousness and recollection. Here "the good" has some positive content, insofar as it has

a moral flavour and an appropriate way of relating. Nevertheless, there is something incomplete about the notion and something which continually escapes expression. In this version of the good, it cannot be reduced to the understanding, to a list of propositions or to something captured clearly in thought. One must hold to the good in this sense, even though one is not totally clear on what exactly it is or whether or not it really 'exists'. This is the way we would relate to the good in religiousness A. The name for this kind of relation is faith- the holding of the paradox in which the positive (In this case the notion "the good") is held together with the negative (Whatever it is that the notion "the good" tries to express, but which continually escapes categorisation), the temporal with the eternal.

Contrastingly, one might relate to the good as a set of principles, perhaps adopted from some social group, or through reason. In this case, the good becomes something that, potentially, can be understood. It does not require the leaving open of a space outside of the understanding, nor does it require paradox. This way of relating would not require faith.

Religiousness A has the potential to illuminate phenomena which do not have a Christian character because it allows us to understand that there may be different ways to hold the positive together with the negative. What is important, however, is that whatever character it does have, it involves the setting aside of a space beyond the understanding and the opening up of the acceptance of paradox. In particular, we are looking for a particular positive expression which hides *something more*, escaping expression. As we will see, there will be problems with identifying a practice which falls into this category. For now, however, let us return to Heelas and Woodhead to see if religiousness A can help us understand contemporary forms of spirituality.

Practical applications

We find, in subjective spirituality, a turn inwards similar to that Kierkegaard describes in religiousness A:

> "The goal is not to defer to higher authority, but to have the courage to become one's own authority. Not to follow established paths, but to forge one's own inner-directed, as subjective, life. Not to become what others want one to be, but to 'become who I truly am'. Not to rely on the knowledge and wisdom of others… but to live out the Delphic' know thyself'" (Heelas, P. & Woodhead, L. 2005: p4).

The aim of the kind of subjective spirituality described here is cashed out in terms of knowledge. One aims to 'know oneself'. This is a process that requires an increasing deepening of one's inwardness. Yoga practitioners, for example, are asked to listen to their body, to turn inwards and sometimes to discover an 'inner voice'[43]. We might liken this to the Socratic form of recollection. Instead of taking up the pre-digested wisdom offered by others, we are encouraged to engage in a process of self-exploration in order to try to find wisdom for ourselves. No other person can be taken to be an authority because it is recognised that wisdom can only be found through a process of inwardness (recollection). In this sense, the teacher takes a role much like that of midwifery:

> "practitioners continually emphasize the importance of 'serving' their participants. Their language is of 'helping', 'guiding', 'supporting', 'working with', 'encouraging', 'enabling', 'nurturing', 'facilitating' and 'steering'. The focus is on the unique participant rather than on some higher authority or common good." (ibid: p28)

The role of the practitioner, then, involves bringing about a turning inward in the participant similar to recollection. They do this through many different means, but the aim revolves

[43] This is particularly so in Western forms of the practice. Interestingly, one might be able to cache out some traditional Indian forms of yoga practice more in terms of congregational religion (even if it a little inappropriate to speak of 'congregation' here). One lives one's life *as* a yogi, subordinating oneself to a guru who is an authority on the divine. One trains one's body and mind in preparation for enlightenment, an exercise which does not necessarily involve trusting oneself as an authority. Such forms of practice tend to be more monastic in form. I suspect that this is true not only of yoga, but other forms of subjective spirituality that are appropriations of practices with much older traditional roots.

around turning the participant inwards in order to find an inner guide. Such a process is akin to that which we saw takes place in religiousness A and could actually fit the bill for an example of such religiousness. The individual reaches knowledge through recollection. The teacher can only ever be a guide towards the eternal. The individual, by turning inward, may begin to discover the limitations of their understanding and to recognise a certain kind of powerlessness. It is at this point that a subjectively spiritual practice has the potential to become an example of religiousness A.

Although there are certainly parallels between the kind of tuition found in forms of subjective spirituality and the Socratic form of midwifery, there are dis-analogies too. The Socratic process involves continual negation. Socrates' interlocutor is reminded repeatedly that they know nothing by being shown again and again that their understanding is inconsistent. The interlocutor is guided towards the eternal through a recognition of the limitations of their own wisdom and thinking. We said that the eternal in religiousness A is reached through a process of negation. It isn't clear, however, that this is the same process that takes place in forms of subjectivity spirituality. A person is guided inwards by a practitioner, but they are not necessarily engaging in a process of continual self-negation. In fact, a kind of self-confidence or trust in self is sometimes promoted, such that might actually restrict a coming to terms with the negative.

Likewise, positive content can be smuggled into this kind of relationship. Although the practitioner might guide the client inward in order to find their own truth, there might be certain expectations for what this sort of truth should look like. This isn't necessarily a problem for religiousness A because, as we have seen, relating to the negative always involves some positive content. The trouble comes, however, when the content is *only*

positive, in other words when the client is led to a particular set of propositions or assumptions without recognising the limited nature of these positive expressions. The same process of turning inwards can be directed in more than one way. In order to further elucidate what it is that places certain categories in religiousness A, let us now consider two contrast cases. These can be understood, I will argue, in terms of Kierkegaard's stages of life.

As we saw, Heelas and Woodhead describe subjective spirituality as arising within the wider context of subjective wellbeing culture. Subjective wellbeing culture, they argue, is based around promoting 'good feelings'. Such a way of being, then, might well be aesthetic. The individual, seeking out pleasure and happiness, might land themselves in all kinds of practices usually associated with subjective spirituality. One reason to practice yoga, for example, might be out of a kind of restlessness that one wishes to eliminate by training the body. Likewise, meditation might be learnt as a technique to silence anxiety. The reason why these forms of engagement are not suitable candidates for religiousness A is that they might involve a taking up of spiritual practices but in a way that prevents a coming to terms with the eternal. Restlessness, anxiety and guilt are all important transition points in Kierkegaard's writing which help pull us from one stage of consciousness to another. Anxiety, for example, pushes us to the point at which we recognise the openness of possibility. Such an experience implies powerlessness- the acknowledgement that one is not in total control of one's life and the recognition that things are not predictable or fixed. This kind of acknowledgement involves the opening up of a space beyond the understanding and potentially the acceptance of a power greater than oneself.

If we develop techniques to hold at bay the transformation that these feelings signify, we might not be so different from A in a rotation of crops, finding ingenious ways to

keep suffering at bay. By using meditation, for example, to soften anxiety, we would not necessarily be engaging with the practice in a way that might help us come to terms with the eternal. Instead, we might actually be preventing the opening up of a space beyond the understanding by systematically softening the feelings that might prompt the opening of this space. Deepening the breath and concentrating on one thing can both be methods for softening anxiety. Both practices help to trigger para-sympathetic nervous function and thereby reduce the fight or flight sensations associated with anxiety. Meditation can become a form of control which extends to the self, in which one uses one's mind to discipline oneself to better align with one's will. If I *don't like* the fact that I am anxious because it threatens my productivity or doesn't fit in with the kind of life I want to have, I can use meditation to train myself out of it. This way of practicing meditation would potentially lack the kind of surrender intrinsic in any relationship to the eternal.

On the other hand, the same practice, taken up for the same reason (the overcoming of anxiety) could lead a person to an opening up of the space beyond the understanding so long as an attitude of surrender is successfully cultivated. Doing so would involve accepting the potentially transformative effects of anxiety. Instead of resisting that which runs counter to one's will, one allows for a transformation of self to take place not dictated by the will. This could happen in a way not intended by the practitioner of meditation. As Heelas and Woodhead put it, there is a kind of slide from subjective wellbeing practices into subjective spirituality. Likewise, we might say that there could be a slide from an aesthetic way of practicing meditation in to a religious one, so long as the practitioner finds themselves at the point at which they recognise the limitations of their understanding and allows for the opening up and surrendering to something which transcends their will.

It would appear that there are two very distinct ways to engage with the same practice. On the one hand, meditation might be used as a practice of surrender, not unlike prayer. It might be a practice that involves a recognition of the eternal through a continual process of negation. One might learn, for example, to regard the self as undefined and separate from any particular temporal object. One might experience a state of no-self or a recognition of something beyond the limits of temporal experience but implied negatively within experience. On the other hand, one might practice meditation to keep anxiety at bay through calming the body and mind and through distraction. In the former case, we might see something akin to religiousness A, in the latter the aesthetic.

Having seen that there are two distinct ways in which an individual might relate to the same practice, one belonging to religiousness A (and therefore involving faith) and one belonging to the aesthetic, we can now see that, although there will be a potential for the kinds of practices Heelas and Woodhead describe as subjectively spiritual to involve faith, they also may not. Whether or not faith is required will revolve around whether or not they involve keeping open of negativity paradoxically alongside the positive content. If the practice has to do only with good feelings, then there is no relation to the negative and the practice is purely aesthetic. Furthermore, if the practice involves engagement only with the positive, it may be an example of what Kierkegaard describes as the ethical.

The ethical stage in Kierkegaard's writings is characterised by a commitment to particular social roles and responsibilities which structure one's identity and give life meaning. This, then, is extremely similar to what Heelas and Woodhead describe when they speak of congregational religion. The judge of *EO* is himself a church going Christian who believes in the importance of subordinating his subjective whims to the structures provided

to him by society. Love, for example, finds its highest expression in marriage and faith in the church. Although some members of a congregation may have a relationship to the genuinely eternal (the ethical stage borders on the religious), many might not. It is possible to go to church, to call oneself a Christian, to be baptised, to pray, without having any relationship to a standpoint outside of temporality whatsoever. All of this can take place *within* temporality. If we understand the good, for example, as arising from social consensus, it is possible to understand God as a kind of human projection- a mythological figure who captures for us the image of a benevolent but watchful Father. Rather than relating to something genuinely outside of temporality, then, we would instead be relating to a projection of an aspect of our own psyche on to a mythological figure in time. A form of worship such as this, one might argue, amounts to idolisation as it requires that one worship a conglomeration of the moral values of one's society as if this were God. Nevertheless, it does not seem unlikely that many church going Christians engage in this kind of worship. Importantly, they might engage in such a practice without ever being aware of it. The church is a social institution as well as a spiritual one and there are likely to be many for whom the social function subordinates the genuinely spiritual. In the ethical, it is reduced to performing a social function and Christian theology becomes mythology.

The ethical way of life, furthermore, is not only to be found in the church and Christianity. It is perfectly possible for a practitioner of some form of subjective spirituality to fall into this category. Although it is true that subjective spirituality involves a turning inward in order to find an inner voice, potentially led by a practitioner, it is possible that what exactly this inner voice is and what it dictates might be no more than an internalisation of the norms of one's social context. The meditator, for example, whose understanding of "right livelihood" is taken solely from what the social community surrounding them dictates,

and who possesses no insight into something which escapes their understanding, would fall into the ethical way of life.

The ethical life does not require faith because what is related to is purely positive. “the good” is here the name for a set of assumptions taken from one’s social situation over what makes a good life. Negativity is not required at all to live this kind of life. Such a life might even prevent a coming to terms with the negative because the potential for negativity is plastered over by a relationship to something purely positive. It would require a breakthrough in consciousness to release oneself from a purely positive relation in order to find potential space for negativity. Such a breakthrough would be characterised by the realisation that what one describes as “the good”, for example, is merely semblance and fails to capture the infinity hidden behind it. It is at the point of this recognition, where one holds to particular positive content through which positivity’s own limitations bubbles up, that faith is to be found. The ethical stage borders on Religiousness A because there is the potential here for a more profound understanding to arise. Like the aesthete who might slide from practicing meditation in order to silence anxiety into a genuine understanding of the eternal, the ethicist has the potential to discover through their positive relationship to the eternal the limitations of the positive. Here, dialectically, they discover negativity.

From the above examples we can see how we might use the category of religiousness A to distinguish between those practices which are genuinely spiritual (because they involve faith) and those that are not. It is possible to engage in a practice that Heelas and Woodhead might describe as subjective spirituality, but in a manner that has nothing to do with the negative. Likewise, it is possible for a person to engage with something like “the good”, but in a manner where it is experienced only positively. This

might involve, for example, relying solely on ideas of what "the good" or "the eternal" are picked up from the social community or from various texts. So far, then, there is potentially space within subjective spirituality for religiousness A. It is also clear, however, that not all forms of subjective spirituality will fall into this category. In fact, there are a whole range of versions of what we might call subjective spirituality which fall short because they do not involve a relationship with the negative.

Now that we have a definition of spirituality, we will turn our attention to the identification of spirituality in the contemporary landscape. There is, however, a problem. if spirituality involves an inward relation to something like the eternal, it does not seem possible to identify the spiritual person third-personally. This is because, as we have seen, a person can engage in any one practice in a variety of different ways. The problem of inwardness calls in to question Heelas and Woodhead's very project because if it is the case that we cannot identify spirituality third personally, it will prove impossible to produce sociological studies tracking the contemporary spiritual landscape. Kierkegaard stresses repeatedly that religiousness is an inward matter. Johannes De Silentio, for example, gives us a humorous account of what he would do if he were to meet a knight of faith:

> "The instant I first lay eyes on him, I set him apart at once; I jump back, clap my hands, and say half aloud, 'Good Lord, is this the man, is this really the one- he looks just like a tax collector!'… I examine his figure from top to toe to see if there may not be a crack through which the infinite would peek. No! He is solid all the way through." (FT: p39)

The absurdity of Johannes De Silentio's anecdote lies in the fact that he at once acknowledges that there would be no way to recognise the knight of faith's relation to The Infinite from his outward appearance, but at the same time Johannes nonetheless engages in the task of trying to imagine what such a knight would look like. The knight of faith looks,

of course, like any other ordinary man. There is nothing which distinguishes him from everyone else and yet inwardly he makes the movement of faith. We might learn a lesson from Johannes here. The fact that someone describes themselves as spiritual, that they look a certain way, or that they engage in certain practices will never be enough for us to identify them as genuinely having faith. If faith involves any kind of inward subjective relationship to The Infinite in this way, we will find it impossible to tell for sure whether or not those engaging in subjective forms of spirituality have faith or not. Doing so would be a task of equal absurdity to Johannes' imaginings on what the knight of faith would look like. What we can say, however, is that there is at least the *potential* that these forms of subjective spirituality could involve a relationship with 'the eternal' and thus faith.

We could, it might be argued, have some sense of what forms of practice definitely do not involve faith and therefore do not qualify as spiritual. Although we might not be able to tell for sure, there are certain hints we might recognise. For example, the aesthetic life is often characterised with a kind of restlessness, not conducive to long term practice. The length of engagement in a practice might give us some indication of the way in which an individual relates to it, insofar as a fast, shifting relationship might be an indication of an aesthetic way of being. Likewise, the ethical life tends to be characterised by a high degree of certainty. Religiousness A requires humility because it requires that one recognise that there are things which are beyond the understanding or even paradoxical. A high degree of dogmatism and an inflexibility, therefore, could be an indication of an ethical way of life.

All this said, we must be careful not to draw conclusions too forcefully from a person's outward behaviour. All of these indicators can be taken only as hints of what kind of inward life a person lives. It is certainly possible that a person with a shifting, seemingly

restless lifestyle still has a relationship with the negative that involves faith. Likewise, it is possible that a person who outwardly attaches themselves forcefully to dogmatics inwardly recognises the infinity that goes beyond the positive content they express. All of this, of course, renders giving a third personal account of spirituality problematic. Whilst, then, Kierkegaard has much that is positive to contribute when it comes to understanding our own relationship to faith, the contribution he can make to sociological accounts of spirituality is a negative one. What we learn from Kierekgaard is that when we think about what it really means to be spiritual, we discover that studying spirituality by means of survey will only ever yield limited results.

Conclusion

Thus far in this chapter we have approached faith from a slightly different angle to in the previous chapters. Before, faith was characterised as that which allows for the possibility of purity of heart. It does this, I argued, by opening up a space in which one does not have to compromise on happiness and yet can commit oneself wholeheartedly to the good. Such a possibility was only available to those who open up a space for hope. How, then, does the kind of faith discussed thus far relate to the kind of faith that constitutes spirituality? Both kinds of faith require the opening up of the space beyond the understanding- a space in which paradox can be held without offence. The kind of faith required for purity of heart is just one example of this opening up of a space for paradox, but other forms exist in which positive content is held together with negativity. I argue, then, that if purity of heart is possible (without sliding in to the demonic/ compromise), it is only so on the grounds that one cultivates some kind of spirituality. Minimally, this

spirituality must allow for the preservation of happiness in the face of the uncompromising ethical demand. There is no particular form this spirituality must take. One could reach purity of heart and belong to no particular group. Inwardly, however, there must be faith if a slide in to the demonic or compromise is to avoided and if such a life is to be sustainable.

The aim of this chapter was to put Kierkegaard's writings in conversation with contemporary studies of spirituality. Doing this has revealed the relevance of Kierkegaardian categories in a non-Christian context. What we find is that contemporary sociological literature struggles a great deal in getting clear on what kind of thing spirituality is. I have suggested that we might best understand the difference between spirituality and non-spiritual practices along the same lines as we might distinguish between religiousness A and the aesthetic/ethical life. In doing this I have demonstrated how faith can still be an important category in the contemporary world. It is faith, I have argued, that allows for a genuinely spiritual relationship to something like God, The Divine, Mother Nature, the negative (etc.). Faith allows for a relationship to something that stands outside the understanding and which continually escapes us. For spirituality, humility is a fundamental virtue because it is through humility that one can maintain the openness required to allow for continual negativity. A common characteristic of faith is that the person with faith relates to some positive, but with the implicit recognition that any expression of this content is limited. In theory, it might be possible to relate to that which escapes the understanding purely negatively but creating expressions through which one can reflect and express one's relationship is natural.

In terms of our wider project, I have demonstrated how faith might be possible for the non-Christian. The non-Christian can relate to paradox and to that which cannot be

understood just as much as the Christian. In terms of conscience, this means that a non-Christian could potentially become pure of heart, so long as the paradoxical hope found by the Christian can be cultivated through a similar kind of humility. As we saw previously, purity of heart is only possible on the grounds that happiness can be found in alignment with the good. When we search for empirical evidence that the good will be met with happiness, however, we find that such an alignment is doubtful. It is thus faith and the hope for that which seems improbable (if not impossible) that secures the possibility of purity of heart. Such a faith is possible for the non-Christian because like the Christian, they can relate to something which escapes the understanding, opening themselves to the possibility of an alignment through hope. It will, however, be extremely difficult, if not impossible to determine whether any non-Christians (or Christians for that matter) actually manage to cultivate this kind of relationship because of the problem of inwardness. The same practice can be related to in a multitude of ways and it is difficult to get clear what exactly a person's relationship with their practice is from the third personal.

Conclusion

The aim of this project has been to uncover the process through which a person may come to find and develop their conscience as it is outlined in Kierkegaard's writings. At the start we posed a series of questions. We asked how a life in which the good is willed above all else could be possible without compromising radically on human happiness. We asked how purity of heart could ever be possible for a human being, part of who's will must always be fixed on the good. We asked how it could ever be possible to follow the demands of one's conscience uncompromisingly, without reaching a point at which these demands become unbearable and thus pressure one in to fleeing from the good altogether. We asked to what degree we have a choice in becoming pure of heart- whether we can make ourselves will the good or not through the force of our own will. It is now possible to answer these questions by drawing on the narrative reconstructed from the texts.

We discovered in chapter 1 that conscience comes into the world through an original act of transgression- what one might call original sin. It is then possible to recollect this original transgression. Conscience, we saw, has both a backwards and a forward-looking element. It involves both the recognition of past wrongdoing through guilt-consciousness, but also of the possibility of future wrongdoing. In forms of life with low levels of spirit, conscience may be experienced merely as restlessness, anxiety or boredom, without providing any direction as to how one ought to proceed. In forms of life in which spirit is more firmly established, conscience can be experienced as the voice of God and can provide guidance. The task for the single individual, argues Kierkegaard, is to allow conscience to grow until the point at which it is extended to all areas of life.

Conscience ties us both to a continual recollection of guilt and may require of us that we make certain compromises when it comes to our happiness. In chapter 2 we asked

who is able to have a conscience and what the barriers to having a conscience might be. The obstacle for the human being, we saw, is double-mindedness- that the will is not focussed purely on the good. Being double-minded involves an attachment to temporal ends and in this state the will is not focussed on only conscience but at the same time attached to temporal ends in the world. We found, however, that double-mindedness manifests differently in different stages of life and that there are additional barriers depending on how it manifests. The aesthete, for example, is focussed on pleasure and the avoidance of boredom. In this form of life, we saw, the fundamental barrier to willing conscience was a lack of spirit. Because conscience manifests in this stage of life only as restlessness and anxiety, it is unclear to the aesthete why they should want a conscience. Conscience cannot be willed in this form of life because the aesthete spends their time avoiding the feelings through which conscience manifests. In the ethical life, on the other hand, we saw that conscience can become masked by a social understanding of the good. Such a person commits themselves to duty and, although there is a craving for the eternal in this form of life, the ethicist's will is directed towards a version of the good which is temporal- it belongs to a particular social context and thus a particular place and time. The ethicist cannot will conscience again because of a lack of spirit. Spirit has not developed to a point at which the demands of conscience are recognised as separate from the social. It is possible, however, that an ethicist might become aware that the demands of conscience differ from the demands of the social good. In cases such as this, a different obstacle may exist- namely akrasia or weakness of the will. The ethicist may not be able to bring themselves to will the good because it requires they sacrifice other ends in the world to which they are attached. The process through which one overcomes double-mindedness was cached out in terms of what Kierkegaard describes as "dying to the world"- a process through which one detaches

the will from all other ends in order for the good to be the sole end. We saw that in the religious stage, there is a commitment to will the good because there is a recognition that guilt leads to suffering and so long as one does not fulfil the demands of conscience one will suffer. Double-mindedness is not necessarily overcome in this form of life and both lack of spirit and aporia may present obstacles to the religious individual at times. There is nevertheless a commitment to will the good.

In chapter 3, we looked at an example of double-mindedness in which the conflict between the demands of the good and the demands of temporal happiness becomes particularly problematic. In Kierkegaard's *WL*, I argued, there exists a tension between a universal form of love directed to all unconditionally and on the other hand a form of love that is directed to particular individuals. The tension was between blindness and sight, between loving everyone equally and loving the particularity of certain individuals. The commandment to love the neighbour, we saw, places an extreme demand on the temporal individual that may not even be possible to meet. We drew on the work of Melanie Klein to see how the kind of guilt that might result from, on the one hand, following the demands of conscience and dying to the world and, on the other hand, continually failing to live up to the commandment might make the commandment self-undermining. Extreme levels of guilt and suffering might lead to a separation from others and an inability to love. Putting Kierkegaard in dialogue with Klein allowed us to see the dangers of living the life of conscience.

Kierkegaard himself highlights the dangers of conscience, speaking of the demonic and enclosing reserve. This allowed us to re-frame the problem of loving the neighbour in these terms: How could it be possible to get to the point at which one wills the good in truth

without in the process slipping in to a state in which one flees from the good and lands oneself in the demonic? WL, it was argued, contains a tension intentionally, pulling the reader between a form of love that is human and preferential and a form of love that is divine and universal. It thus deepens the experience of double-mindedness in the reader, bringing it in to awareness. Not only this, but the text presents love as impossible, demanding the inhuman. The question then was whether Kierkegaard might have shot himself in the foot by presenting his reader with a demand that appears impossible to fulfil and at the same time attaching a weighty guilt to their inevitable failure. The danger, we saw, is that an individual burdened by the guilt of continually failing to fulfil the commandment could find themselves in a demonic form of life in which they can only flee from the good altogether. Such is the risk of any life that takes the demands of conscience seriously.

There are two potential responses to a sign of contradiction like the commandment to love- offence and faith. We considered offence when we looking in to the demonic and enclosing reserve. In chapter 4, we turned our attention to faith. Faith, it was argued, does not remove the contradiction, but allows instead for the two sides to be held together in tension. It allows for the simultaneous detachment from the temporal in order to relate oneself absolutely to the eternal, but at the same time leaves an openness to temporality. We drew on *FT* in order to see how Abraham exemplifies this kind of faith. For Johannes De Silentio, what makes Abraham stand out as the father of faith is his ability to return immediately to the temporal once Isaac is returned to him. The ease of his return betrays the fact that Abraham never closed himself from Isaac altogether. Through the movement of faith, Abraham is able to subordinate his desire for Isaac to his obedience to

God. At the same time, however, Abraham does not stop desiring Isaac and believes, paradoxically, that Isaac will be returned to him.

It was argued at this point that, if they are to avoid the demonic, the individual who "dies to the world" must go through a similar process to Abraham. They must be willing to subordinate all temporal ends in the world to the demands of the good, but this does not necessarily require a complete cutting off from ends in the world. Through faith, one can let go of the world with the simultaneous belief in its restoration. It is with a release of one's will, a movement through which one gives up the need to be in control, that one finds the world miraculously given. The individual who follows their conscience and who tries to will the good with purity of heart through faith can maintain an openness to the possibility of happiness even when striving for the good seems to require that they sacrifice their happiness. The hope is maintained that such happiness may be returned to them, in alignment with the good.

Once we had seen that faith opens up a route through which one may strive to will the good without falling in to the demonic, we considered whether faith can be understood as a choice or not. At times, Kierkegaard uses the language of agency in relation to faith whilst at other times suggesting that it is something that one is forced into. It was argued that faith is best understood as neither active nor passive, but rather as "medio-passive". That is to say, faith is both an active and a passive movement. On the one hand, faith requires a particular context such that the individual is attuned in the right way. This context is given by a deepening of guilt-consciousness and the suffering that results. Kierkegaard's indirect communications (for example *WL*) are texts which attempt to bring about the required context. On the other hand, the person who exists within the required context will

be correctly attuned to experience what feels like a choice- they can carry on living the kind of life they have been, perhaps fleeing from the good, or they can try something new. This new option presents itself as an unknown. The choice between this unknown and a return to double-minded is what Kierkegaard describes as “The decision”.

In chapter 5, we turned out attention to the experience of what it is like to have faith more directly. The aim here was to demonstrate exactly how faith might allow one to overcome the tension between happiness and the demands of conscience. We saw here that faith can be understood as a response to the Kantian problem- that the good does not seem to be met with happiness in this world. For the will to be directed towards the good, there must be some way for the good to come together with happiness, for otherwise part of the will would always be left behind with happiness. This combination of the good and happiness is what Kant calls “the highest good”. As we have seen, Kierkegaard deals with a similar problem in double-mindedness. We compared Kierkegaard solution to the problem with Kant’s, demonstrating that, whilst Kant turns to practical reason, Kierkegaard turns to faith. Faith allows the individual to hope for what might not seem possible to the understanding- that the good will be met with happiness. In doing this, the individual is able to live in such a way as to recognise that the suffering of dying to the world will both lead them to the good and to happiness. Double-mindedness is overcome when the possibility of happiness is maintained alongside the possibility of purity of heart. As we saw, having this kind of faith allows for several kinds of joy to be experienced in the present. The individual can find joy in the fact that they are working together with God, that eternal happiness is promised to them and that they are on the right path.

The problem here, however, was that our account of faith became quite instrumental. We presented faith as a solution to a motivational problem and thus much of *UDVS* read as argumentation in favour of faith. This was problematic because, as we saw, faith is not something we can choose to have. *UDVS*, I argued, is better read as an attempt to remind the reader of a faith that is already present within them. Its function is thereby to trigger recollection in the reader- the recognition that one already lives in a way that, at least to some extent, demonstrates that one has faith.

In the final chapter, we put Kierkegaard in dialogue with contemporary studies in the Sociology of spirituality. The aim here was to ask how things have changed since Kierkegaard was writing and whether changes in the spiritual landscape affect what sense we can make of these writings. We set out to see whether faith has any role in the contemporary world and what form it may take in new forms of spirituality. In order to do this, we drew on an influential study by Heelas and Woodhead into spirituality in the West. They argue that a shift has taken place in which more people are engaging in what they describe as "subjective spirituality". The problem with this account, we saw, is that a clear definition of spirituality is not given. It is in Kierkegaard, I argued, that we might find a way in which to be able to tell which contemporary practices ought to be called spiritual and which not. The standard was faith- if a practice involves faith, I argued, it belongs to the category Kierkegaard describes as "religiousness A" and is spiritual. Such forms of practice usually involve the holding together of some infinity(negativity) alongside some positive expression of this infinity. The important point is that it is continually recognised that the positive expression can never do justice to the infinity behind it. The paradoxical structure of such spirituality is to be found in the need to give a positive expression for something that continually escapes the understanding, that we can know of only negatively through

the limitations of temporality. Faith, we saw, is the structure that allows the paradoxical holding together of opposing sides of a tension. Contemporary forms of spirituality that have the structure of religiousness A are therefore the place in which we may find faith in the contemporary landscape.

Let us now answer the questions set out at the beginning of the project: It is possible to live the life of conscience without radically compromising on human happiness, so long as one can hope for the coming together of the good with happiness. Such a hope requires us to be open to a possibility that is beyond the understanding and thus requires of us humility. This bringing together of the good and happiness is also what allows for the possibility of purity of heart because it means that we do not need to give up on happiness to will only the good. A person with faith can engage in the process of dying to the world, of detaching the will from temporal ends and fixing it solely on the good only to discover that the temporal is fully returned to them. Although the good might seem to require that we sacrifice our happiness, the person with faith recognises that such sacrifice is outweighed by the promise of eternal happiness. What is more such a recognition brings with it joy of a form that can overcome the suffering of sacrifice.

In terms of choice, we discovered that faith can neither be understood as something freely chosen, nor as something imposed. It is through the process of suffering, through experiencing oneself as double-mindedness and through beginning the process of dying to the world that one may find faith. Faith is medio-passive. It requires that we be in a position in which we are correctly attuned to find ourselves presented with a choice. The choice is between a form of life that is familiar to us and the unknown in which we set aside our understanding in favour of hope.

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