The Sickness unto Death

SØREN KIERKEGAARD
1813–1855

The Sickness unto Death

Sygdommen til Døden

Translated from the Danish with AI (Claude) and edited



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INTRODUCTION

The Sickness unto Death appeared in Copenhagen in July 1849, under a new pseudonym, Anti-Climacus, with Kierkegaard's own name as editor. Its subtitle calls it "a Christian psychological exposition for upbuilding and awakening." The title comes from the story of Lazarus: "This sickness is not unto death." For the Christian, Kierkegaard says, death itself is not the worst thing; the sickness unto death is despair.

The book opens with a famously dense definition: a human being is spirit, spirit is the self, and the self is "a relation that relates itself to itself." Despair is a disorder in that relation, and it takes many forms: the person who loses himself in the infinite or in the finite, in endless possibility or in grim necessity; the person who does not even know he is in despair; the one who in weakness does not want to be himself; and the one who in defiance insists on being himself on his own terms.

The second part turns psychology into theology. Despair before God is sin, and the opposite of sin is not virtue but faith. Anti-Climacus argues with the Socratic idea that sin is ignorance, then traces how sin deepens: despairing over one's sin, despairing of forgiveness, and finally declaring Christianity untrue.

Preface

Forord

Why a Christian treatise must be both rigorous and upbuilding, like a physician's lecture at the sickbed.

DANISH

SKS 11.11 Herr! gieb uns blöde Augen
für Dinge, die nichts taugen,
und Augen voller Klarheit
in alle deine Wahrheit.

SKS 11.11 Mange vil maaskee denne »Udviklings« Form forekomme besynderlig; den vil synes dem for streng til at kunne være opbyggelig, og for opbyggelig til at kunne være streng videnskabelig. Hvad dette Sidste angaaer, da har jeg derom ingen Mening. Hvad det Første derimod angaaer, da er dette ikke min Mening om den; og var det Tilfældet, at den var for streng til at være opbyggelig, saa er det efter mit Begreb en Feil. Eet er det jo, om den ikke kan være opbyggelig for Enhver, fordi ikke Enhver har Forudsætninger til at følge den; et Andet, at den har det Opbyggeliges Charakteer. Christeligt bør nemlig Alt, Alt tjene til Opbyggelse. Den Art Videnskabelighed, som ikke tilsidst er opbyggelig, er netop derved uchristelig.

Alt Christeligt maa i Fremstillingen have Lighed med en Læges Foredrag ved Sygesengen; om end kun den Lægekyndige forstaaer det, bør dog aldrig glemmes, at det er ved Sygesengen. Dette det Christeliges Forhold til Livet (i Modsætning til en videnskabelig Fjernhed fra Livet), eller denne det Christeliges ethiske Side er just det Opbyggelige, og den Art Fremstilling, hvor streng den end forresten kan være, aldeles forskjellig, qvalitativ forskjellig fra den Art Videnskabelighed, der er »ligegyldig«, hvis ophøiede Heroisme christelig er saa langt fra at være Heroisme, at den christelig er en Art umenneskelig Nysgjerrighed.

Det er christelig Heroisme, og sandeligen den sees maaskee sjelden nok, at vove ganske at blive sig selv, et enkelt Menneske, dette bestemte enkelte Menneske, ene

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Herr! gieb uns blöde Augen
für Dinge, die nichts taugen,
und Augen voller Klarheit
in alle deine Wahrheit. [Lord, give us eyes that are dim to things that are worth nothing, and eyes full of clarity into all your truth.]

Many may find the form of this "exposition" strange. It will seem to them too rigorous to be upbuilding, and too upbuilding to be rigorously scholarly. As for the latter, I have no opinion on that. As for the former, that is not my opinion of it; and if it were the case that it was too rigorous to be upbuilding, then by my notion that would be a fault. It is one thing whether it cannot be upbuilding for everyone, because not everyone has the prerequisites for following it; it is another whether it has the character of the upbuilding. For in Christian terms everything, everything, ought to serve for upbuilding. The kind of scholarship that is not, in the end, upbuilding is for that very reason unchristian.[1]

Everything Christian must, in its presentation, resemble a physician's lecture at the sickbed. Even if only someone versed in medicine understands it, it must never be forgotten that it is given at the sickbed. This relation of the Christian to life (in contrast to a scholarly distance from life), or this ethical side of the Christian, is precisely the upbuilding. And this kind of presentation, however rigorous it may otherwise be, is altogether different, qualitatively different, from the kind of scholarship that is "indifferent." In Christian terms, the lofty heroism of that scholarship is so far from being heroism that it is a kind of inhuman curiosity.

Christian heroism, and truly it is perhaps seen rarely enough, is to venture wholly to become oneself, a single human being, this particular

1 "Upbuilding" renders *opbyggelig* / *Opbyggelse*, the Danish for "edifying" / "edification", whose root sense is building up.

DANISH

lige over for Gud, ene i denne uhyre Anstrengelse og dette uhyre Ansvar; men det er ikke christelig Heroisme, at narres med det rene Menneske, eller lege Forundringsleg med Verdenshistorien. Al christelig Erkjenden, hvor streng dens Form end forøvrigt er, bør være bekymret; men denne Bekymring er just det Opbyggelige. Bekymringen er Forholdet til Livet, til Personlighedens Virkelighed og saaledes, christelig, Alvoren; den ligegyldige [118] Videns Ophøiethed er, christelig, langt fra at være mere Alvor, den er, christelig, Spøg og Forfængelighed. Men Alvoren er igjen det Opbyggelige.

SKS 11.11 Dette lille Skrift er derfor i een Forstand saaledes beskaffent, at en Seminarist kunde skrive det; i en anden Forstand dog maaskee saaledes, at ikke enhver Professor kunde skrive det.

Men at Afhandlingens Indklædning er den den er, er idetmindste vel betænkt, og dog vistnok ogsaa psychologisk rigtigt. Der gives en høitideligere Stiil, som er saa høitidelig, at den ikke er meget betegnende, og som, da man er kun altfor vant til den, let bliver Intet sigende.

Forøvrigt kun een Bemærkning, vistnok en Overflødighed, men som jeg dog vil forskylde: jeg vil een Gang for alle gjøre opmærksom paa, at Fortvivlelse i hele dette Skrift, hvad Titelen jo siger, opfattes som Sygdommen, ikke som Helbredelsesmidlet. Saaledes dialektisk er nemlig Fortvivlelse. Saaledes er jo ogsaa i christelig Terminologi Døden Udtrykket for den største aandelige Elendighed, og Helbredelsen dog just at døe, at afdøe. / I 1848.

ENGLISH

single human being, alone before God, alone in this enormous exertion and this enormous responsibility. But it is not Christian heroism to be taken in by "pure humanity," or to play wonder-games with world history. All Christian knowing, however rigorous its form may otherwise be, ought to be concerned; but this concern is precisely the upbuilding. Concern is the relation to life, to the actuality of personality, and so, in Christian terms, it is earnestness. The loftiness of indifferent [118] knowledge is, in Christian terms, far from being more earnest; in Christian terms it is jest and vanity. But earnestness, again, is the upbuilding.

In one sense, therefore, this little book is such that a student at a teachers' college could write it; in another sense, though, it is perhaps such that not every professor could write it.[2]

But that the treatise is dressed the way it is has at least been well considered, and is surely also psychologically correct. There is a more solemn style that is so solemn it is not very expressive, and which, because one is only too used to it, easily ends up saying nothing.

Otherwise just one remark, no doubt superfluous, but one I will nonetheless allow myself. I wish to point out once and for all that throughout this whole book despair, as the title indeed says, is understood as the sickness, not as the cure. For despair is dialectical in just this way. In the same way, in Christian terminology death is the expression for the greatest spiritual wretchedness, and yet the cure is precisely to die, to die away. / In 1848.[3]

2 The Danish *Seminarist* is a student at a seminary for training schoolteachers, not a theological seminary.
3 "Despair" renders *Fortvivlelse*, built on *tvivl* ("doubt") with an intensifying prefix.

Introduction

Indgang

"This sickness is not unto death": Lazarus, and what Christianity means by the sickness unto death.

DANISH

SKS 11.12 »Denne Sygdom er ikke til Døden« (Joh. XI, 4). Og dog døde jo Lazarus; da Disciplene misforstode, hvad Christus senere tilføiede »Lazarus, vor Ven er sovet ind; men jeg gaaer hen for at opvække ham af Søvne« (XI, 11), sagde Han dem reent ud »Lazarus er død« (XI, 14). Altsaa Lazarus er død, og dog var denne Sygdom ikke til Døden; han var død, og dog er denne Sygdom ikke til Døden.

Vi vide nu vel, at Christus tænkte paa det Under, der skulde lade de Medlevende, »forsaavidt de kunde troe, see Guds Herlighed« (XI, 40), det Under, ved hvilket Han opvakte Lazarus fra de Døde, saa »denne Sygdom« ikke blot ikke var til Døden, men som Christus forudsagde »til Guds Ære, at Guds Søn skal æres ved den« (XI, 4): o, men selv om Christus ikke havde opvakt Lazarus, gjælder det dog ikke ligefuldt, at denne Sygdom, Døden selv, ikke er til Døden? Idet Christus træder hen til Graven og med høi Røst raaber »Lazarus, kom hid ud« (XI, 43), er det jo vist nok, at »denne« Sygdom ikke er til Døden.

Men hvis Christus end ikke havde sagt dette – blot det, at Han, der er »Opstandelsen og Livet« (XI, 25), træder hen til Graven, betyder dette ikke, at denne Sygdom ikke er til Døden: det, at Christus er til, betyder det ikke, at *denne* Sygdom ikke er til Døden! Og hvad havde det hjulpet Lazarus at være opvakt fra de Døde, naar det jo dog tilsidst maa ende med, at han døer – hvad havde det hjulpet Lazarus, hvis Han ikke var, Han der er Opstandelsen og Livet for hver Den, [124] som troer paa Ham!

SKS 11.12 Nei, ikke fordi Lazarus blev opvakt fra de Døde, ikke derfor kan man sige, at *denne* Sygdom ikke er til Døden; men fordi Han er til, derfor er denne Sygdom ikke til Døden. Thi menneskelig talt er Døden det Sidste af Alt, og menneskelig talt er der kun Haab saalænge der er Liv.

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"This sickness is not unto death" (John 11:4). And yet Lazarus died. When the disciples misunderstood what Christ added later, "Lazarus our friend has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him from sleep" (11:11), he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead" (11:14). So Lazarus is dead, and yet this sickness was not unto death. He was dead, and yet this sickness is not unto death.[1]

We know well enough that Christ was thinking of the miracle that would let his contemporaries, "if they could believe, see the glory of God" (11:40). This was the miracle by which he raised Lazarus from the dead, so that "this sickness" was not only not unto death but, as Christ foretold, "for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it" (11:4). Oh, but even if Christ had not raised Lazarus, would it not be just as true that this sickness, death itself, is not unto death? When Christ steps up to the grave and cries with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" (11:43), it is certain enough that "this" sickness is not unto death.

But even if Christ had not said this, does not the mere fact that he, who is "the resurrection and the life" (11:25), steps up to the grave mean that this sickness is not unto death? Does not the fact that Christ exists mean that *this* sickness is not unto death! And what would it have helped Lazarus to be raised from the dead, when it must still end in the end with his dying? What would it have helped Lazarus, if he did not exist, he who is the resurrection and the life for everyone [124] who believes in him!

No, it is not because Lazarus was raised from the dead that one can say *this* sickness is not unto death. It is because he exists that this sickness is not unto death. For, humanly speaking, death is

1 John 11 tells how Jesus raised his friend Lazarus of Bethany from the dead. The book's title, *Sygdommen til Døden*, comes from this verse.

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Men christelig forstaaet er Døden ingenlunde det Sidste af Alt, ogsaa den kun en lille Begivenhed indenfor hvad der er Alt, et evigt Liv; og christelig forstaaet er der i Døden uendelig meget mere Haab end der blot menneskelig talt er naar der ikke blot er Liv, men dette Liv i fuldeste Sundhed og Kraft.

Altsaa christelig forstaaet er end ikke Døden »Sygdommen til Døden«, end mindre da Alt, hvad der hedder jordisk og timelig Lidelse, Nød, Sygdom, Elendighed, Trængsel, Gjenvordigheder, Piinsler, Sjelslidelser, Sorg, Græmmelse. Og var Sligt end saa tungt og piinagtigt, at vi Mennesker eller dog den Lidende siger »dette er værre end Døden« – alt Sligt, hvad der, forsaavidt det ikke er Sygdom, kan sammenlignes med en Sygdom, er dog, christelig forstaaet, ikke Sygdommen til Døden.

Saa høimodigt har Christendommen lært den Christne at tænke om alt Jordisk og Verdsligt, Døden iberegnet. Det er næsten som maatte den Christne hovmode sig ved denne stolte Opløftelse over Alt, hvad ellers Mennesket kalder Ulykke, over hvad ellers Mennesket kalder det største Onde. Men saa har Christendommen igjen opdaget en Elendighed, hvilken Mennesket som saadan ikke veed er til; denne Elendighed er Sygdommen til Døden. Hvad det naturlige Menneske opregner som det Gyselige – naar han saa har opregnet Alt og Intet mere veed at nævne: dette er for den Christne som en Spøg.

Saaledes er Forholdet mellem det naturlige Menneske og den Christne; det er som Forholdet mellem et Barn og en Mand: hvad Barnet gyser for, det anseer Manden for Intet at være. Barnet veed ikke, hvad det Forfærdelige er; det veed Manden, og for dette gyser han. Barnets Ufuldkommenhed er først den, ikke at kjende det Forfærdelige; og da igjen, hvad heri ligger, den, at gyse for [125] Det, som ikke er forfærdeligt. Og saaledes ogsaa med det naturlige Menneske, han er uvidende om hvad i Sandhed det Forfærdelige er, dog er han derved ikke fritagen fra at gyse, nei, han gyser for Det, som ikke er det Forfærdelige.

SKS 11.12 Det er ligesom med Hedningens Guds-Forhold: han kjender ikke den sande Gud, men ikke nok dermed, han dyrker en Afgud som Gud.

ENGLISH

the last thing of all, and, humanly speaking, there is hope only as long as there is life. But understood in a Christian way, death is by no means the last thing of all; it too is only a small event within what is everything, an eternal life. And understood in a Christian way, there is infinitely more hope in death than there is, merely humanly speaking, when there is not only life but this life in the fullest health and strength.

So, understood in a Christian way, not even death is "the sickness unto death." Still less, then, is everything that goes by the name of earthly and temporal suffering: want, sickness, wretchedness, affliction, adversity, torment, mental suffering, sorrow, grief. And even if such things are so heavy and painful that we human beings, or at any rate the sufferer, say "this is worse than death," all such things, which, insofar as they are not sickness, can be compared to a sickness, are still, understood in a Christian way, not the sickness unto death.

So magnanimously has Christianity taught the Christian to think about everything earthly and worldly, death included. It is almost as if the Christian must grow haughty over this proud elevation above everything that human beings otherwise call misfortune, above what human beings otherwise call the greatest evil. But then Christianity has in turn discovered a wretchedness that the human being as such does not know exists; this wretchedness is the sickness unto death. What the natural human being lists as horrifying, when he has listed everything and can name nothing more, is to the Christian like a jest.

Such is the relation between the natural human being and the Christian. It is like the relation between a child and a man: what the child shudders at, the man regards as nothing. The child does not know what the terrible is; the man knows it, and shudders at that. The child's imperfection is, first, not knowing the terrible, and then, as this implies, shuddering at [125] what is not terrible. So too with the natural human being. He is ignorant of what is truly terrible, yet this does not exempt him from shuddering. No, he shudders at what is not the terrible.

It is just like the pagan's relation to God: he does not know the true God, and, as if that were not enough, he worships an idol as God.

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Kun den Christne veed, hvad der forstaaes ved Sygdommen til Døden. Han fik som Christen et Mod, hvilket det naturlige Menneske ikke kjender – dette Mod fik han ved at lære Frygt for det end Forfærdeligere. Paa den Maade faaer et Menneske altid Mod; naar man frygter en større Fare, har et Menneske altid Mod til at gaae i en mindre; naar man uendeligt frygter een Fare, er det som vare de andre slet ikke til. Men det Forfærdelige den Christne lærte at kjende er »Sygdommen til Døden«.

ENGLISH

Only the Christian knows what is meant by the sickness unto death. As a Christian he gained a courage that the natural human being does not know, and he gained this courage by learning to fear what is still more terrible. That is how a person always gains courage. When one fears a greater danger, one always has the courage to walk into a lesser one; when one infinitely fears one danger, it is as if the others did not exist at all. But the terrible thing that the Christian learned to know is "the sickness unto death."

Despair Is the Sickness unto Death

Første Afsnit, A
The self as a relation that relates itself to itself; the possibility and actuality of despair; despair as the inability to die.

A. FORTVIVLELSE ER EN SYGDOM I AANDEN, I SELVET, OG KAN SAALEDES VÆRE ET TREDOBBELT: FORTVIVLET IKKE AT VÆRE SIG BEVIDST AT HAVE ET SELV (UEGENTLIG FORTVIVLELSE); FORTVIVLET IKKE AT VILLE VÆRE SIG SELV; FORTVIVLET AT VILLE VÆRE SIG SELV.

DANISH	ENGLISH
SKS 11.12 Mennesket er Aand. Men hvad er Aand? Aand er Selvet. Men hvad er Selvet? Selvet er et Forhold, der forholder sig til sig selv, eller er det i Forholdet, at Forholdet forholder sig til sig selv; Selvet er ikke Forholdet, men at Forholdet forholder sig til sig selv. Mennesket er en Synthese af Uendelighed og Endelighed, af det Timelige og det Evige, af Frihed og Nødvendighed, kort en Synthese. En Synthese er et Forhold mellem To. Saaledes betragtet er Mennesket endnu intet Selv.	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 it is, in the relation, the relation's relating itself to itself; the self is not the relation but the relation's relating itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of infinitude and finitude, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. Considered in this way, a human being is not yet a self.[1]
I Forholdet mellem To er Forholdet det Tredie som negativ Eenhed, og de To forholde sig til Forholdet, og i Forholdet til Forholdet; saaledes er under Bestemmelsen Sjel Forholdet mellem Sjel og Legeme et Forhold. Forholder derimod Forholdet sig til sig selv, saa er dette Forhold det positive Tredie, og dette er Selvet.	In a relation between two, the relation is the third as a negative unity, and the two relate themselves to the relation, and in the relation to the relation. Thus, under the qualification of soul, the relation between soul and body is a relation. If, however, the relation relates itself to itself, then this relation is the positive third, and this is the self.
Et saadant Forhold, der forholder sig til sig selv, et Selv, maa enten have sat sig selv, eller være sat ved et Andet.	Such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must either have established itself or have been established by another.
Er Forholdet, der forholder sig til sig selv, sat ved et Andet, saa er Forholdet vistnok det Tredie, men dette Forhold, det Tredie, er saa dog igjen et Forhold, forholder sig til hvad der har sat hele Forholdet.	If the relation that relates itself to itself has been established by another, then the relation is indeed the third, but this relation, the third, is then in turn a relation: it relates itself to that which established the whole relation.
SKS 11.13 Et saadant deriveret, sat Forhold er Menneskets Selv, et Forhold, der forholder sig til sig selv, og i at forholde sig til sig selv forholder sig til et Andet. Deraf kommer det, at der kan blive to Former for egentlig Fortvivlelse. Havde Menneskets Selv sat sig selv, saa kunde der kun være Tale om een Form, den ikke at ville være sig selv, at ville af	Such a derived, established relation is the human self: a relation that relates itself to itself, and in relating itself to itself relates itself to another. That is why there can be two forms of despair properly so called. Had the human self established itself, there could be question of only one form: not wanting to

1 Key terms: *Aand* (spirit), *Selv* (self), *Forhold* (relation), *Synthese* (synthesis).

DANISH

med sig selv, men der kunde ikke være Tale om, fortvivlet at ville være sig selv.

Denne Formel er nemlig Udtrykket for hele Forholdets (Selvets) Afhængighed, Udtrykket for, at Selvet ikke ved sig selv kan komme til eller være i Ligevægt og Ro, men kun ved i at forholde sig til sig selv at forholde sig til Det, som har sat hele Forholdet. Ja, det er saa langt fra, at denne anden Form af Fortvivlelse (fortvivlet at ville være sig selv) blot betegner en egen Art af Fortvivlelse, at tværtimod al Fortvivlelse tilsidst kan opløses i og tilbageføres paa den.

Dersom en Fortvivlende er, som han mener det, opmærksom paa sin Fortvivlelse, ikke taler meningsløst om den, som om Noget, der hænder ham (omtrent som naar Den, der lider af Svimmel, ved et nerveust Bedrag taler om en Tyngde paa Hovedet, eller om at det er som faldt der Noget ned paa ham o. s. v., hvilken Tyngde, og hvilket Tryk dog ikke er noget Udvortes, men en omvendt Reflexion af det Indvortes) – og nu af al Magt ved sig selv og ene ved sig selv vil hæve Fortvivlelsen: saa er han endnu i Fortvivlelsen, arbeider sig med al sin formeentlige Arbeiden kun desto dybere i en dybere Fortvivlelse.

Fortvivlelsens Misforhold er ikke et simpelt Misforhold, men et Misforhold i et Forhold, der forholder sig til sig selv, og er sat af et Andet, saa Misforholdet i hiint for sig værende Forhold tillige reflekterer sig uendeligt i Forholdet til den Magt, som satte det.

Dette er nemlig Formelen, som beskriver Selvets Tilstand, naar Fortvivlelsen ganske er udryddet: i at forholde sig til sig selv, og i at ville være sig selv grunder Selvet gjennemsigtigt i den Magt, som satte det.

ENGLISH

be oneself, wanting to be rid of oneself. But there could be no question of in despair wanting to be oneself.

For this formula is the expression for the dependence of the whole relation (the self). It expresses the fact that the self cannot by itself arrive at or remain in equilibrium and rest, but only by relating itself, in relating itself to itself, to that which has established the whole relation. Indeed, this second form of despair (in despair wanting to be oneself) is so far from designating merely a particular kind of despair that, on the contrary, all despair can in the end be resolved into it and traced back to it.

Suppose a person in despair is, as he believes, aware of his despair, and does not speak senselessly of it as of something that happens to him (rather as someone who suffers from dizziness, through a nervous delusion, speaks of a weight on his head, or says it is as if something were falling down on him, and so on, although this weight and this pressure are nothing external but an inverted reflection of what is internal). Suppose he now wants, with all his might, by himself and by himself alone, to lift the despair. Then he is still in despair, and with all his supposed working he only works himself all the deeper into a deeper despair.

The misrelation of despair is not a simple misrelation but a misrelation in a relation that relates itself to itself and has been established by another. So the misrelation in that relation which is for itself also reflects itself infinitely in the relation to the power that established it.

For this is the formula that describes the state of the self when despair is completely rooted out: in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it.

B. THE POSSIBILITY AND ACTUALITY OF DESPAIR

Being able to despair is humanity's advantage; being in despair is its ruin, renewed at every moment.

DANISH

Er Fortvivlelse et Fortrin eller en Mangel? Reent dialektisk er den begge Dele. Hvis man vilde fastholde den abstrakte Tanke Fortvivlelse, uden at tænke nogen Fortvivlet, saa maatte man sige: den er et uhyre [131] Fortrin. Muligheden af denne Sygdom er Menneskets

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Is despair an advantage or a defect? Purely dialectically, it is both. If one were to hold on to the abstract thought of despair, without thinking of anyone in despair, one would have to say: it is an enormous [131] advantage. The possibility of this

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Fortrin for Dyret, og dette Fortrin udmærker ham ganske anderledes end den opreiste Gang, thi det tyder paa den uendelige Opreisthed eller Ophøiethed, at han er Aand. Muligheden af denne Sygdom er Menneskets Fortrin for Dyret; at være opmærksom paa denne Sygdom er den Christnes Fortrin for det naturlige Menneske; at være helbredet fra denne Sygdom den Christnes Salighed.

SKS 11.13 Altsaa det er et uendeligt Fortrin at kunne fortvivle; og dog er det ikke blot den største Ulykke og Elendighed at være det, nei det er Fortabelse. Saaledes er Forholdet mellem Mulighed og Virkelighed ellers ikke; er det et Fortrin at kunne være Det og Det, saa er det et endnu større Fortrin, at være det, det vil sige, det at være forholder sig som en Stigen til det at kunne være. Hvad Fortvivlelse derimod angaaer, saa forholder det at være sig som et Fald til det at kunne være; saa uendeligt som Mulighedens Fortrin er, saa dybt er Faldet. Det der altsaa i Forhold til Fortvivlelse er det Stigende er ikke at være det. Dog er atter denne Bestemmelse tvetydig.

Det er ikke med det ikke at være fortvivlet som med det ikke at være halt, blind o. d.. Dersom det ikke at være fortvivlet hverken betyder mere eller mindre end det ikke at være det, saa er det netop at være det. Det ikke at være fortvivlet maa betyde den tilintetgjorte Mulighed af at kunne være det; hvis det skal være sandt, at et Menneske ikke er fortvivlet, maa han i ethvert Øieblik tilintetgjøre Muligheden. Saaledes er Forholdet mellem Mulighed og Virkelighed ellers ikke. Thi vel sige Tænkerne, at Virkelighed er den tilintetgjorte Mulighed, men det er ikke ganske sandt, den er den udfyldte, den virksomme Mulighed.

Her derimod er Virkeligheden (ikke at være fortvivlet), som derfor ogsaa er en Negtelse, den afmægtige, tilintetgjorte Mulighed; ellers er Virkelighed i Forhold til Mulighed en Bekræftelse, her en Benegtelse.

Fortvivlelse er Misforholdet i en Syntheses Forhold, som forholder sig til sig selv. Men Synthesen er ikke Misforholdet, den er blot Muligheden, eller, i Synthesen ligger Muligheden af Misforholdet. Var Synthesen Misforholdet, saa var Fortvivlelse slet ikke til, saa vilde Fortvivlelse være Noget, der laae i Menneskenaturen som saadan, det er, saa var det ikke Fortvivlelse; den vilde

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sickness is the human being's advantage over the animal, and this advantage distinguishes him in quite another way than walking upright, for it points to the infinite uprightness or loftiness of his being spirit. The possibility of this sickness is the human being's advantage over the animal; to be aware of this sickness is the Christian's advantage over the natural human being; to be cured of this sickness is the Christian's blessedness.

So it is an infinite advantage to be able to despair; and yet to be in despair is not only the greatest misfortune and wretchedness. No, it is perdition. Otherwise the relation between possibility and actuality is not like this. If it is an advantage to be able to be this or that, then it is an even greater advantage to be it; that is, being is related to being able to be as an ascent. With despair, by contrast, being is related to being able to be as a fall; as infinite as the advantage of the possibility is, so deep is the fall. So with respect to despair, the ascent is not to be in despair. Yet this qualification is in turn ambiguous.[2]

Not being in despair is not like not being lame, blind, and the like. If not being in despair means neither more nor less than not being it, then it is precisely being it. Not being in despair must mean the annihilated possibility of being able to be it. If it is to be true that a person is not in despair, he must annihilate the possibility at every moment. Otherwise the relation between possibility and actuality is not like this. For the thinkers do say that actuality is annihilated possibility, but that is not quite true: it is fulfilled, active possibility.

Here, by contrast, actuality (not being in despair), which is therefore also a negation, is impotent, annihilated possibility. Otherwise actuality in relation to possibility is a confirmation; here it is a denial.

Despair is the misrelation in the relation of a synthesis that relates itself to itself. But the synthesis is not the misrelation; it is merely the possibility, or, in the synthesis lies the possibility of the misrelation. If the synthesis were the misrelation, then despair would not exist at all. Despair would then be something that lay in human nature as

2 "Actuality" renders *Virkelighed* (also "reality").

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være Noget, der hændte Mennesket, Noget han leed, som en Sygdom, i hvilken Mennesket falder, eller som Døden, [132] der er Alles Lod. Nei, det at fortvivle ligger i Mennesket selv; men var han ikke Synthese, kunde han slet ikke fortvivle, og var Synthesen ikke oprindeligt fra Guds Haand i det rette Forhold, kunde han heller ikke fortvivle.

SKS 11.13 Hvorfra kommer saa Fortvivlelsen? Fra Forholdet, hvori Synthesen forholder sig til sig selv, idet Gud, der gjorde Mennesket til Forholdet, ligesom slipper det ud af sin Haand, det er, idet Forholdet forholder sig til sig selv. Og deri, at Forholdet er Aand, er Selvet, deri ligger Ansvaret, under hvilket al Fortvivlelse er og er hvert Øieblik den er, hvor meget, og hvor sindrigt end skuffende sig selv og Andre, den Fortvivlede taler om sin Fortvivlelse som en Ulykke, ved en Forvexling som i hiint anførte Tilfælde af Svimmelhed, med hvilken Fortvivlelse, om end qvalitativ forskjellig, har meget tilfælles, da den under Bestemmelsen Sjel er hvad Fortvivlelse er under Bestemmelsen Aand, og svanger paa Analogier til Fortvivlelse.

Naar saa Misforholdet, Fortvivlelsen, er indtraadt, følger det saa af sig selv, at det vedbliver? Nei, det følger ikke af sig selv; hvis Misforholdet vedbliver, følger det ikke af Misforholdet, men af Forholdet, som forholder sig til sig selv. Dette vil sige, for hver Gang Misforholdet yttrer sig, og i ethvert Øieblik det er til, maa der gaaes tilbage til Forholdet. See, man taler om, at et Menneske paadrager sig en Sygdom, f. Ex. ved Uforsigtighed.

Saa indtræder da Sygdommen, og fra det Øieblik gjør den sig gjældende og er nu en *Virkelighed,* hvis Oprindelse bliver mere og mere *forbigangen.* Det vilde være baade grusomt og umenneskeligt, om man i eet væk vilde vedblive at sige »i dette Øieblik paadrager Du, den Syge, Dig denne Sygdom«, det er, om man i ethvert Øieblik vilde opløse Sygdommens Virkelighed i dens Mulighed. Det er sandt, at han paadrog sig Sygdommen, men det gjorde han kun een Gang, Sygdommens Vedbliven er en simpel Affølge af, at han een Gang paadrog sig den, dens Fremgang ikke i ethvert Øieblik at henføre til ham som Aarsag; han paadrog sig den, men man kan ikke sige, han *paadrager* sig den.

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such, that is, it would not be despair. It would be something that happened to a person, something he suffered, like a sickness a person falls into, or like death, [132] which is everyone's lot. No, despairing lies in the human being himself. But if he were not a synthesis, he could not despair at all; and if the synthesis were not originally in the right relation from the hand of God, he could not despair either.

Where, then, does despair come from? From the relation in which the synthesis relates itself to itself, in that God, who made the human being into the relation, as it were lets it go from his hand; that is, in that the relation relates itself to itself. And in the fact that the relation is spirit, is the self, lies the responsibility under which all despair stands, and stands at every moment it exists. This holds however much, and however ingeniously deceiving himself and others, the person in despair speaks of his despair as a misfortune, through a confusion like the one in the case of dizziness mentioned above. Despair, though qualitatively different, has much in common with dizziness, since dizziness is, under the qualification of soul, what despair is under the qualification of spirit, and it is pregnant with analogies to despair.

Once the misrelation, despair, has set in, does it follow of itself that it continues? No, it does not follow of itself. If the misrelation continues, this follows not from the misrelation but from the relation that relates itself to itself. That is to say, every time the misrelation shows itself, and at every moment it exists, one must go back to the relation. Look, we say that a person contracts an illness, for example through carelessness.

Then the illness sets in, and from that moment it asserts itself and is now an *actuality*, whose origin becomes more and more *past*. It would be both cruel and inhuman to keep saying over and over, "At this moment you, the sick person, are contracting this illness," that is, to want at every moment to dissolve the actuality of the illness into its possibility. It is true that he contracted the illness, but he did so only once. The continuation of the illness is a simple consequence of his having once contracted it, and its progress is not at every moment to be traced back to him as its cause. He con-

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Anderledes med det at fortvivle; ethvert Fortvivlelsens virkelige Øieblik er at tilbageføre til Mulighed, hvert Øieblik han er fortvivlet, *paadrager* han sig det; det er bestandigt den nærværende Tid, der vorder intet i Forhold til Virkeligheden tilbagelagt Forbigangent; i ethvert Fortvivlelsens virkelige Øieblik bærer den Fortvivlede alt [133] det Foregaaende i Muligheden som et Nærværende. Dette kommer deraf, at at fortvivle er en Bestemmelse af Aand, forholder sig til det Evige i Mennesket.

SKS 11.13 Men det Evige kan han ikke blive af med, nei, i al Evighed ikke; han kan ikke een Gang for alle kaste det fra sig, Intet er umuligere; han maa i ethvert Øieblik, hvor han ikke har det, have kastet eller kaste det fra sig – men det kommer igjen, det er, hvert Øieblik han er fortvivlet, paadrager han sig det at fortvivle. Thi Fortvivlelsen følger ikke af Misforholdet, men af Forholdet, som forholder sig til sig selv. Og Forholdet til sig selv kan et Menneske ikke blive af med, saa lidet som med sit Selv, hvad da forøvrigt er Eet og det Samme, da jo Selvet er Forholdet til sig selv.

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tracted it, but one cannot say that he *is contracting* it.

It is otherwise with despairing. Every actual moment of despair is to be traced back to possibility; every moment he is in despair, he *is contracting* it. It is continually the present tense; nothing becomes a past left behind in relation to actuality. In every actual moment of despair the person in despair carries all [133] that went before in possibility as something present. This is because despairing is a qualification of spirit, and is related to the eternal in the human being.

But the eternal he cannot get rid of, no, not in all eternity. He cannot throw it away once and for all; nothing is more impossible. At every moment when he does not have it, he must have thrown it away or be throwing it away, but it comes back; that is, every moment he is in despair he is contracting despair. For despair follows not from the misrelation but from the relation that relates itself to itself. And a person can no more get rid of the relation to himself than of his self, which is in any case one and the same thing, since the self is the relation to itself.

C. DESPAIR IS "THE SICKNESS UNTO DEATH"

The torment of despair is not being able to die: the self cannot consume itself.

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Dette Begreb Sygdommen til Døden maa dog tages paa en egen Maade. Ligefrem betyder det en Sygdom, hvis Ende, hvis Udgang er Døden. Saaledes taler man om en dødelig Sygdom eenstydigt med en Sygdom til Døden. I den Forstand kan Fortvivlelse ikke kaldes Sygdommen til Døden. Men christeligt forstaaet er Døden selv en Gjennemgang til Livet. Forsaavidt er, christelig, ingen jordisk, legemlig Sygdom til Døden. Thi vistnok er Døden det sidste af Sygdommen, men Døden er ikke det Sidste. Skal der i strængeste Forstand være Tale om en Sygdom til Døden, maa det være en, hvor det Sidste er Døden, og hvor Døden er det Sidste. Og dette er just Fortvivlelse.

Dog er Fortvivlelse i en anden Forstand endnu bestemtere Sygdommen til Døden. Det er nemlig saa langt som muligt fra, at man, ligefrem forstaaet, døer af denne Sygdom, eller at denne Sygdom ender med den legemlige Død. Tværtimod, Fortvivlelsens Qval er netop

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This concept, the sickness unto death, must however be taken in a special way. Literally it means a sickness whose end, whose outcome, is death. Thus one speaks of a fatal illness as synonymous with a sickness unto death. In that sense despair cannot be called the sickness unto death. But understood in a Christian way, death is itself a passage into life. To that extent, in Christian terms, no earthly, bodily sickness is unto death. For death is indeed the last stage of the sickness, but death is not the last thing. If there is to be talk, in the strictest sense, of a sickness unto death, it must be one in which the last thing is death, and death is the last thing. And this is precisely despair.

Yet in another sense despair is still more definitely the sickness unto death. For it is as far as possible from being the case that one literally dies of this sickness, or that this sickness ends in bodily death. On the contrary, the torment of despair is

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ikke at kunne døe. Den har saaledes mere tilfælles med den Dødssyges Tilstand, naar han ligger og trækkes med Døden og ikke kan døe. Saaledes er det at være syg *til* Døden det ikke at kunne døe, dog ikke som var der Haab om Livet, nei Haabløsheden er, at selv det sidste Haab, Døden, ikke er. Naar Døden er den største Fare, haaber man paa Livet; men naar man lærer den end forfærdeligere Fare at kjende, haaber man paa Døden.

SKS 11.13 Naar saa Faren er saa stor, at Døden er blevet Haabet, saa er Fortvivlelse den Haabløshed end ikke at kunne døe.

I denne sidste Betydning er da Fortvivlelse Sygdommen til Døden, denne qvalfulde Modsigelse, denne Sygdom i Selvet, evig at døe, at døe og dog ikke at døe, at døe Døden. Thi at døe betyder at det er forbi, men at døe Døden betyder at opleve det at døe; og lader dette sig eet eneste Øieblik opleve, saa er det dermed for evig at opleve det. Skulde et Menneske døe af Fortvivlelse, som man døer af en Sygdom, saa maatte det Evige i ham, Selvet, kunne døe i samme Forstand som Legemet døer af Sygdommen. Men dette er en Umulighed; Fortvivlelsens Døen omsætter sig bestandigt i en Leven.

Den Fortvivlede kan ikke døe; »saa lidet som Dolken kan dræbe Tanker«, saalidet kan Fortvivlelsen fortære det Evige, Selvet, der ligger til Grund for Fortvivlelsen, hvis Orm ikke døer, og hvis Ild ikke udslukkes. Dog er Fortvivlelse just en *Selv*fortærelse, men en afmægtig Selvfortærelse, der ikke formaaer hvad den selv vil. Men hvad den selv vil er at fortære sig selv, hvilket den ikke formaaer, og denne Afmagt er en ny Form af Selvfortærelse, i hvilken dog Fortvivlelsen atter ikke formaaer hvad den vil, at fortære sig selv, det er en Potentsation eller Loven for Potentsationen. Dette er det Hidsende, eller det er den kolde Brand i Fortvivlelsen, dette Nagende, hvis Bevægelse er bestandigt ind efter, dybere og dybere i afmægtig Selvfortærelse.

Det er saa langt fra at det er nogen Trøst for den Fortvivlede, at Fortvivlelsen ikke fortærer ham, det er lige det Modsatte, denne Trøst er just Qvalen, er just hvad der holder Naget ilive og Liv i Naget; thi just derover – ikke fortvivlede – men fortvivler han: at han ikke kan fortære sig selv, ikke kan blive af med sig selv, ikke kan

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precisely not being able to die. So it has more in common with the condition of someone mortally ill, who lies struggling with death and cannot die. Thus to be sick *unto* death is not to be able to die, yet not as if there were hope of life. No, the hopelessness is that even the last hope, death, is not there. When death is the greatest danger, one hopes for life; but when one comes to know the even more terrible danger, one hopes for death.

When the danger is so great that death has become the hope, then despair is the hopelessness of not even being able to die.

In this last sense, then, despair is the sickness unto death: this tormenting contradiction, this sickness in the self, eternally to die, to die and yet not to die, to die death. For to die means that it is over, but to die death means to live through dying; and if this can be lived through for a single moment, then it is thereby lived through eternally. If a person were to die of despair as one dies of a sickness, then the eternal in him, the self, would have to be able to die in the same sense as the body dies of the sickness. But this is an impossibility; the dying of despair continually turns into a living.

The person in despair cannot die. "No more than the dagger can kill thoughts" can despair consume the eternal, the self, which lies at the root of despair, whose worm does not die and whose fire is not quenched. Yet despair is precisely a *self*-consuming, but an impotent self-consuming that cannot do what it itself wants. What it itself wants, though, is to consume itself, which it cannot do; and this impotence is a new form of self-consuming, in which despair once again cannot do what it wants, namely consume itself. This is an intensification, or the law of intensification. This is what inflames it, or it is the cold burning in despair, this gnawing, whose movement is constantly inward, deeper and deeper into impotent self-consuming.[3]

It is so far from being any consolation to the person in despair that despair does not consume him that it is just the opposite. This consolation is precisely the torment; it is precisely what keeps the gnawing alive and keeps life in the gnawing. For it

3 "Whose worm does not die…" echoes Mark 9:48 (cf. Isaiah 66:24). "Intensification" renders *Potentsation*. *Den kolde Brand*, literally "the cold burning," is the Danish word for gangrene.

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blive til Intet. Dette er den potentserede Formel for Fortvivlelsen, Feberens Stigen i denne Selvets Sygdom.

En Fortvivlende fortvivler over *Noget.* Saaledes seer det et Øieblik ud, men det er kun et Øieblik; i samme Øieblik viser den sande Fortvivlelse sig eller Fortvivlelsen sig i sin Sandhed. Idet han fortvivlede over *Noget,* fortvivlede han egentlig over *sig selv,* og vil nu af med sig selv. Naar saaledes den Herskesyge, hvis Løsen er »enten Cæsar eller slet Intet«, ikke bliver Cæsar, saa fortvivler han derover. Men dette betyder noget Andet: at han, just fordi han ikke blev Cæsar, nu ikke kan udholde at være sig selv. Han fortvivler altsaa egentligen ikke over, at han ikke blev [135] Cæsar, men over sig selv at han ikke blev Cæsar.

SKS 11.13 Dette Selv, der, hvis det var blevet Cæsar, havde været ham al hans Lyst, i en anden Forstand forøvrigt lige saa fortvivlet, dette Selv er ham nu det Utaaleligste af Alt. Det er i dybere Forstand ikke det, der er ham det Utaalelige, at han ikke blev Cæsar, men dette Selv, som ikke blev Cæsar, er ham det Utaalelige, eller endnu rigtigere, det der er ham det Utaalelige, er, at han ikke kan blive af med sig selv. Naar han var blevet Cæsar, saa var han fortvivlet blevet af med sig selv; men nu blev han ikke Cæsar, og kan fortvivlet ikke blive af med sig selv. Væsentligen er han lige fortvivlet, thi han har ikke sit Selv, han er ikke sig selv.

Ved at være blevet Cæsar var han dog ikke blevet sig selv, men af med sig selv; og ved ikke at blive Cæsar fortvivler han over ikke at kunne blive af med sig selv. Det er derfor en overfladisk Betragtning (der da formodentligen aldrig har seet en Fortvivlet, end ikke sig selv), naar man om en Fortvivlet siger, som var dette hans Straf: han fortærer sig selv. Thi netop det er det han fortvivlet, og netop det er det, han til sin Qval ikke kan, da der ved Fortvivlelsen er gaaet Ild i Noget, som ikke kan brænde, eller ikke forbrænde, i Selvet.

At fortvivle over Noget er altsaa endnu ikke egentlig Fortvivlelse. Det er Begyndelsen, eller det er, som naar

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is precisely over this that he—not despaired, but—despairs: that he cannot consume himself, cannot get rid of himself, cannot become nothing. This is the intensified formula for despair, the rising of the fever in this sickness of the self.

A person in despair despairs over *something*. So it seems for a moment, but only for a moment; in that same moment true despair shows itself, or despair shows itself in its truth. In despairing over *something*, he was really despairing over *himself*, and now he wants to be rid of himself. So when the power-hungry man, whose watchword is "either Caesar or nothing," does not become Caesar, he despairs over it. But this means something else: that precisely because he did not become Caesar, he now cannot bear to be himself. So what he really despairs over is not that he did not become [135] Caesar, but over himself, that he did not become Caesar.[4]

This self which, had it become Caesar, would have been his whole delight (though in another sense just as much in despair), this self is now the most unbearable thing of all to him. In a deeper sense, what is unbearable to him is not that he did not become Caesar; it is this self that did not become Caesar that is unbearable to him. Or, more correctly still, what is unbearable to him is that he cannot get rid of himself. Had he become Caesar, he would in despair have got rid of himself; but now he did not become Caesar, and in despair he cannot get rid of himself. Essentially he is equally in despair, for he does not have his self, he is not himself.

By becoming Caesar he would not have become himself but have got rid of himself; and by not becoming Caesar he despairs over not being able to get rid of himself. It is therefore a superficial view (one that has presumably never seen anyone in despair, not even itself) when people say of someone in despair, as if this were his punishment, "He is consuming himself." For that is precisely what he, in despair, wants, and precisely what, to his torment, he cannot do, since in despair fire has caught in something that cannot burn, or cannot burn up: in the self.

To despair over something is therefore not yet despair proper. It is the beginning, or it is as when the

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Lægen siger om en Sygdom, den har endnu ikke erklæret sig. Det Næste er den erklærede Fortvivlelse, at fortvivle over sig selv. En ung Pige fortvivler af Elskov, altsaa hun fortvivler over Tabet af den Elskede, at han døde eller at han blev hende utro. Dette er ingen erklæret Fortvivlelse, nei, hun fortvivler over sig selv.

Dette hendes Selv, som hun, hvis det var blevet »hans« Elskede, paa den livsaligste Maade var blevet af med, eller havde tabt, dette Selv er hende nu en Plage, naar det skal være et Selv uden »ham«; dette Selv, der var blevet hende, forøvrigt i en anden Forstand ligesaa fortvivlet, hendes Rigdom, er nu blevet hende en modbydelig Tomhed, da »han« er død, eller det er blevet hende en Afsky, da det minder hende om, at hun er bedragen. Forsøg det nu, siig til en saadan Pige: Du fortærer dig selv, og du skal høre hun svarer: »o, nei Qvalen er just, at jeg ikke kan det.«

At fortvivle over sig, fortvivlet at ville af med sig selv, er Formelen for al Fortvivlelse, saa derfor den anden Form for Fortvivlelse, fortvivlet at ville være sig selv, kan føres tilbage til den første, fortvivlet ikke at ville [136] være sig selv, ligesom vi i det Foregaaende opløste den Form fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv i den fortvivlet at ville være sig selv (cfr. A.). En Fortvivlende vil fortvivlet være sig selv. Men naar han fortvivlet vil være sig selv, saa vil han jo ikke af med sig selv. Ja, saa synes det; men naar man seer nærmere til, seer man dog, at Modsigelsen er den samme.

SKS 11.13 Det Selv, han fortvivlet vil være, er et Selv han ikke er (thi at ville være det Selv, han i Sandhed er, er jo lige det Modsatte af Fortvivlelse), han vil nemlig løsrive sit Selv fra den Magt, som satte det. Men dette formaaer han trods al Fortvivlen ikke; trods al Fortvivlelsens Anstrængelse er hiin Magt den stærkere, og tvinger ham til at være det Selv, han ikke vil være. Men saaledes vil han jo dog af med sig selv, af med det Selv, han er, for at være det Selv, han selv har hittet paa.

At være Selv, som han vil det, det vilde, om end i en anden Forstand lige saa fortvivlet, være ham al hans Lyst; men at tvinges til at være Selv, som han ikke vil være det,

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physician says of an illness that it has not yet declared itself. The next stage is declared despair: despairing over oneself. A young girl despairs because of love; that is, she despairs over the loss of her beloved, that he died or was unfaithful to her. This is not declared despair. No, she despairs over herself.

This self of hers, which she would have got rid of, or lost, in the most blissful way had it become "his" beloved, this self is now a torment to her when it has to be a self without "him." This self, which would have become her wealth (though in another sense just as much in despair), has now become a loathsome emptiness to her, since "he" is dead, or it has become repugnant to her, since it reminds her that she was deceived. Try it now: say to such a girl, "You are consuming yourself," and you will hear her answer, "Oh no, the torment is precisely that I cannot."

To despair over oneself, in despair wanting to be rid of oneself, is the formula for all despair. So the second form of despair, in despair wanting to be oneself, can be traced back to the first, in despair not wanting to [136] be oneself, just as we earlier resolved the form in despair not wanting to be oneself into the form in despair wanting to be oneself (cf. A.). A person in despair wants in despair to be himself. But if he wants in despair to be himself, then surely he does not want to be rid of himself. Yes, so it seems; but if one looks more closely, one sees that the contradiction is the same.

The self that he in despair wants to be is a self he is not (for to want to be the self one truly is, is precisely the opposite of despair); that is, he wants to tear his self loose from the power that established it. But in spite of all his despairing he cannot do this; in spite of all the exertion of despair, that power is the stronger and compels him to be the self he does not want to be. But in this way he does, after all, want to be rid of himself, rid of the self he is, in order to be the self he himself has thought up.

To be a self as he wants it would be his whole delight, though in another sense it would be just as much in despair. But to be compelled to be a self

4 "Either Caesar or nothing" (Latin *aut Caesar aut nihil*) was the motto of Cesare Borgia (1475–1507).

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det er hans Qval, den er, at han ikke kan blive af med sig selv.

Socrates beviste Sjelens Udødelighed af, at Sjelens Sygdom (Synden) ikke fortærer denne, som Legemets Sygdom fortærer Legemet. Saaledes kan man ogsaa bevise det Evige i et Menneske deraf, at Fortvivlelsen ikke kan fortære hans Selv, at dette just er Modsigelsens Qval i Fortvivlelsen. Var der intet Evigt i et Menneske, saa kunde han slet ikke fortvivle, men kunde Fortvivlelsen fortære hans Selv, saa var der alligevel ingen Fortvivlelse til.

Saaledes er Fortvivlelse, denne Sygdom i Selvet, Sygdommen til Døden. Den Fortvivlede er dødssyg. Det er i en ganske anden Forstand end det gjælder om nogen Sygdom, de ædleste Dele, Sygdommen har angrebet; og dog kan han ikke døe. Døden er ikke Sygdommens Sidste, men Døden er i eet væk det Sidste. At frelses fra denne Sygdom ved Døden er en Umulighed, thi Sygdommen og dens Qval – og Døden er just ikke at kunne døe.

Denne er Tilstanden i Fortvivlelse. Om det end nok saa meget undgaaer den Fortvivlede, om det end nok saa meget (hvilket da især maa gjælde om den Art Fortvivlelse, der er Uvidenhed om at være Fortvivlelse) lykkes den Fortvivlede ganske at have tabt sit Selv, og tabt det saaledes, at det ikke mærkes i mindste Maade: Evigheden vil saa dog gjøre det aabenbart, at hans Tilstand var Fortvivlelse, og fornagle ham hans Selv, saa Qvalen dog bliver, at han ikke kan blive af med sit Selv, [137] og det bliver aabenbart, at det var en Indbildning med, at det var lykkedes ham.

SKS 11.13 Og saaledes maa Evigheden gjøre, fordi det at have et Selv, at være et Selv, er den største, den uendelige Indrømmelse, der er gjort Mennesket, men tillige Evighedens Fordring paa ham.

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as he does not want to be it, that is his torment: that he cannot get rid of himself.

Socrates proved the immortality of the soul from the fact that the sickness of the soul (sin) does not consume it as the sickness of the body consumes the body. In the same way one can also prove the eternal in a human being from the fact that despair cannot consume his self, that this is precisely the torment of contradiction in despair. If there were nothing eternal in a human being, he could not despair at all; but if despair could consume his self, then there would be no despair after all.[5]

Thus despair, this sickness in the self, is the sickness unto death. The person in despair is mortally ill. In a quite different sense than can be said of any illness, the sickness has attacked the noblest parts; and yet he cannot die. Death is not the last stage of the sickness, but death is continually the last. To be saved from this sickness by death is an impossibility, for the sickness and its torment—and death—are precisely not being able to die.

This is the condition in despair. However completely it escapes the person in despair, however completely the person in despair succeeds (and this must hold above all of the kind of despair that is ignorance of being despair) in having lost his self, and lost it in such a way that it is not noticed in the least, eternity will nevertheless make it manifest that his condition was despair. It will nail him fast to his self, so that the torment still remains that he cannot get rid of his self, [137] and it becomes manifest that his having succeeded was an illusion.

And eternity must do this, because having a self, being a self, is the greatest, the infinite, concession that has been made to the human being, but at the same time it is eternity's claim upon him.

5 Socrates (469–399 BC), the Athenian philosopher. The argument is in Plato's *Republic*, Book 10 (608d–611a).

The Universality of This Sickness

Første Afsnit, B
There is not a single human being who is not in some way in despair.

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SKS 11.13 Som vel Lægen maa sige, at der maaskee ikke lever eet eneste Menneske der er ganske sund, saaledes maatte man, hvis man ret kjendte Mennesket, sige, at der ikke lever eet eneste Menneske, uden at han jo dog er lidt fortvivlet, uden at der dog inderst inde boer en Uro, en Ufred, en Disharmoni, en Angest for et ubekjendt Noget, eller for et Noget han end ikke tør stifte Bekjendtskab med, en Angest for en Tilværelsens Mulighed eller en Angest for sig selv, saa han dog, som Lægen taler om at gaae med en Sygdom i Kroppen, gaaer med en Sygdom, gaaer og bærer paa en Aandens Sygdom, der en enkelt Gang glimtviis, ved og med en ham selv uforklarlig Angest, lader sig mærke med, at den er derinde.

Og i ethvert Tilfælde har der intet Menneske levet og der lever intet Menneske udenfor Christenheden, uden at han er fortvivlet, og i Christenheden Ingen, forsaavidt han ikke er sand Christen; og forsaavidt han ikke ganske er dette, er han dog noget fortvivlet.

Denne Betragtning vil vistnok synes mange et Paradox, en Overdrivelse, derhos en mørk og forstemmende Anskuelse. Dog er den Intet af alt Dette. Den er ikke mørk, den søger tværtimod at skaffe Lys i hvad man almindeligviis lader staae hen i en vis Dunkelhed; den er ikke forstemmende, tværtimod opløftende, da den betragter ethvert Menneske under Bestemmelsen af den høieste Fordring til ham, at være Aand; den er heller ikke et Paradox, tværtimod en conseqvent gjennemført Grund-Anskuelse, og forsaavidt da heller ingen Overdrivelse.

SKS 11.13 Den almindelige Betragtning af Fortvivlelse bliver derimod staaende ved Tilsyneladelsen, og er saaledes en

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A physician might well say that perhaps not one single human being alive is completely healthy. In the same way, if one really knew the human being, one would have to say that not one single human being is alive who is not, after all, a little in despair; in whose innermost depths there does not, after all, dwell an unrest, a discord, a disharmony, an anxiety about an unknown something, or about a something he does not even dare to become acquainted with, an anxiety about a possibility of existence or an anxiety about himself. As the physician speaks of going about with an illness in the body, so he goes about with a sickness, walks about carrying a sickness of the spirit, which now and then, in a flash, through and with an anxiety he cannot explain to himself, lets it be felt that it is there inside.[1]

And in any case no human being has lived, and no human being lives, outside Christendom who is not in despair; and within Christendom no one, insofar as he is not a true Christian; and insofar as he is not wholly that, he is still somewhat in despair.

This view will no doubt seem to many a paradox, an exaggeration, and a gloomy and depressing outlook besides. Yet it is none of these. It is not gloomy; on the contrary, it seeks to shed light on what is usually left standing in a certain obscurity. It is not depressing but, on the contrary, uplifting, since it considers every human being under the qualification of the highest demand upon him, that of being spirit. Nor is it a paradox; on the contrary, it is a consistently worked-out fundamental view, and to that extent no exaggeration either.

The ordinary view of despair, by contrast, stops at appearances, and is thus a superficial view, that is,

1 "Anxiety" renders *Angest*, Kierkegaard's technical term, as in *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844).

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overfladisk Betragtning, det er, ingen Betragtning. Den antager, at ethvert Menneske jo bedst maa vide med sig selv, om han er fortvivlet eller ikke. Den der da siger sig selv at være det, han ansees for fortvivlet, men Den der mener sig selv ikke at være det, han ansees heller ikke derfor. Som en Følge heraf bliver Fortvivlelse et sjeldnere Phænomen, istedetfor at den er det ganske Almindelige. Det er ikke det Sjeldne, at En er fortvivlet; nei, det er det Sjeldne, det saare Sjeldne, at En i Sandhed ikke er det.

Men den vulgaire Betragtning forstaaer sig meget daarligt paa Fortvivlelse. Den overseer saaledes blandt Andet ganske (for blot at nævne dette, der dog rigtigt forstaaet bringer Tusinder og Tusinder og Millioner ind under Bestemmelsen Fortvivlelse), den overseer ganske, at det just er en Form af Fortvivlelse det ikke at være det, det ikke at være sig bevidst, at man er det.

Det gaaer i en langt dybere Forstand den vulgaire Betragtning i Forhold til at opfatte Fortvivlelse, som det stundom gaaer den i Forhold til at bestemme, om et Menneske er syg eller ikke – i en langt dybere Forstand; thi den vulgaire Betragtning forstaaer sig endnu langt mindre paa, hvad Aand er (og uden det kan man heller ikke forstaae sig paa Fortvivlelse) end paa Sygdom og Sundhed. I Almindelighed antager man, at et Menneske, naar han ikke selv siger, at han er syg, er rask, end sige, naar han selv siger, at han er rask. Lægen derimod betragter Sygdommen anderledes. Og hvorfor?

Fordi Lægen har en bestemt og udviklet Forestilling om, hvad det er at være sund, og efter denne prøver han et Menneskes Tilstand. Lægen veed, at som der er en Sygdom, der kun er Indbildning, saaledes ogsaa en Sundhed; han anvender derfor i sidste Tilfælde først Midler, for at faae Sygdommen til at blive aabenbar. Overhovedet har Lægen, just fordi han er Læge (den Indsigtsfulde) ikke ubetinget Tiltro til Menneskets eget Udsagn om sit Befindende. Hvis det var Tilfældet, at hvad ethvert Menneske sagde om sit Befindende, om han er sund eller syg, om hvor han lider o. s. v., var ubetinget til at stole paa, saa var det at være Læge en Indbildning.

Thi en Læge har ikke blot at foreskrive Lægemidlerne, men først og fremmest at kjende Sygdommen, og altsaa igjen først og fremmest at kiende, om den formeentligen Syge virkelig er syg, eller om den formeentligen Sunde

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no view at all. It assumes that every human being must surely know best for himself whether he is in despair or not. Whoever says that he is in despair is regarded as in despair, but whoever thinks he is not is for that reason not regarded as such either. As a consequence, despair becomes a rather rare phenomenon instead of the utterly common thing it is. It is not rare that someone is in despair. No, what is rare, very rare indeed, is that someone is truly not in despair.

But the popular view understands despair very poorly. Among other things (to mention just this one, which, rightly understood, brings thousands upon thousands, and millions, under the qualification of despair), it completely overlooks the fact that not being in despair, not being conscious that one is in despair, is precisely a form of despair.

When it comes to understanding despair, the popular view fares, in a far deeper sense, as it sometimes fares when it comes to deciding whether a person is sick or not. In a far deeper sense, for the popular view understands even far less about what spirit is (and without that one cannot understand despair either) than about sickness and health. Generally it is assumed that a person is well if he does not himself say that he is sick, all the more so if he himself says that he is well. The physician, however, views sickness differently. And why?

Because the physician has a definite and developed idea of what it is to be healthy, and by this he examines a person's condition. The physician knows that just as there is a sickness that is merely imagined, so too there is such a health; in the latter case, therefore, he first applies remedies to make the sickness come out into the open. In general the physician, precisely because he is a physician (the one with insight), does not have unconditional confidence in a person's own statement about how he is. If it were the case that whatever anyone said about how he is—whether he is healthy or sick, where it hurts, and so on—could be unconditionally relied on, then being a physician would be an illusion.

For a physician has not only to prescribe remedies but first and foremost to recognize the sickness, and so, again, first and foremost to know whether the supposedly sick person is really sick, or

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maaskee er virkelig syg. Saaledes ogsaa med den Sjelekyndiges [140] Forhold til Fortvivlelse. Han veed, hvad Fortvivlelse er, han kjender den og nøies derfor ikke hverken med det Udsagn af et Menneske, at han ikke er fortvivlet, eller, at han er det. Det maa nemlig bemærkes, at i en vis Forstand ere end ikke altid De fortvivlede, der sige sig at være det.

SKS 11.14 Man kan jo affectere Fortvivlelse, og man kan tage feil og forvexle Fortvivlelse, som er en Aandens Bestemmelse, med allehaande transitorisk Forstemthed, Sønderrevethed, der atter gaaer over uden at bringe det til Fortvivlelse. Imidlertid anseer rigtignok den Sjelekyndige ogsaa dette for Former af Fortvivlelse; han seer meget godt at det er Affectation – men just denne Affectation er Fortvivlelse; han seer meget godt, at denne Forstemthed o. s. v. ikke har stort at betyde – men just Dette, at den ikke har og ikke faaer stort at betyde, er Fortvivlelse.

Den vulgaire Betragtning overseer fremdeles, at Fortvivlelse, sammenlignet med en Sygdom, er anderledes dialectisk end hvad man ellers kalder Sygdom, fordi det er en Aandens Sygdom. Og dette Dialectiske, rigtigt forstaaet, bringer atter Tusinder ind under Bestemmelsen Fortvivlelse. Dersom nemlig en Læge i et givet Øieblik har forvisset sig om, at Den og Den er sund – og han saa i et senere Øieblik bliver syg: saa kan Lægen have Ret i, at dette Menneske *var* dengang rask, nu derimod *er* han syg. Anderledes med Fortvivlelse. Saasnart Fortvivlelse viser sig, saa viser det sig, at Mennesket var fortvivlet. Forsaavidt kan man i intet Øieblik afgjøre Noget om et Menneske, der ikke er frelst ved at have været fortvivlet.

Thi naar, dersom Det indtræder, som bringer ham til Fortvivlelse, saa bliver det i samme Øieblik aabenbart, at han hele sit foregaaende Liv igjennem har været fortvivlet. Ingenlunde kan man derimod sige, naar En faaer Feber, at det nu bliver aabenbart, at han har havt Feber hele sit Liv igjennem. Men Fortvivlelse er en Aandens Bestemmelse, forholder sig til det Evige, og har derfor noget af det Evige i sin Dialectik.

Fortvivlelse er ikke blot anderledes dialectisk end en Sygdom, men i Forhold til Fortvivlelse ere alle Kjendetegn dialectiske, og derfor skuffes den overfladiske Betragtning saa let i at bestemme, om Fortvivlelse er tilstede eller ikke. Det ikke at være fortvivlet kan nemlig

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whether the supposedly healthy person is perhaps really sick. So too with the relation of the expert on the soul [140] to despair. He knows what despair is, he is acquainted with it, and therefore he is not content with a person's statement either that he is not in despair or that he is. For it must be noted that, in a certain sense, not even those who say they are in despair are always in despair.

One can, after all, affect despair; and one can be mistaken and confuse despair, which is a qualification of spirit, with all sorts of passing low spirits and inner turmoil, which pass off again without coming to despair. The expert on the soul, however, does regard these too as forms of despair. He sees very well that it is affectation, but precisely this affectation is despair. He sees very well that these low spirits, and so on, do not mean much, but precisely this, that they do not mean much and do not come to mean much, is despair.

The popular view further overlooks the fact that despair, compared with a sickness, is dialectical in a different way from what is otherwise called sickness, because it is a sickness of the spirit. And this dialectic, rightly understood, again brings thousands under the qualification of despair. Suppose a physician has made sure at a given moment that such-and-such a person is healthy, and the person falls ill at a later moment. Then the physician may be right that this person *was* healthy then but now *is* sick. Not so with despair. As soon as despair shows itself, it shows that the person was in despair. To that extent one can at no moment decide anything about a person who has not been saved by having been in despair.

For when whatever brings him to despair occurs, it becomes manifest in that same moment that he has been in despair throughout his entire previous life. On the other hand, one can by no means say, when someone gets a fever, that it now becomes manifest that he has had a fever throughout his entire life. But despair is a qualification of spirit, is related to the eternal, and therefore has something of the eternal in its dialectic.

Despair is not only dialectical in a different way from a sickness; with despair all the symptoms are dialectical, and that is why the superficial view is so easily deceived in deciding whether despair is present or not. For not being in despair can mean

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betyde just at være fortvivlet, og det kan betyde at være frelst fra at være fortvivlet. Tryghed og Beroligelse kan betyde at være fortvivlet, just denne Tryghed, denne Beroligelse kan være Fortvivlelsen; og det kan betyde at [141] have overvundet Fortvivlelse og vundet Fred.

SKS 11.141 Det er ikke med det ikke at være fortvivlet, som med det ikke at være syg; thi det ikke at være syg kan dog ikke være det at være syg, men det ikke at være fortvivlet kan just være det at være fortvivlet. Det er ikke med Fortvivlelse som med en Sygdom, at Ildebefindendet er Sygdommen. Ingenlunde. Ildebefindendet er atter dialectisk. Det aldrig at have fornummet dette Ildebefindende, er just at være fortvivlet.

Dette vil sige, og har sin Grund i, at som Aand betragtet (og skal man tale om Fortvivlelse maa man betragte Mennesket under Bestemmelsen Aand) er Menneskets Tilstand altid critisk. Man taler i Forhold til Sygdom om en Crisis, men ikke i Forhold til Sundhed. Og hvorfor ikke? Fordi legemlig Sundhed er en umiddelbar Bestemmelse, som først bliver dialectisk i Sygdommens Tilstand, hvor der saa bliver Tale om Crisen. Men aandelig, eller naar Mennesket betragtes som Aand, er baade Sundhed og Sygdom critisk; der gives ingen umiddelbar Aandens Sundhed.

Saasnart man ikke betragter Mennesket under Bestemmelsen Aand (og hvis ikke, kan man heller ikke tale om Fortvivlelse), men kun som sjelelig-legemlig Synthese, saa er Sundhed en umiddelbar Bestemmelse, og Sjelens eller Legemets Sygdom først den dialectiske Bestemmelse. Men Fortvivlelse er just, at Mennesket ikke er sig bevidst at være bestemmet som Aand. Selv hvad der menneskelig talt er det Skjønneste og Elskeligste af Alt, en qvindelig Ungdommelighed, der er idel Fred og Harmoni og Glæde: det er dog Fortvivlelse.

Dette er nemlig Lykke, men Lykke er ingen Bestemmelse af Aand, og langt, langt inde, inderst inde i Lykkens skjulteste Forborgenhed, der boer ogsaa Angesten, som er Fortvivlelsen; den vil saa gjerne have Lov til at blive derinde, thi det er Fortvivlelsen dens kjereste, dens meest udsøgte Sted at boe: inderst inde i Lykken.

Al Umiddelbarhed er trods sin illusoriske Tryghed og Ro Angest, og derfor ganske conseqvent meest angest for Intet; man gjør ikke Umiddelbarheden saa angest ved den meest gysende Beskrivelse af det forfærdeligste Noget,

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precisely being in despair, and it can mean having been saved from being in despair. Security and tranquility can mean being in despair; precisely this security, this tranquility, can be the despair. And it can mean [141] having overcome despair and gained peace.

Not being in despair is not like not being sick. For not being sick cannot be being sick, but not being in despair can be precisely being in despair. It is not with despair as with a sickness, where feeling unwell is the sickness. By no means. The feeling unwell is itself dialectical. Never to have felt this unwellness is precisely to be in despair.

This means, and has its ground in the fact, that viewed as spirit (and if one is to speak of despair, one must view the human being under the qualification of spirit), the human condition is always critical. With sickness one speaks of a crisis, but not with health. And why not? Because bodily health is an immediate qualification, which first becomes dialectical in the state of sickness, where there is then talk of the crisis. But spiritually, or when the human being is viewed as spirit, both health and sickness are critical; there is no immediate health of the spirit.

As soon as one does not view the human being under the qualification of spirit (and if not, one cannot speak of despair either) but only as a synthesis of soul and body, health is an immediate qualification, and sickness of soul or body is only then the dialectical qualification. But despair is precisely that the human being is not conscious of being qualified as spirit. Even what is, humanly speaking, the loveliest and most lovable thing of all, a young woman's youthfulness, which is sheer peace and harmony and joy—that too is despair.

For this is happiness, but happiness is not a qualification of spirit; and far, far within, in the innermost depths of happiness's most hidden recesses, there dwells anxiety too, which is despair. It would so much like to be allowed to stay in there, for despair's dearest, most choice place to dwell is in the innermost depths of happiness.

All immediacy, despite its illusory security and calm, is anxiety, and therefore, quite consistently, it is most anxious about nothing. One does not make immediacy as anxious by the most harrow-

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som ved et underfundigt, næsten skjødesløst, men dog med Reflectionens sikkert beregnende Sigte henkastet halvt Ord om et Ubestemt, ja man gjør Umiddelbarheden allermeest angest ved paa en listig Maade at paadutte den, at den selv nok veed, hvad det er man taler om. Thi vistnok veed Umiddelbarheden det ikke; [142] men aldrig fanger Reflexionen saa sikkert som naar den danner sin Snare af Intet, og aldrig er Reflexionen saaledes sig selv, som naar den er – Intet.

SKS 11.14 Der skal en eminent Reflexion, eller rettere der skal en stor Tro til for at kunne udholde Intets, det er, den uendelige Reflexion. Altsaa selv det Skjønneste og Elskeligste af Alt, en qvindelig Ungdommelighed er dog Fortvivlelse, er Lykke. Det lykkes vel derfor heller ikke at slippe Livet igjennem paa denne Umiddelbarhed. Og lykkes det denne Lykke at slippe igjennem, ja, det hjælper kun lidet, thi det er Fortvivlelse. Fortvivlelse er nemlig, just fordi den er heelt dialectisk, den Sygdom, om hvilken det gjælder, at det er den største Ulykke aldrig at have havt den – en sand Guds Lykke at faae den, om det end er den allerfarligste Sygdom, naar man ikke vil helbredes fra den.

Ellers kan der dog kun være Tale om, at det er en Lykke at blive helbredet fra en Sygdom, Sygdommen selv er Ulykken.

Det er derfor saa langt som muligt fra, at den vulgaire Betragtning har Ret, som antager, at Fortvivlelse er det Sjeldne, den er tværtimod det ganske Almindelige. Det er saa langt som muligt fra, at den vulgaire Betragtning har Ret, som antager, at Enhver, der ikke mener eller føler sig at være fortvivlet, heller ikke er det, og at kun Den er det, der siger sig at være det. Tværtimod Den, der uden Affectation siger sig at være det, er dog lidt, er et Dialektisk nærmere ved at helbredes end alle De, som ikke ansees for og ikke ansee sig selv for fortvivlede.

Men just dette er, hvad vistnok den Sjelekyndige vil give mig Ret i, det Almindelige, at de fleste Mennesker leve uden ret at blive sig bevidste at være bestemte som Aand – og deraf al den saakaldte Tryghed, Tilfredshed med Livet o. s. v., o. s. v., hvad just er Fortvivlelse. De, der derimod sige sig at være fortvivlede, ere ordentligviis

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ing description of the most terrible something as by a half-word about something indefinite, tossed off slyly, almost carelessly, yet with the surely calculated aim of reflection. Indeed, one makes immediacy most anxious of all by cunningly insinuating that it surely knows itself what one is talking about. For immediacy certainly does not know; [142] but reflection never catches so surely as when it makes its snare out of nothing, and reflection is never so much itself as when it is—nothing.[2]

It takes an eminent reflection, or rather it takes a great faith, to be able to endure the reflection of nothing, that is, infinite reflection. So even the loveliest and most lovable thing of all, a young woman's youthfulness, is nevertheless despair, is happiness. Therefore one will hardly succeed in slipping through life on this immediacy. And if this happiness does succeed in slipping through, well, that helps but little, for it is despair. For despair, precisely because it is wholly dialectical, is the sickness of which it holds true that the greatest misfortune is never to have had it. It is a true godsend to get it, even though it is the most dangerous sickness of all if one does not want to be cured of it.

Otherwise one can speak only of its being fortunate to be cured of a sickness; the sickness itself is the misfortune.

So the popular view is as wrong as it could possibly be when it assumes that despair is something rare; on the contrary, despair is quite common. The popular view is as wrong as it could possibly be when it assumes that whoever does not think or feel that he is in despair is not in despair, and that only the one who says he is, is. On the contrary, the one who says without affectation that he is in despair is still a little nearer, one dialectical step nearer, to being cured than all those who are not regarded, and do not regard themselves, as being in despair.

But precisely this is the common case, as the expert on the soul will surely grant me: most people live without ever really becoming conscious of being qualified as spirit. From this comes all the so-called security, contentment with life, etc., etc., which is precisely despair. Those, on the other

2 "Immediacy" renders *Umiddelbarhed*: life as simply given, before reflection.

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enten Dem, der have en saa meget dybere Natur, at de maae blive sig bevidste som Aand, eller Dem, hvem tunge Begivenheder og forfærdelige Afgjørelser have hjulpet hen til at blive sig bevidste som Aand – det er enten Dem eller Dem; thi saare sjelden er vistnok Den, der i Sandhed ikke er fortvivlet.

O, der tales saa meget om menneskelig Nød og Elendighed – jeg søger at forstaae det, har ogsaa kjendt Adskilligt deraf nærved; der tales saa meget om at forspilde et Liv: men kun det Menneskes Liv var forspildt, der levede saaledes hen, bedragen af Livets Glæder eller af [143] dets Sorger, at han aldrig evigt afgjørende blev sig bevidst som Aand, som Selv, eller hvad der er det Samme, aldrig blev opmærksom paa, og i dybeste Forstand fik Indtrykket af, at der er en Gud til, og »han«, han Selv, hans Selv til for denne Gud, hvilken Uendelighedens Vinding aldrig naaes uden gjennem Fortvivlelse.

SKS 11.14 Ak, og denne Elendighed, at der leve saa Mange saaledes hen, bedragne for den saligste af alle Tanker, denne Elendighed, at man beskjæftiger sig, eller i Forhold til Menneskenes Mængde beskjæftiger dem med alt Andet, bruger dem til at afgive Kræfterne i Livets Skuespil, men aldrig minder dem om denne Salighed, at man sammenhober dem – og bedrager dem, istedetfor at splitte dem ad, at hver Enkelt maa vinde det Høieste, det Eneste, der er værd at leve for, og nok for en Evighed at leve i: mig synes, jeg kunde græde en Evighed over, at denne Elendighed er til!

O, og dette er i mine Tanker eet Rædselens Udtryk mere for denne af alle forfærdeligste Sygdom og Elendighed: dens Skjulthed, ikke blot, at Den, der lider af den, kan ønske at skjule den og kan formaae det, at den kan boe i et Menneske saaledes, at Ingen, Ingen opdager den, nei, at den kan være saaledes skjult i et Menneske, at han ikke selv veed af det!

O, og naar saa engang Timeglasset er udrundet, Timelighedens Timeglas; naar Verdslighedens Larm er forstummet, og den rastløse eller uvirksomme Travlhed fik en Ende; naar Alt er stille om Dig, som det er i Evigheden – hvad enten Du var Mand eller Qvinde, Riig eller Fattig, Afhængig eller Uafhængig, Lykkelig eller

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hand, who say they are in despair are ordinarily either people with a nature so much deeper that they must become conscious of themselves as spirit, or people whom hard events and terrible decisions have helped to become conscious of themselves as spirit. It is either the one or the other, for the person who is truly not in despair is very rare indeed.

Oh, there is so much talk about human need and misery. I try to understand it, and I have known a good deal of it at close range. There is so much talk about wasting a life. But only that person's life was wasted who went on living, deceived by life's joys or its [143] sorrows, in such a way that he never became eternally and decisively conscious of himself as spirit, as self—or, what is the same, never became aware, and in the deepest sense never gained the impression, that there is a God, and that "he," he himself, his self, exists before this God. This gain of infinitude is never reached except through despair.

Alas, and this misery: that so many live on like this, cheated of the most blessed of all thoughts. This misery: that people busy themselves—or, where the human crowd is concerned, keep the crowd busy—with everything else, use them to make up the cast in the drama of life, but never remind them of this blessedness. That people are heaped together—and deceived—instead of being split apart, so that each single individual might gain the highest, the only thing worth living for, and enough to live in for an eternity. It seems to me I could weep for an eternity that this misery exists!

Oh, and in my view this is one more expression of the horror of this most terrible of all sicknesses and miseries: its hiddenness. Not only that the one who suffers from it may wish to hide it and be able to, so that it can dwell in a person in such a way that no one, no one discovers it. No—that it can be so hidden in a person that he himself does not know it!

Oh, and when at last the hourglass has run out, the hourglass of temporality; when the noise of worldliness has fallen silent, and the restless or idle busyness has come to an end; when everything is still around you, as it is in eternity—whether you were man or woman, rich or poor, dependent or

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Ulykkelig; hvad enten Du bar Kronens Glands i Høihed, eller i ringe Ubemærkethed kun Dagens Møie og Hede; hvad enten Dit Navn skal mindes saa længe Verden staaer, og altsaa er mindet saalænge den stod, eller Du, uden Navn, som Navnløs løb med i den talløse Mængde;

hvad enten den Herlighed, som omgav Dig overgik al menneskelig Beskrivelse, eller Dig overgik den strengeste og meest vanærende menneskelige Dom: Evigheden spørger Dig, og hver Enkelt i disse Millioner Millioner, kun om Eet, om Du har levet fortvivlet eller ikke, om saaledes fortvivlet, at Du ikke vidste af at Du var fortvivlet, eller saaledes, at Du skjult bar denne Sygdom i Dit Inderste, som din nagende Hemmelighed, som en syndig Kjerligheds Frugt under dit Hjerte, eller saaledes, at Du, en Rædsel for Andre, rasede i Fortvivlelse.

Og hvis saa, hvis Du har levet fortvivlet, hvad Du end [144] forresten vandt eller tabte, saa er for Dig Alt tabt, Evigheden vedkjender sig Dig ikke, den kjendte Dig aldrig, eller end forfærdeligere, den kjender Dig som Du er kjendt, den sætter Dig fast ved Dit Selv i Fortvivlelsen!

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independent, fortunate or unfortunate; whether you bore the splendor of the crown in high station, or in humble obscurity only the toil and heat of the day; whether your name will be remembered as long as the world stands, and so will have been remembered as long as it stood, or you, without a name, ran along nameless in the countless crowd;[3]

whether the glory that surrounded you surpassed all human description, or the harshest and most disgraceful human judgment befell you: eternity asks you, and each individual among these millions upon millions, about one thing only—whether you have lived in despair or not. Whether in such despair that you did not know you were in despair; or in such a way that you carried this sickness hidden in your innermost being, as your gnawing secret, as the fruit of a sinful love beneath your heart; or in such a way that you, a horror to others, raged in despair.

And if so—if you have lived in despair, then, whatever else you [144] won or lost, for you everything is lost. Eternity does not acknowledge you; it never knew you—or, more terrible still, it knows you as you are known; it binds you fast to your self in despair![4]

3 "The toil and heat of the day" echoes the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:12).
4 Echoes Matthew 7:23 ("I never knew you") and 1 Corinthians 13:12 ("as I have been fully known").

The Forms of Despair: Finitude and Infinitude, Possibility and Necessity

Første Afsnit, C.A
Despair considered in the constituents of the synthesis: lacking finitude or infinitude, possibility or necessity.

	DANISH	ENGLISH
SKS 11.14	Fortvivlelsens Skikkelser maae abstrakt lade sig udfinde ved at reflektere paa de Momenter, hvoraf Selvet, som Synthese, bestaaer. Selvet er dannet af Uendelighed og Endelighed. Men denne Synthese er et Forhold, og et Forhold, der, om end deriveret, forholder sig til sig selv, hvilket er Frihed. Selvet er Frihed. Men Frihed er det Dialektiske i Bestemmelserne Mulighed og Nødvendighed.	It must be possible to discover the forms of despair abstractly by reflecting on the constituents of which the self, as a synthesis, consists. The self is formed of infinitude and finitude. But this synthesis is a relation, and a relation that, although derived, relates itself to itself, which is freedom. The self is freedom. But freedom is the dialectical element in the qualifications of possibility and necessity.[1]
	Hovedsagelig maa dog Fortvivlelse betragtes under Bestemmelsen: Bevidsthed; det om Fortvivlelse er bevidst eller ikke, er det qvalitativ Forskjellige mellem Fortvivlelse og Fortvivlelse. Al Fortvivlelse er vistnok i Begrebet seet bevidst; men deraf følger ikke, at Den, i hvem den er, Den som begrebsrigtigt maa kaldes fortvivlet, er sig det bevidst. Saaledes er Bevidstheden det Afgjørende. Overhovedet er Bevidsthed, ɔ: Selvbevidsthed, det Afgjørende i Forhold til Selvet. Jo mere Bevidsthed jo mere Selv; jo mere Bevidsthed jo mere Villie, jo mere Villie jo mere Selv. Et Menneske, der slet ingen Villie har, er intet Selv; men jo mere Villie han har, jo mere Selvbevidsthed har han ogsaa.	Principally, however, despair must be viewed under the qualification of consciousness. Whether despair is conscious or not is what makes the qualitative difference between one despair and another. All despair, viewed in its concept, is of course conscious; but it does not follow that the person in whom it is, the one who must rightly, by the concept, be called in despair, is conscious of it. Consciousness, then, is the decisive factor. In general, consciousness—that is, self-consciousness—is decisive with regard to the self. The more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will; the more will, the more self. A person who has no will at all is no self; but the more will he has, the more self-consciousness he has, too.[2]

A) DESPAIR UNDER FINITUDE AND INFINITUDE

Becoming a self means becoming concrete, moving away from oneself infinitely and returning to oneself.

	DANISH	ENGLISH
SKS 11.14	Selvet er den bevidste Synthese af Uendelighed og Endelighed, der forholder sig til sig selv, hvis Opgave er at vorde sig selv, hvilket kun lader sig gjøre ved Forholdet til Gud. Men at vorde sig selv er at vorde concret. Men at	The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude that relates itself to itself, whose task is to become itself, which can be done only through the relation to God. But to become oneself

1 "Infinitude" and "finitude" render *Uendelighed* and *Endelighed*; "possibility" and "necessity," *Mulighed* and *Nødvendighed*.
2 "Consciousness" renders *Bevidsthed*.

DANISH

vorde concret er hverken at blive endelig eller at blive uendelig, thi det der skal vorde concret er jo en Synthese. Udviklingen maa altsaa bestaae i uendeligt at komme bort fra sig selv i Uendeliggjørelse af Selvet, og i uendeligt at komme tilbage til sig selv i Endeliggjørelsen. Vorder derimod Selvet ikke sig selv, saa er det fortvivlet, enten det veed af det eller ikke.

Dog er et Selv i ethvert Øieblik, det er til, i Vorden, thi Selvet κατα δυναμιν er ikke virkeligt til, er blot Det, der skal blive til. Forsaavidt da Selvet ikke vorder sig selv, er det ikke sig selv; men det ikke at være sig selv er just Fortvivlelse.

ENGLISH

is to become concrete. And to become concrete is neither to become finite nor to become infinite, for what is to become concrete is, after all, a synthesis. The development must therefore consist in infinitely moving away from oneself in the infinitizing of the self, and in infinitely coming back to oneself in the finitizing. If, on the other hand, the self does not become itself, it is in despair, whether it knows it or not.

Yet a self, in every moment that it exists, is in a process of becoming, for the self κατα δυναμιν [potentially] does not actually exist; it is only that which is to come into existence. Insofar, then, as the self does not become itself, it is not itself; but not to be oneself is precisely despair.

A) THE DESPAIR OF INFINITUDE

Feeling, knowing and willing turn fantastic, and the self evaporates into abstraction.

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At dette er saaledes, ligger i det Dialektiske at Selvet er en Synthese, hvorfor det Ene bestandigt er sit Modsatte. Ingen Form af Fortvivlelse kan man bestemme ligefrem (ɔ: udialektisk), men kun ved at reflektere paa dens Modsatte. Man kan beskrive den Fortvivledes Tilstand i Fortvivlelsen ligefrem, som en Digter jo gjør det, ved at give ham Replikken. Men bestemme Fortvivlelsen kan man kun ved dens Modsatte; og skal Replikken være digterisk værdifuld, maa den i Udtrykkets Colorit indeholde Reflexen af den dialektiske Modsætning. Altsaa, enhver menneskelig Existents, der formeentligen er blevet eller blot vil være uendelig, ja ethvert Øieblik, i hvilket en menneskelig Existents er blevet eller blot vil være uendelig, er Fortvivlelse.

Thi Selvet er Synthesen, hvor det Endelige er det Begrændsende, det Uendelige det Udvidende. Uendelighedens Fortvivlelse er derfor det Phantastiske, det Grændseløse; thi kun da er Selvet sundt og frit fra Fortvivlelse, naar det, just ved at have fortvivlet, sig selv gjennemsigtigt grunder i Gud.

Det Phantastiske forholder sig vistnok nærmest til Phantasien; men Phantasien forholder sig igjen til Følelse, Erkjendelse, Villie, saa et Men [147] neske kan have en phantastisk Følelse, Erkjendelse, Villie. Phantasien er overhovedet det Uendeliggjørendes Medium; den er ikke nogen Evne som de andre Evner – hvis man vil tale saaledes, er den Evnen instar omnium. Hvad Følelse,

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That this is so lies in the dialectical fact that the self is a synthesis, and therefore each term is constantly its opposite. No form of despair can be defined directly (that is, undialectically), but only by reflecting on its opposite. One can describe the condition of the person in despair directly, as a poet does, by giving him lines to speak. But despair can be defined only through its opposite; and if the lines are to have poetic value, the coloring of their expression must contain the reflection of the dialectical opposite. Thus every human existence that supposedly has become infinite, or merely wants to be infinite—indeed, every moment in which a human existence has become, or merely wants to be, infinite—is despair.

For the self is the synthesis in which the finite is the limiting factor and the infinite the expanding factor. The despair of infinitude is therefore the fantastic, the limitless; for the self is healthy and free from despair only when, precisely by having despaired, it grounds itself transparently in God.

The fantastic is, of course, most closely related to imagination; but imagination in turn is related to feeling, knowing, and willing, so that a human [147] being can have a fantastic feeling, knowing, and willing. Imagination is in general the medium of the infinitizing process. It is not one capacity like the others; if one wants to speak that way, it is the

DANISH	ENGLISH
Erkjendelse, Villie et Menneske har, beroer dog til syvende og sidst paa, hvad Phantasie han har, det vil sige paa, hvorledes Dette reflekterer sig, ɔ: paa Phantasien. Phantasien er den uendeliggjørende Reflexion, hvorfor den gamle Fichte ganske rigtigt antog, selv i Forhold til Erkjendelsen, at Phantasien er Kategoriernes Oprindelse. Selvet er Reflexion, og Phantasien er Reflexion, er Selvets Gjengivelse, hvilken er Selvets Mulighed.	capacity instar omnium [that stands for all the others]. What feeling, knowing, and willing a person has depends in the last resort on what imagination he has, that is, on how these are reflected—that is, on imagination. Imagination is the infinitizing reflection, which is why the elder Fichte quite rightly assumed, even with regard to knowing, that imagination is the origin of the categories. The self is reflection, and imagination is reflection; it is the rendering of the self, which is the self's possibility.[3]
SKS 11.14 Phantasien er al Reflexions Mulighed; og dette Mediums Intensitet er Muligheden af Selvets Intensitet.	Imagination is the possibility of all reflection; and the intensity of this medium is the possibility of the self's intensity.
Det Phantastiske er overhovedet Det, som fører et Menneske saaledes ud i det Uendelige, at det blot fører ham bort fra sig og derved afholder ham fra at komme tilbage til sig selv.	The fantastic is in general that which carries a person out into the infinite in such a way that it only carries him away from himself and thereby prevents him from coming back to himself.
Naar Følelsen saaledes bliver phantastisk, da forflygtiges Selvet blot mere og mere, det bliver tilsidst en Slags abstrakt Følsomhed, der umenneskeligt ikke tilhører noget Menneske, men umenneskeligt saa at sige følsomt participerer i et eller andet Abstraktums Skjebne, f. Ex. Menneskeheden in abstracto. Som den Gigtsvage ikke er sin sandselige Følelse mægtig, men denne er i Vindens og Veierligets Vold, saa han uvilkaarligt mærker det paa sig, naar der er Forandring i Luften o. s. v., saaledes med Den, hvis Følelse er blevet phantastisk, han bliver paa en Maade uendeliggjort, men ikke saaledes, at han mere og mere vorder sig selv, thi han taber mere og mere sig selv.	When feeling becomes fantastic in this way, the self simply evaporates more and more. In the end it becomes a kind of abstract sentimentality which, inhumanly, belongs to no human being, but which, inhumanly, participates sentimentally, so to speak, in the fate of some abstraction or other, for example humanity in abstracto [in the abstract]. The rheumatic is not master of his bodily sensations; they are at the mercy of wind and weather, so that he involuntarily feels it in himself when there is a change in the air, etc. So it is with the one whose feeling has become fantastic: he becomes in a way infinitized, but not in such a way that he becomes more and more himself, for he loses himself more and more.
Ligesaa med Erkjendelsen, naar den bliver phantastisk. Loven for Selvets Udvikling i Henseende til Erkjendelse, forsaavidt det da skal være sandt, at Selvet vorder sig selv, er, at Erkjendelsens stigende Grad svarer til Selverkjendelsens Grad, at Selvet, jo mere det erkjender, desto mere erkjender sig selv. Skeer dette ikke, da bliver Erkjendelsen, jo mere den stiger, desto mere en Art umenneskelig Erkjenden, paa hvis Tilveiebringelse Menneskets Selv ødsles, omtrent som der ødsledes Mennesker paa at bygge Pyramider, eller der i hiin russiske Hornmusik ødsledes Mennesker paa at være en Takt, hverken mere eller mindre.	Likewise with knowing, when it becomes fantastic. The law for the self's development with regard to knowing, insofar as it is to be true that the self becomes itself, is that the rising degree of knowledge corresponds to the degree of self-knowledge: the more the self knows, the more it knows itself. If this does not happen, then the more knowing increases, the more it becomes a kind of inhuman knowing, in the production of which the human self is squandered—rather as human beings were squandered on building pyramids, or as, in that Russian horn music, human beings were

3 Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), German idealist philosopher, called "the elder" to distinguish him from his son, the philosopher Immanuel Hermann Fichte.

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squandered on being one single beat, neither more nor less.[4]

Naar Villien bliver phantastisk, saa forflygtiges ligeledes Selvet mere og mere. Villien bliver da ikke bestandigt i samme Grad concret som abstrakt, [148] saa den, jo mere den uendeliggjøres i Forsæt og Beslutning, bliver desto mere og mere sig selv ganske nærværende og samtidig i den lille Deel af Opgaven, som lader sig udføre nu strax, saa den i at uendeliggjøres kommer i strengeste Forstand tilbage til sig selv, saa den *længst borte* fra sig selv (naar den er meest uendeliggjort i Forsæt og Beslutning) er sig selv i samme Øieblik *allernærmest* i at udføre den uendelig lille Deel af Arbeidet, hvilken lader sig udføre endnu idag, endnu i denne Time, endnu i dette Øieblik.

When the will becomes fantastic, the self likewise evaporates more and more. The will then does not continually become concrete to the same degree that it is abstract, [148] which would mean this: the more it is infinitized in purpose and resolution, the more fully present and contemporary with itself it becomes in the small part of the task that can be carried out right now; in being infinitized it comes back to itself in the strictest sense; *farthest away* from itself (when it is most infinitized in purpose and resolution), it is at the same moment *closest* to itself in carrying out the infinitely small part of the work that can be done this very day, this very hour, this very moment.

SKS 11.148 Og naar saa Følelse eller Erkjendelse eller Villie er blevet phantastisk, saa kan tilsidst hele Selvet blive det, hvad enten det nu er en mere aktiv Form, at Mennesket styrter sig i det Phantastiske, eller en mere lidende Form, at han rives hen, men i begge Tilfælde ansvarlig. Selvet fører saa en phantastisk Existents i abstrakt Uendeliggjørelse eller i abstrakt Isolation, bestandigt manglende sit Selv, hvorfra det blot kommer mere og mere bort. Saaledes f. Ex. paa det religieuse Gebeet. Gudsforholdet er Uendeliggjørelse; men denne Uendeliggjørelse kan phantastisk rive et Menneske saaledes hen, at det blot bliver en Beruselse.

And when feeling or knowing or willing has become fantastic, in the end the whole self can become so—whether in a more active form, in which the person plunges into the fantastic, or in a more passive form, in which he is carried away; but in both cases he is responsible. The self then leads a fantastic existence in abstract infinitizing or in abstract isolation, continually lacking its self, from which it only moves farther and farther away. Take, for example, the religious sphere. The God-relationship is an infinitizing; but this infinitizing can carry a person away so fantastically that it becomes mere intoxication.

Det kan være et Menneske som var det ikke til at holde ud at være til for Gud, fordi nemlig Mennesket ikke kan komme tilbage til sig selv, blive sig selv. En saadan phantastisk Religieus vilde sige (for at charakterisere ham ved Hjælp af Replik): »at en Spurv kan leve er begribeligt, den veed ikke af, at den er til for Gud. Men at vide, at man er til for Gud, og saa ikke i samme Øieblik at blive afsindig eller at blive til Intet!«

It can seem to a person as if it were unbearable to exist before God, because he cannot come back to himself, cannot become himself. Such a fantastic religious person would say (to characterize him by giving him a line to speak): “That a sparrow can live is understandable; it does not know that it exists before God. But to know that one exists before God, and then not go mad or come to nothing that very moment!”[5]

LOSING ONESELF QUIETLY

The greatest danger, losing one’s self, can pass unnoticed while a person marries, works and is esteemed.

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Men fordi et Menneske saaledes er blevet phantastisk, og derfor fortvivlet, saa kan han dog, skjøndt det oftest

But although a person has become fantastic in this way, and therefore in despair, he can nevertheless

4 In Russian horn bands of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, each musician (often a serf) blew a horn that sounded only one note.

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bliver aabenbart, ret godt leve hen, være Menneske som det synes, beskjæftiget med det Timelige, gifte sig, avle Børn, være æret og anseet – og man mærker det maaskee ikke, at han i dybere Forstand mangler et Selv. Sligt gjøres der i Verden ikke store Ophævelser over; thi et Selv er Det, der mindst spørges om i Verden, og er Det, som det meest af Alt er farligt at lade sig mærke med at man har. Den største Fare, den at tabe sig selv, kan i Verden gaae saa stille af som var det Ingenting.

Intet Tab kan gaae saa stille af; ethvert andet Tab, en Arm, et Been, 5 Rbd., en Hustru o. s. v., bemærkes dog.

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—though it usually becomes evident—live on quite well, be a human being to all appearances, occupied with temporal things, marry, have children, be honored and esteemed; and perhaps no one notices that in a deeper sense he lacks a self. The world makes no great fuss about such things; for a self is the thing the world asks about least, and the thing it is most dangerous of all to let on that one has. The greatest danger, losing oneself, can happen very quietly in the world, as if it were nothing at all.

No other loss can happen so quietly; every other loss—an arm, a leg, five rix-dollars, a wife, etc.—is at least noticed.[6]

B) THE DESPAIR OF FINITUDE

Worldly people let themselves be ground smooth like pebbles, becoming numbers instead of selves.

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SKS 11.14 At Dette er saaledes, ligger, som viist blev under α, i det Dialektiske, at Selvet er en Synthese, hvorfor det Ene er sit Modsatte.

At mangle Uendelighed er fortvivlet Begrændsethed, Bornerethed. Hermed er dog naturligviis kun, ethisk, Tale om Bornerethed og Indskrænkethed. I Verden tales der egentlig blot om intellectuel eller æsthethisk Indskrænkethed eller om det Ligegyldige, om hvilket der da altid er meest Tale i Verden; thi Verdslighed er just at tillægge det Ligegyldige uendelig Værd.

Den verdslige Betragtning klamrer sig altid fast om Differentsen mellem Menneske og Menneske, har, som naturligt (thi at have det er Aandelighed) ingen Forstand paa det ene Fornødne, og derfor ingen Forstand paa den Indskrænkethed og Bornerethed, der er at have tabt sig selv, ikke ved at forflygtiges i det Uendelige, men ved aldeles at endeliggjøres, ved istedetfor at være et Selv at være blevet et Tal, eet Menneske mere, een Gjentagelse mere af dette evindelige Einerlei.

Den fortvivlede Bornerethed er at mangle Primitivitet, eller at have berøvet sig sin Primitivitet, at have, aandelig forstaaet, afmandet sig selv. Ethvert Menneske er nemlig

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That this is so lies, as was shown under α, in the dialectical fact that the self is a synthesis, and therefore each term is its opposite.

To lack infinitude is despairing limitedness, narrow-mindedness. Here, of course, only narrow-mindedness and limitation in the ethical sense are meant. The world really talks only about intellectual or aesthetic limitation, or about things of no importance, which are always what the world talks about most; for worldliness is precisely to ascribe infinite value to what is of no importance.

The worldly view always clings to the differences between one person and another, and, naturally enough (for to have it is spirituality), has no understanding of the one thing needful. It therefore has no understanding of the limitation and narrow-mindedness that consists in having lost oneself—not by evaporating into the infinite but by being entirely finitized; by having become, instead of a self, a number, one more human being, one more repetition of this everlasting Einerlei [sameness].[7]

Despairing narrow-mindedness is to lack primitivity, or to have robbed oneself of one's primitivity, to have, spiritually speaking, emasculated oneself.

5 Perhaps an echo of Matthew 10:29, where not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from God.
6 Rbd. (*rigsbankdaler*, rix-dollars) was the Danish currency of the time; five was a modest sum.
7 "The one thing needful": Jesus' words to Martha in Luke 10:42.

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primitivt anlagt som et Selv, bestemt til at blive sig selv; og vistnok er ethvert Selv som saadant kantet, men deraf følger blot, at det skal tilslibes, ikke at det skal afslibes, ikke at det af Menneskefrygt aldeles skal opgive at være sig selv, eller endog blot af Menneskefrygt ikke turde være sig selv i den sin væsentligere Tilfældighed (hvilken netop ikke skal afslibes), i hvilken man dog er sig selv for sig selv.

Men medens een Art Fortvivlelse styrer vild i det Uendelige og taber sig selv, saa lader en anden Art af Fortvivlelse sig ligesom sit Selv franarre af »de Andre.« Ved at see den Mængde Mennesker omkring sig, ved at faae travlt med allehaande verdslige Anliggender, ved at blive klog paa, hvorledes det gaaer til i Verden, glemmer saa et saadant Menneske sig selv, hvad han, guddommelig forstaaet, hedder, tør ikke troe paa sig selv, finder det for voveligt at være sig selv, langt lettere og sikkrere at være som de Andre, at blive en Efterabelse, at blive Numerus, med i Mængden.

Denne Form af Fortvivlelse bliver man nu saa godt som slet ikke opmærksom paa i Verden. Et saadant Menneske har just ved saaledes at [150] tabe sig selv vundet Perfectibilitet til ret at gaae med i Handel og Vandel, ja til at gjøre Lykke i Verden. Her er intet Sinkeri, ingen Vanskelighed med hans Selv og dets Uendeliggjørelse, han er afslebet som en Rullesteen, courant som en gangbar Mynt. Det er saa langt fra at Nogen anseer ham for fortvivlet, at han just er et Menneske som sig bør. Overhovedet har Verden, som naturligt, ingen Forstand paa det sande Forfærdelige.

SKS 11.15 Den Fortvivlelse, som ikke blot ikke volder En Uleilighed i Livet, men gjør En Livet beqvemt og mageligt, den ansees naturligviis paa ingen Maade for Fortvivlelse. At dette er Verdens Betragtning seer man blandt Andet ogsaa næsten af alle Ordsprog, hvilke blot ere Klogskabsregler. Man siger saaledes, at man fortryder ti Gange at have talet for een Gang at have tiet, og hvorfor? Fordi det at have talet som et udvortes Faktum kan vikle En ind i Ubehageligheder, da det er en Virkelighed. Men det at have tiet! Og dog er det det Allerfarligste. Thi ved at tie er Mennesket ene overladt til sig selv; her kommer Virkeligheden ham ikke til Hjælp ved at straffe ham, ved at bringe Følgerne af hans Tale over ham.

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For every human being is primitively constituted as a self, destined to become himself. Certainly every self as such has sharp edges; but from this it only follows that it is to be honed, not ground down—not that out of fear of people it should give up being itself altogether, or even merely that out of fear of people it should not dare to be itself in its more essential contingency (which is precisely what must not be ground down), in which one is, after all, oneself for oneself.[8]

But while one kind of despair runs wild into the infinite and loses itself, another kind of despair lets itself be, as it were, cheated out of its self by "the others." By seeing the multitude of people around him, by getting busy with all sorts of worldly affairs, by becoming wise to how things go in the world, such a person forgets himself, forgets what his name is, divinely understood. He does not dare to believe in himself, finds it too risky to be himself, far easier and safer to be like the others, to become an imitation, to become numerus [a mere number], one of the crowd.

This form of despair goes almost entirely unnoticed in the world. Precisely by thus [150] losing himself, such a person has gained the perfectibility to get along splendidly in business and society, indeed to make a success of himself in the world. Here there is no holdup, no difficulty with his self and its infinitizing; he is ground as smooth as a pebble, as current as a coin in circulation. So far from anyone regarding him as in despair, he is exactly what a human being ought to be. In general the world, naturally enough, has no understanding of what is truly terrible.

The despair that not only causes one no inconvenience in life but makes life comfortable and easy is, naturally, in no way regarded as despair. That this is the world's view can be seen, among other things, in almost all proverbs, which are merely rules of prudence. Thus it is said that one regrets having spoken ten times for every once one regrets having kept silent. And why? Because having spoken, being an external fact, can involve one in unpleasantness, since it is an actuality. But having kept silent! And yet that is the most dangerous thing of all. For by keeping silent a person is left

8 *Primitivitet*: one's original, underived individuality, not anything crude.

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entirely to himself; here actuality does not come to his aid by punishing him, by bringing the consequences of his speech down upon him.

Nei, i den Henseende er det let gjort med at tie. Men derfor frygter Den, der veed hvad det Forfærdelige er, just af Alt meest ethvert Misgreb, enhver Synden, der tager Retningen ind efter, og intet Spor efterlader i det Udvortes. Det er saaledes i Verdens Øine farligt at vove, og hvorfor? Fordi man saa kan tabe. Men det ikke at vove, det er klogt. Og dog, ved ikke at vove kan man just saa forfærdelig let tabe, hvad man dog, hvor meget man end tabte ved at vove, vanskeligt tabte, og i ethvert Tilfælde aldrig saaledes, saa let, saa ganske som var det Ingenting – sig selv. Thi har jeg vovet forkeert, nu vel, saa hjælper Livet mig med Straffen.

No, in that respect keeping silent is easy. But this is exactly why the one who knows what the terrible is fears most of all every misstep, every sin, that takes an inward direction and leaves no outward trace. Likewise, in the eyes of the world it is dangerous to venture. And why? Because one may lose. But not to venture—that is prudent. And yet by not venturing one can so terribly easily lose what one would hardly lose by venturing, however much else one lost—and in any case never lose in this way, so easily, so completely, as if it were nothing at all: oneself. For if I have ventured wrongly, well then, life helps me with its punishment.

Men har jeg slet ikke vovet, hvo hjælper mig saa? Og naar jeg ovenikjøbet ved slet ikke i høieste Forstand at vove (og at vove i høieste Forstand er just at blive opmærksom paa sig selv) feigt vinder alle jordiske Fordele – og taber mig selv!

But if I have not ventured at all, who helps me then? And what if, on top of that, by not venturing at all in the highest sense (and to venture in the highest sense is precisely to become aware of oneself), I cowardly gain every earthly advantage—and lose myself![9]

Og saaledes er det just med Endelighedens Fortvivlelse. Fordi et Menneske saaledes er fortvivlet, derfor kan han meget godt, og egentligen netop desto bedre, leve hen i Timeligheden, være Menneske som det synes, være priset af Andre, æret og anseet, beskjæftiget med alle Timelighedens Formaal. Ja just det man kalder Verdsligheden bestaaer af lutter saadanne Mennesker, der, om man saa kan sige, forskrive sig til Verden. De bruge deres Evner, samle Penge, udføre verdslige Bedrifter, [151] beregne klogt, o. s. v. o. s. v., blive maaskee nævnte i Historien, men dem selv ere de ikke, de have, aandelig forstaaet, intet Selv, intet Selv for hvis Skyld de kunde vove Alt, intet Selv for Gud – hvor selviske de end forresten ere.

And that is precisely how it is with the despair of finitude. Because a person is in despair in this way, he can very well—indeed, really all the better—live on in temporality, be a human being to all appearances, be praised by others, honored and esteemed, occupied with all the aims of temporal life. Indeed, what is called worldliness consists of nothing but such people, who, if one may put it this way, sign themselves over to the world. They use their abilities, amass money, carry out worldly exploits, [151] calculate shrewdly, etc., etc., and perhaps get mentioned in history; but themselves they are not. Spiritually understood, they have no self, no self for whose sake they could venture everything, no self before God—however selfish they may otherwise be.

B) DESPAIR UNDER POSSIBILITY AND NECESSITY

The self needs both possibility and necessity in order to become itself freely.

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SKS 11.15 For at vorde (og Selvet skal jo frit vorde sig selv) er Mulighed og Nødvendighed lige væsentlige. Ligesom der

For becoming (and the self is, after all, to become itself freely), possibility and necessity are equally

9 Echoes Matthew 16:26: what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

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til Selvet hører Uendelighed og Endelighed (απειρον – περας), saaledes ogsaa Mulighed og Nødvendighed. Et Selv, der ingen Mulighed har, er fortvivlet, og ligesaa et Selv, der ingen Nødvendighed har.

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essential. Just as infinitude and finitude (απειρον – περας [the unlimited – the limit]) belong to the self, so do possibility and necessity. A self that has no possibility is in despair, and so is a self that has no necessity.[10]

A) THE DESPAIR OF POSSIBILITY

A self that runs wild in possibility never becomes actual and loses its way.

DANISH

At Dette er saaledes, ligger, som viist blev, i det Dialektiske.

Ligesom Endelighed er det Begrændsende i Forhold til Uendelighed, saaledes er Nødvendighed i Forhold til Mulighed Det, der holder igjen. Idet Selvet, som Synthese af Endelighed og Uendelighed, er sat, er κατα δυναμιν, for nu at vorde, reflekterer det sig i Phantasiens Medium, og derved viser den uendelige Mulighed sig. Selvet er κατα δυναμιν lige saa meget muligt som nødvendigt; thi det er jo sig selv, men det skal vorde sig selv. Forsaavidt det er sig selv, er det Nødvendigt, og forsaavidt det skal vorde sig selv, er det en Mulighed.

Løber nu Muligheden Nødvendigheden over Ende, saa Selvet i Muligheden løber fra sig selv, saa det intet Nødvendigt har, hvortil det skal tilbage: saa er dette Mulighedens Fortvivlelse. Dette Selv bliver en abstrakt Mulighed, det spræller sig træt i Mulighed, men det kommer ikke af Stedet og heller ikke til noget Sted, thi det Nødvendige er just Stedet; at vorde sig selv er jo just en Bevægelse paa Stedet. At vorde er en Bevægelse fra Stedet, men at vorde sig selv er en Bevægelse paa Stedet.

Muligheden synes saa Selvet større og større, Mere og Mere bliver det muligt, fordi Intet bliver virkeligt. Tilsidst er det som var Alt muligt, men just dette er, naar Afgrunden har slugt Selvet. Enhver lille Mulig [152] hed vilde for at vorde Virkelighed, allerede behøve nogen Tid. Men tilsidst bliver Tiden, der skulde bruges til Virkelighed, kortere og kortere, Alt bliver øieblikkeligere og øieblikkeligere. Muligheden bliver intensivere og intensivere, men i Mulighedens Forstand, ikke i Virkelighedens Forstand; thi i Virkelighedens Forstand er

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That this is so lies, as has been shown, in the dialectic.

Just as finitude is the limiting factor in relation to infinitude, so necessity is the restraining factor in relation to possibility. When the self, as a synthesis of finitude and infinitude, is established, is κατα δυναμιν [potentially], then in order to become it reflects itself in the medium of imagination, and in this way infinite possibility appears. The self κατα δυναμιν [potentially] is just as much possible as necessary; for it is indeed itself, but it is to become itself. Insofar as it is itself, it is the necessary; and insofar as it is to become itself, it is a possibility.

Now if possibility overruns necessity, so that the self runs away from itself into possibility, so that it has nothing necessary to return to, then this is the despair of possibility. This self becomes an abstract possibility; it thrashes about in possibility until it is exhausted, but it neither moves from the place nor arrives at any place, for the necessary is precisely the place. To become oneself is precisely a movement in place. To become is a movement away from the place, but to become oneself is a movement in place.

Possibility then seems to the self greater and greater; more and more becomes possible, because nothing becomes actual. In the end it is as if everything were possible—but that is precisely the moment the abyss has swallowed the self. Every little possibility [152] would need some time to become actuality. But in the end the time that ought to be used for actuality becomes shorter and shorter; everything becomes more and more momentary. Possibility becomes more and more in-

10 *Apeiron* and *peras*, the unlimited and the limit, are paired principles in Pythagorean thought and in Plato's *Philebus*.

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det Intensive, at dog Noget af Det, der er muligt, bliver virkeligt.

SKS 11.151 I Øieblikket viser Noget sig som Muligt, og saa viser der sig en ny Mulighed, tilsidst følge disse Phantasmagorier saa hurtigt paa hinanden, at det er, som var Alt muligt, og det er just det sidste Øieblik, hvor Individet heelt og holdent er blevet selv et Luftsyn.

Det Selvet nu mangler er vistnok Virkelighed; saaledes vil man ogsaa tale i Almindelighed, som man jo taler om, at et Menneske er blevet uvirkeligt. Men ved nærmere Eftersyn er det egentligen Nødvendighed han mangler. Det er nemlig ikke saa, som Philosopherne forklare, at Nødvendighed er Eenhed af Mulighed og Virkelighed, nei, Virkelighed er Eenhed af Mulighed og Nødvendighed. Det er ei heller blot en Mangel paa Kraft, naar et Selv saaledes løber vild i Mulighed, idetmindste er det ikke saaledes at forstaae, som man i Almindelighed forstaaer det. Det, der fattes er egentligen Kraft til at lyde, til at bøie sig under det Nødvendige i Ens Selv, hvad der maa kaldes Ens Grændse.

Ulykken er derfor heller ikke, at et saadant Selv ikke blev til Noget i Verden, nei, Ulykken er, at han ikke blev opmærksom paa sig selv, at det Selv, han er, er et ganske bestemt Noget og saaledes det Nødvendige. Han tabte derimod sig selv derved, at dette Selv phantastisk reflecterede sig i Muligheden. Allerede i Forhold til at see sig *selv* i et Speil er det nødvendigt at kjende sig selv, thi gjør man ikke det, saa seer man ikke sig *selv,* men blot et Menneske. Men Mulighedens Speil er ikke noget almindeligt Speil, det maa bruges med den yderste Forsigtighed. Thi om dette Speil gjælder det i høieste Forstand, det er usandt.

At et Selv seer saaledes og saaledes ud i Muligheden af sig selv er kun halv Sandhed; thi i Muligheden af sig selv er Selvet endnu langtfra eller kun halvt sig selv. Saa gjælder det, hvorledes dette Selvs Nødvendighed bestemmer det nærmere. Det er med Muligheden som naar man indbyder et Barn til en eller anden Glæde; Barnet er strax villigt, men nu gjælder det, om Forældrene ville tillade det – og som det er med Forældrene, saaledes er det med Nødvendigheden.

SKS 11.153

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tense—but in the sense of possibility, not in the sense of actuality; for in the sense of actuality, intensity means that at least something of what is possible becomes actual.

One moment something appears possible, and then a new possibility appears; in the end these phantasmagorias follow one another so rapidly that it is as if everything were possible. And that is precisely the last moment, when the individual has himself become entirely a mirage.

What the self now lacks is, of course, actuality; that is how people would ordinarily put it, just as they say that a person has become unreal. But on closer inspection it is really necessity he lacks. For it is not the case, as the philosophers explain, that necessity is the unity of possibility and actuality. No, actuality is the unity of possibility and necessity. Nor is it merely a lack of strength when a self goes astray in possibility in this way—at least not in the sense in which that is usually understood. What is really missing is the strength to obey, to submit to what is necessary in one's self, what may be called one's limit.[11]

The misfortune, therefore, is not that such a self did not amount to anything in the world. No, the misfortune is that he did not become aware of himself—aware that the self he is is a quite definite something, and thus the necessary. Instead, he lost himself because this self reflected itself fantastically in possibility. Even to see one's *self* in a mirror one must know oneself; for if one does not, one does not see one's *self*, but merely a human being. But the mirror of possibility is no ordinary mirror; it must be used with the utmost caution. For of this mirror it is true in the highest sense that it lies.

That a self looks such and such in the possibility of itself is only half the truth; for in the possibility of itself the self is still far from being itself, or is only half itself. What matters, then, is how the necessity of this self determines it more precisely. Possibility is like inviting a child to some treat or other: the child is willing at once, but now the question is whether the parents will allow it—and as it is with the parents, so it is with necessity.

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Dog i Muligheden er Alt muligt. Der kan derfor i Muligheden løbes vild paa alle mulige Maader, men væsentligen paa to. Den ene Form er den ønskende, higende, den anden den tungsindig-phantastiske (Haabet – Frygten eller Angesten). Som der saa ofte fortælles i Eventyr og Folkesagn om en Ridder, der pludselig faaer Øie paa en sjelden Fugl, efter hvilken han bliver ved at løbe, idet det i Begyndelsen seer ud som var han den ganske nær – men saa flyver den igjen, indtil det saa er blevet Nat, han kommet bort fra Sine, uden at kunne finde Veien i den Ørk, hvor han nu befinder sig: saaledes med Ønskets Mulighed.

Istedetfor at tage Muligheden tilbage i Nødvendigheden, løber han efter Muligheden – og tilsidst kan han ikke finde tilbage til sig selv. – Tungsindigt skeer det Modsatte paa samme Maade. Individet forfølger tungsindigt elskende en Angestens Mulighed, der tilsidst fører ham bort fra ham selv, saa han omkommer i den Angest, eller omkommer i Det, han var angest for at omkomme i.

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Yet in possibility everything is possible. So in possibility one can go astray in every possible way, but essentially in two. The one form is wishful and yearning; the other is melancholy and fantastic (hope—fear or anxiety). Fairy tales and folk legends so often tell of a knight who suddenly catches sight of a rare bird and keeps chasing it, because at first it seems he is very close to it—but then it flies off again, until night has fallen and he has lost his companions and cannot find his way in the wilderness where he now finds himself. So it is with the possibility of wishing.

Instead of taking possibility back into necessity, he chases after possibility—and in the end he cannot find his way back to himself.—In melancholy the opposite happens in the same way. The individual pursues, with melancholy love, a possibility of anxiety, which in the end leads him away from himself, so that he perishes in anxiety, or perishes in the very thing he was anxious about perishing in.

B) THE DESPAIR OF NECESSITY

Lacking possibility is like being mute; only belief that for God everything is possible saves.

DANISH

Dersom man vilde sammenligne det at løbe vild i Mulighed med Barnets Vokaliseren, saa er det at mangle Mulighed som det at være stum. Det Nødvendige er som lutter Konsonanter, men for at udtale dem maa der Mulighed til. Naar denne mangler, naar en menneskelig Existents er bragt dertil, at den mangler Mulighed, er den fortvivlet, og er det i ethvert Øieblik, hvor den mangler Mulighed.

I Almindelighed mener man nu, at der er en vis Alder, som især er riig paa Haab, eller man taler om, at man til en vis Tid, i et enkelt Øieblik af sit Liv er eller var saa riig paa Haab og Mulighed. Alt Dette er dog blot menneskelig Tale, som ikke kommer til det Sande; al denne Haaben og al denne Fortvivlen er endnu hverken den sande Haaben eller den sande Fortvivlen.

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If one were to compare going astray in possibility to a child's vowel sounds, then lacking possibility is like being mute. The necessary is like pure consonants, but to pronounce them there must be possibility. When this is lacking, when a human existence has been brought to the point of lacking possibility, it is in despair, and it is so in every moment that it lacks possibility.

Now people commonly think that there is a certain age that is especially rich in hope, or they say that at a certain time, at a particular moment of one's life, one is or was so rich in hope and possibility. All this, however, is merely human talk that does not get at the truth; all this hoping and all this despairing are not yet either true hoping or true despairing.

11 "The philosophers": chiefly Hegel and his followers; in Hegel's *Logic*, necessity is the unity of possibility and actuality.

FOR GOD EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Faced with certain ruin, the believer fights for possibility and trusts that God can help.

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Det Afgjørende er: for Gud er Alt muligt. Dette er evig sandt og altsaa sandt i ethvert Øieblik. Man siger det nok saadan til daglig Brug, og til daglig Brug siger man det saadan, men Afgjørelsen er først, naar Mennesket er bragt til det Yderste, saa der menneskelig talt ingen Mulighed er. Da gjælder det, om han vil troe, at for Gud er Alt muligt, det er, om han vil *troe.* Men dette er ganske Formelen for at tabe Forstanden; at [154] troe er just at tabe Forstanden for at vinde Gud. Lad det skee saaledes. Tænk Dig et Menneske, der med hele en forskrækket Indbildningskrafts Gysen har forestillet sig en eller anden Rædsel som ubetinget ikke til at udholde.

SKS 11.15 Nu hænder den ham, just denne Rædsel hænder ham. Menneskelig talt er hans Undergang det Visseste af Alt – og fortvivlet kæmper hans Sjels Fortvivlelse for at faae Lov til at fortvivle, for at faae, om man saa vil, Ro til at fortvivle, hele Personlighedens Samtykke til og i at fortvivle, saa han Intet og Ingen vilde forbande mere end Den, der forsøgte, og Forsøget paa at forhindre ham i at fortvivle, som Digternes Digter ypperligt, uforligneligt udtrykker det (Richard II; Verwünscht sei Vetter, der mich abgelenkt Von dem bequemen Wege zur Verzweiflung. 3die Akt. 3die Scene). Altsaa saaledes er Frelse menneskelig talt det Umuligste af Alt; men for Gud er Alt muligt!

Dette er *Troens* Kamp, der kæmper, om man saa vil, afsindigt for Mulighed. Thi Mulighed er det ene Frelsende. Naar En besvimer, saa raaber man Vand, Eau de Cologne, Hoffmannsdraaber; men naar En vil fortvivle, saa hedder det: skaf Mulighed, skaf Mulighed, Mulighed er det eneste Frelsende; en Mulighed, saa aander den Fortvivlende igjen, han lever atter op; thi uden Mulighed kan et Menneske ligesom ikke faae Veiret. Stundom kan saa en menneskelig Phantasies Opfindsomhed strække til

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The decisive thing is: for God everything is possible. This is eternally true, and therefore true in every moment. People do say it, of course, in everyday use, and in everyday use they say it just like that; but the decision comes only when a person has been brought to the extremity, so that, humanly speaking, there is no possibility. Then the question is whether he will believe that for God everything is possible—that is, whether he will *believe.* But this is exactly the formula for losing one's understanding; [154] to believe is precisely to lose one's understanding in order to gain God. Let it happen like this. Imagine a person who, with all the shudder of a terrified imagination, has pictured some horror or other as absolutely unendurable.[12]

Now it happens to him—precisely this horror happens to him. Humanly speaking, his ruin is the most certain thing of all. And in despair his soul's despair fights for permission to despair, for, if you will, the peace to despair, for the consent of his whole personality to despairing and in despairing, so that he would curse nothing and no one more than whoever tried to prevent him from despairing, and the attempt itself—as the poet of poets so superbly, so incomparably puts it (Richard II: Verwünscht sei Vetter, der mich abgelenkt Von dem bequemen Wege zur Verzweiflung [Cursed be you, cousin, who turned me aside from the easy road to despair]. Act 3, scene 3). So, humanly speaking, salvation is the most impossible thing of all; but for God everything is possible![13]

This is the fight of *faith*, which fights, if you will, madly for possibility. For possibility is the only thing that saves. When someone faints, people shout for water, eau de Cologne, Hoffmann's drops; but when someone is about to despair, the cry is: get possibility, get possibility, possibility is the only thing that saves! A possibility—and the person in despair breathes again, he revives; for without possibility a person cannot, as it were, draw breath. Sometimes the inventiveness of hu-

12 Cf. Matthew 19:26 and Mark 10:27. In Danish "believe" (*troe*) and "faith" (*Tro*) are the same word.
13 Shakespeare, *Richard II*, quoted in the German translation of Schlegel and Tieck; the lines are in fact in Act 3, scene 2.

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i at skaffe Mulighed, men tilsidst, ɔ: naar det gjælder om at *troe,* hjælper kun dette, at for Gud er Alt muligt.

Saaledes kæmpes der. Om den saaledes Kæmpende skal gaae under, beroer ene og alene paa, om han vil skaffe Mulighed tilveie, ɔ: om han vil troe. Og dog forstaaer han, at menneskelig talt hans Undergang er det Visseste af Alt. Dette er det Dialektiske i at troe. I Almindelighed veed et Menneske ikke Andet, end at Dette og Dette forhaabentligen, formodentligen o. s. v. ikke vil hænde ham. Hænder det ham saa, saa gaaer han under. Den Dumdristige styrter sig i en Fare, hvis Mulighed ogsaa kan være den og den; og hænder den ham saa, saa fortvivler han og gaaer under.

Den *Troende* seer og forstaaer menneskelig talt sin Undergang (i hvad der er hændt ham, eller i hvad han har vovet), men han troer. Derfor gaaer han ikke under. Han henstiller det ganske til Gud, hvorledes han skal hjælpes, men han troer, at for Gud er Alt muligt. At *troe* sin Undergang er umuligt. At forstaae, at det menneskeligt er hans Undergang, og saa dog at troe paa Mulighed, er at troe. Saa hjælper [155] Gud ham ogsaa, maaskee ved at lade ham undgaae Rædselen, maaskee ved Rædselen selv, at her uventet, miraculøst, guddommeligt viser sig Hjælp. Miraculøst; thi det er da et besynderligt Snerperi, at det kun skulde være skeet for 1800 Aar siden, at et Menneske blev hjulpet miraculøst.

SKS 11.155 Om et Menneske er blevet hjulpet miraculøst, beroer væsentligen paa, med hvad Forstands Lidenskab han har forstaaet, at Hjælpen var umulig, og dernæst paa, hvor redelig han saa er mod den Magt, der dog hjalp ham. Men ordentligviis gjøre Menneskene hverken det Ene eller det Andet; de skrige, at Hjælp er umulig, uden engang at have anspændt deres Forstand paa at finde Hjælpen, og bag efter lyve de utaknemligt.

Den Troende eier den evig sikkre Modgift mod Fortvivlelse: Mulighed; thi for Gud er Alt muligt i ethvert Øieblik. Dette er Troens Sundhed, der løser Modsigelser. Modsigelsen er her, at menneskelig talt er Undergangen vis, og at der saa dog er Mulighed. Sundhed er

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man imagination can manage to procure possibility; but in the end—that is, when it comes to *believing*—only this helps: that for God everything is possible.[14]

That is how the fight is fought. Whether the one who fights in this way will perish depends solely and entirely on whether he will procure possibility, that is, whether he will believe. And yet he understands that, humanly speaking, his ruin is the most certain thing of all. This is the dialectic of believing. Ordinarily a person knows nothing more than that this or that will, hopefully, presumably, etc., not happen to him. If it does happen to him, he perishes. The foolhardy person rushes into a danger whose possibility may likewise be this or that; and if it happens to him, he despairs and perishes.

The *believer* sees and understands his ruin, humanly speaking (in what has happened to him, or in what he has ventured), but he believes. Therefore he does not perish. He leaves it entirely to God how he is to be helped, but he believes that for God everything is possible. To *believe* one's ruin is impossible. To understand that humanly it is his ruin, and yet to believe in possibility—that is to believe. Then [155] God helps him too, perhaps by letting him escape the horror, perhaps through the horror itself, so that here, unexpectedly, miraculously, divinely, help appears. Miraculously—for it is a strange prudishness to suppose that only 1,800 years ago did it happen that a person was helped miraculously.

Whether a person has been helped miraculously depends essentially on the passion of understanding with which he has understood that help was impossible, and then on how honest he is toward the power that nevertheless helped him. But as a rule people do neither the one nor the other. They cry out that help is impossible without ever having strained their understanding to find help, and afterward they ungratefully lie.

The believer possesses the eternally sure antidote to despair: possibility; for God everything is possible in every moment. This is the health of faith, which resolves contradictions. The contradiction here is that, humanly speaking, ruin is certain,

14 Hoffmann's drops: a mixture of ether and alcohol, a common restorative for fainting.

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overhovedet at kunne løse Modsigelser. Saaledes legemligt eller physisk: Træk er en Modsigelse, thi Træk er Kulde og Varme disparat eller udialektisk; men et sundt Legeme løser denne Modsigelse og mærker ikke Træk. Saaledes ogsaa med Troen.

At mangle Mulighed betyder enten, at Alt er blevet En nødvendigt, eller at Alt er blevet Trivialitet.

Deterministen, Fatalisten er fortvivlet, og har som Fortvivlet tabt sit Selv, fordi Alt er for ham Nødvendighed. Det gaaer ham som hiin Konge der døde af Sult, fordi al Føde forvandlede sig til Guld. Personligheden er en Synthese af Mulighed og Nødvendighed. Det er derfor med dens Bestaaen som med Aandedrættet (*Re*spirationen), der er en Ind- og Udaanden. Deterministens Selv kan ikke aande, thi det er umuligt at aande ene og alene det Nødvendige, hvilket blot og bart qvæler Menneskets Selv. – Fatalisten er fortvivlet, har tabt Gud og saaledes sit Selv; thi Den, der ikke har en Gud, har heller intet Selv.

Men Fatalisten har ingen Gud, eller, hvad der er det Samme, hans Gud er Nødvendighed; som nemlig for Gud Alt er muligt, saa er Gud det, at Alt er muligt. Fatalistens Gudsdyrkelse er derfor i Maximum en Interjektion, og væsentligen er den Stumhed, stum Underkastelse, han kan ikke bede. At bede er ogsaa at aande, og Muligheden er for Selvet hvad Suurstoffet er for Aandedrættet. Men saa lidet som et Menneske kan aande blot Suur [156] stof eller blot Qvælstof, saa lidet kan Mulighed alene eller Nødvendighed alene betinge Bønnens Aandedrag.

SKS 11.15 For at bede maa der være en Gud, et Selv – og Mulighed, eller et Selv og Mulighed i prægnant Forstand, thi Gud er det at Alt er muligt, eller at Alt er muligt, er Gud; og kun Den, hvis Væsen blev saaledes rystet, at han blev Aand ved at forstaae, at Alt er muligt, kun han har indladt sig med Gud. Det, at Guds Villie er det Mulige, gjør, at jeg kan bede; er den blot det Nødvendige, er Mennesket væsentligen lige saa umælende som Dyret.

ENGLISH

and that there is nevertheless possibility. Health in general is being able to resolve contradictions. So it is bodily or physically: a draft is a contradiction, for a draft is cold and warmth together disparately, or undialectically; but a healthy body resolves this contradiction and does not notice the draft. So it is also with faith.

To lack possibility means either that everything has become necessary for one, or that everything has become triviality.

The determinist, the fatalist, is in despair, and as one in despair has lost his self, because for him everything is necessity. He fares like that king who died of hunger because all his food turned to gold. The personality is a synthesis of possibility and necessity. Its continuance is therefore like breathing (*re*spiration), which is an inhaling and an exhaling. The determinist's self cannot breathe, for it is impossible to breathe necessity alone, which simply suffocates the human self.—The fatalist is in despair, has lost God and thus his self; for whoever has no God has no self either.[15]

But the fatalist has no God, or, what is the same, his God is necessity. For since for God everything is possible, God is this: that everything is possible. The fatalist's worship is therefore at most an interjection; essentially it is muteness, mute submission. He cannot pray. To pray is also to breathe, and possibility is to the self what oxygen is to breathing. But just as a person cannot breathe oxygen [156] alone or nitrogen alone, so possibility alone or necessity alone cannot sustain the breathing of prayer.

In order to pray there must be a God, a self—and possibility; or a self and possibility in the pregnant sense, for God is this, that everything is possible, or that everything is possible is God. And only the one whose being was so shaken that he became spirit by understanding that everything is possible—only he has had dealings with God. That God's will is the possible is what makes it possible for me to pray; if it is merely the necessary, a human being is essentially as speechless as an animal.

15 King Midas of Greek legend, whose wish that everything he touched might turn to gold was granted.

PHILISTINISM

The philistine, content with the probable, has neither imagination nor possibility, and so loses God and self.

DANISH

Med Spidsborgerlighed, Trivialitet, som ogsaa væsentligen mangler Mulighed, forholder det sig noget anderledes. Spidsborgerlighed er Aandløshed, Determinisme og Fatalisme er Aands-Fortvivlelse; men Aandløshed er ogsaa Fortvivlelse. Spidsborgerlighed mangler enhver Aandens Bestemmelse, og gaaer op i det Sandsynlige, indenfor hvilket det Mulige finder sin Smule Plads; den mangler saaledes Mulighed for at blive opmærksom paa Gud. Uden Phantasi, som Spidsborgeren altid er, lever den i et vist trivielt Indbegreb af Erfaringer, om hvordan det gaaer til, hvad der er muligt, hvad der pleier at skee, Spidsborgeren være forresten Øltapper eller Statsminister. Saaledes har Spidsborgeren tabt sig selv og Gud.

Thi for at blive opmærksom paa sit Selv og paa Gud, maa Phantasien svinge et Menneske høiere end til det Sandsynliges Dunstkreds, den maa rive En ud af denne, og, ved at gjøre hvad der overskrider enhver Erfarings qvantum satis muligt, lære ham, at haabe og at frygte eller at frygte og at haabe. Men Phantasi har Spidsborgeren ikke, vil ikke have den, afskyer den. Her er altsaa ingen Hjælp. Og hjælper saa stundom Tilværelsen med Rædsler, som overskride den trivielle Erfarings Papegøie-Viisdom, saa fortvivler Spidsborgerligheden, det er, saa bliver det aabenbart, at det var Fortvivlelse; den mangler saa Troens Mulighed for ved Gud at kunne redde et Selv ud af den visse Undergang.

Fatalisme og Determinisme har dog Phantasi nok til at fortvivle om Mulighed, Mulighed nok til at opdage Umuligheden; Spidsborgerligheden beroliger sig i det Trivielle, lige fortvivlet enten det gaaer godt eller det gaaer galt. Fatalisme og Determinisme mangler Mulighed for at afspænde og formilde, for at temperere Nødvendigheden, altsaa Mulighed som Formildelse; Spidsborgerlighed mangler Mulighed som Opvækkelse fra Aandløshed. Thi Spidsborgerlighed mener at raade over [157] Muligheden, at have narret denne uhyre Elasticitet ind i det Sandsynliges Fælde eller *[Sindssygeanstalt]*, mener at holde den fangen; den fører Muligheden omkring fangen i Sandsynlighedens Buur, foreviser den, bilder sig selv ind at være Herren, mærker

ENGLISH

With philistinism, triviality, which also essentially lacks possibility, the situation is somewhat different. Philistinism is spiritlessness; determinism and fatalism are despair of spirit; but spiritlessness is also despair. Philistinism lacks every qualification of spirit and is entirely absorbed in the probable, within which the possible finds its little bit of room; it thus lacks the possibility of becoming aware of God. Lacking imagination, as the philistine always does, it lives within a certain trivial compendium of experiences about how things go, what is possible, what usually happens —whether the philistine is otherwise a tapster or a prime minister. In this way the philistine has lost his self and God.[16]

For in order to become aware of his self and of God, a person must be lifted by imagination higher than the haze of the probable; imagination must tear him out of it and, by making possible what exceeds the qvantum satis [sufficient measure] of all experience, teach him to hope and to fear, or to fear and to hope. But imagination the philistine does not have, does not want, abhors. So here there is no help. And if existence sometimes helps with horrors that exceed the parrot-wisdom of trivial experience, then philistinism despairs—that is, it then becomes evident that it was despair. It then lacks faith's possibility of being able, through God, to rescue a self from certain ruin.

Fatalism and determinism, however, have imagination enough to despair of possibility, possibility enough to discover impossibility; philistinism reassures itself with the trivial, equally in despair whether things go well or badly. Fatalism and determinism lack possibility for relaxing and softening, for tempering necessity—that is, possibility as mitigation. Philistinism lacks possibility as awakening from spiritlessness. For philistinism thinks it has control of [157] possibility, thinks it has lured this enormous elasticity into the trap, or the mental institution, of the probable, thinks it holds it captive. It parades possibility around, captive in

16 "Philistinism" renders *Spidsborgerlighed* (roughly, petty-bourgeois narrowness); "spiritlessness," *Aandløshed*.

DANISH	ENGLISH
ikke, at den just derved har fanget sig selv til at være Aandløshedens Træl, og det Usleste af Alt.	the cage of probability, puts it on display, imagines itself to be the master—and does not notice that precisely by doing so it has taken itself captive, to be the slave of spiritlessness and the most wretched thing of all.[17]
SKS 11.15 Thi med Fortvivlelsens Dristighed svinger Den sig, som foer vild i Mulighed; sammenknuget i Fortvivlelse forløfter Den sig paa Tilværelsen, hvem Alt blev nødvendigt: men aandløst triumpherer Spidsborgerligheden.	For the one who went astray in possibility soars with the boldness of despair; the one for whom everything became necessary strains himself to the breaking point against existence, clenched in despair; but philistinism triumphs spiritlessly.

17 "Awakening" renders *Opvækkelse*, also the Danish word for a religious revival.

The Forms of Despair: Consciousness

Første Afsnit, C.B
Despair unaware of being despair; the despair of weakness, not willing to be oneself; the despair of defiance, willing to be oneself.

DANISH

Bevidsthedens Grad er i Stigen, eller i Forhold til som den stiger, den bestandig stigende Potentsation i Fortvivlelsen; jo mere Bevidsthed, jo intensivere Fortvivlelse. Dette sees overalt, tydeligst i Fortvivlelsens Maximum og Minimum. Djævelens Fortvivlelse er den intensiveste Fortvivlelse, thi Djævelen er reen Aand, og forsaavidt absolut Bevidsthed og Gjennemsigtighed; der er i Djævelen ingen Dunkelhed, som kunde tjene til formildende Undskyldning, hans Fortvivlelse er derfor den absoluteste Trods. Dette er Fortvivlelses Maximum. Fortvivlelses Minimum er en Tilstand, som, ja saaledes kunde man menneskelig fristes til at sige det, i en Slags Uskyldighed end ikke veed af, at det er Fortvivlelse.

Naar da saaledes Bevidstløsheden er i Maximum, saa er Fortvivlelsen mindst; det er jo næsten som var det dialektisk, om man har Ret til at kalde en saadan Tilstand Fortvivlelse.

ENGLISH

The degree of consciousness, as it rises, or in proportion as it rises, is the constantly rising intensification in despair: the more consciousness, the more intense the despair. This can be seen everywhere, most clearly at despair's maximum and minimum. The devil's despair is the most intense despair, for the devil is pure spirit, and to that extent absolute consciousness and transparency. In the devil there is no obscurity that could serve as a mitigating excuse; his despair is therefore the most absolute defiance. This is despair's maximum. Despair's minimum is a state that—yes, humanly speaking one could be tempted to put it this way—in a kind of innocence does not even know that it is despair.[1]

When, then, unconsciousness is at its maximum, despair is least; it is almost a dialectical question whether one is justified in calling such a state despair at all.

A. DESPAIR THAT DOES NOT KNOW IT IS DESPAIR

Most people live in unaware despair, preferring the basement of their own house.

DANISH

At denne Tilstand alligevel er Fortvivlelse og med Rette nævnes saa, er et Udtryk for hvad man i god Forstand maa kalde Sandhedens Rethaveri. Veritas est index sui et falsi. Men dette Sandhedens Rethaveri agtes rigtignok ikke, som det ogsaa er langtfra, at Menneskene i Almin [158] delighed ansee Forholdet til det Sande, det at forholde sig til det Sande, som det høieste Gode, saare meget langtfra, at de socratisk ansee det at være i en Vildfarelse for den største Ulykke; det Sandselige i dem har oftest langt Overvægten over deres Intellectualitet.

ENGLISH

That this state is nevertheless despair, and is rightly called so, is an expression of what, in a good sense, must be called truth's insistence on being right. Veritas est index sui et falsi [Truth is the criterion both of itself and of the false]. But this insistence of truth on being right is certainly not respected—just as people in [158] general are far from regarding the relation to the true, relating themselves to the true, as the highest good; very far indeed from regarding, like Socrates, being in error as the greatest misfortune. The sensate in them usually far outweighs their intellectuality.[2]

1 "Defiance" renders *Trods*.

DANISH

SKS 11.15 Naar saaledes et Menneske formeentligen er lykkelig, indbilder sig at være lykkelig, medens han dog i Sandhedens Lys betragtet er ulykkelig, saa er det som oftest meget langtfra, at han ønsker at rives ud af denne Vildfarelse. Tværtimod, han bliver forbittret, han anseer Den for sin arrigste Fjende, der gjør det, han betragter det som et Overfald, noget nær som et Mord, paa den Maade, som det hedder, at myrde hans Lykke. Og hvoraf kommer det? Det kommer deraf, at det Sandselige og det Sandselig-Sjelelige aldeles behersker ham; det kommer af, at han lever i det Sandseliges Kategorier, det Behagelige og det Ubehagelige, giver Aand, Sandhed o. d.

en god Dag; det kommer af, at han er for sandselig til at have Mod til at vove og til at udholde at være Aand. Hvor forfængelige og indbildske end Menneskene kunne være, have de dog oftest en meget ringe Forestilling om sig selv, det er, de have ingen Forestilling om at være Aand, det Absolute, som et Menneske kan være; men forfængelige og indbildske ere de – sammenlignelsesviis.

Dersom man vilde tænke sig et Huus, bestaaende af Kjælder, Stue og første Sal, saaledes beboet, eller saaledes indrettet, at der var eller det var beregnet paa en Stands-Forskjel mellem Beboerne i hver Etage – og dersom man vilde sammenligne det at være Menneske med et saadant Huus: saa er desto værre dette Sørgelige og Latterlige de fleste Menneskers Tilfælde, at de i deres eget Huus foretrække at boe i Kjælderen. Ethvert Menneske er den sjelelig-legemlige Synthese anlagt til at være Aand, dette er Bygningen; men han foretrækker at boe i Kjælderen, det er, i det Sandseliges Bestemmelser.

Og han foretrækker ikke blot at boe i Kjælderen, nei, han elsker det i den Grad, at han bliver forbittret, naar Nogen vil foreslaae ham at indtage Belle-Etagen, som staaer ledig til hans Disposition – thi det er jo i hans eget Huus han boer.

Nei, det at være i en Vildfarelse, er, ganske usocratisk, det som Menneskene mindst frygte. Man kan see forbausende Exempler derpaa, som efter en uhyre Maalestok oplyse dette. En Tænker opfører en uhyre Bygning, et System, et hele Tilværelsen og Verdenshistorien o. s. v. omfattende System – og betragter man hans personlige Liv, saa opdager [159] man til sin Forbauselse dette Forfærdelige og Latterlige, at han selv ikke personligen beboer dette uhyre, høithvælvede

ENGLISH

So when a person is supposedly happy, imagines himself to be happy, although in the light of truth he is unhappy, he is usually very far from wishing to be torn out of this error. On the contrary, he becomes indignant; he regards whoever does it as his worst enemy; he regards it as an assault, almost a murder—in the sense in which people speak of murdering someone's happiness. And why? Because the sensate and the sensate-psychical completely dominate him; because he lives in the categories of the sensate, the pleasant and the unpleasant, and gives spirit, truth, and the like

short shrift; because he is too sensate to have the courage to venture and to endure being spirit. However vain and conceited people may be, they usually have a very meager conception of themselves; that is, they have no conception of being spirit, the absolute that a human being can be. But vain and conceited they are—by comparison.

Imagine a house with a basement, a ground floor, and an upper floor, occupied, or laid out, in such a way that there was, or was meant to be, a difference of social rank between the occupants of each floor; and compare being a human being with such a house. Then, sadly, this is the pitiful and ludicrous case with most people: in their own house they prefer to live in the basement. Every human being is the soul-body synthesis, designed to be spirit; that is the building. But he prefers to live in the basement, that is, in the qualifications of the sensate.

And he does not merely prefer to live in the basement; no, he loves it so much that he becomes indignant if anyone suggests that he move into the Belle-Etage [the grand main floor], which stands vacant at his disposal—for it is, after all, his own house he lives in.

No, being in error is, quite un-Socratically, what people fear least. One can see astonishing examples of this, which illustrate it on an enormous scale. A thinker erects an enormous building, a system, a system embracing the whole of existence and world history, etc.—and if one looks at his personal life, one discovers [159] to one's astonishment the terrible and ludicrous fact that he himself does not personally live in this enormous,

2 Spinoza, *Ethics* II, proposition 43, scholium.

DANISH

Pallads, men en Ladebygning ved Siden af, eller et Hundehuus, eller i det Høieste Portnerleiligheden. Vilde man tillade sig med et eneste Ord at gjøre opmærksom paa denne Modsigelse, saa vilde han blive fornærmet.

SKS 11.157 Thi at være i en Vildfarelse frygter han ikke, naar han blot faaer Systemet færdigt – ved Hjælp af at være i en Vildfarelse.

Altsaa, at Den, der er fortvivlet, selv er uvidende om, at hans Tilstand er Fortvivlelse, gjør Intet til Sagen, han er ligefuldt fortvivlet. Er Fortvivlelse Forvildelse, saa er det, at man er uvidende derom, blot det Mere, tillige at være i en Vildfarelse. Det er med Uvidenheden i Forhold til Fortvivlelse som i Forhold til Angest (cfr. Begrebet Angest af Vigilius Haufniensis), Aandløshedens Angest kjendes netop paa den aandløse Tryghed. Men Angesten er alligevel i Grunden, saaledes er Fortvivlelsen ogsaa i Grunden, og naar Sandsebedragenes Fortryllelse ophører, naar Tilværelsen begynder at vakle, saa viser ogsaa strax Fortvivlelsen sig som den, der var i Grunden.

Den Fortvivlede der er uvidende om, at han er fortvivlet, er, sammenlignet med Den som er sig dette bevidst, blot et Negativt længere borte fra Sandheden og Frelsen. Fortvivlelsen selv er en Negativitet, Uvidenheden om den en ny Negativitet. Men for at naae Sandheden maa man igjennem enhver Negativitet; thi det gjælder her hvad Folkesagnet fortæller om, at hæve en vis Trolddom: Stykket maa spilles heelt igjennem baglænds, ellers hæves Trolddommen ikke. Dog er det kun i een Forstand, i reen dialektisk Forstand, at den om sin Fortvivlelse Uvidende er fjernere fra Sandheden og det Frelsende end den Vidende, som dog bliver i Fortvivlelsen; thi i en anden Forstand, ethisk-dialektisk, er den bevidst i Fortvivlelsen blivende Fortvivlede fjernere fra Frelsen, da hans Fortvivlelse er intensivere.

Men Uvidenheden er saa langt fra at hæve Fortvivlelsen eller at gjøre Fortvivlelse til Ikke-Fortvivlelse, at den tværtimod kan være den farligste Form af Fortvivlelse. I Uvidenheden er den Fortvivlede, men til sin egen Fordærvelse, paa en Maade sikkret mod at blive

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high-vaulted palace, but in a shed beside it, or a doghouse, or at most in the porter's lodge. If one ventured to call attention to this contradiction with a single word, he would be offended.[3]

For he is not afraid of being in error, as long as he gets the system finished—with the help of being in error.

So the fact that the person in despair is himself ignorant that his condition is despair makes no difference; he is in despair all the same. If despair is going astray, then being ignorant of it is simply an addition: being in error as well. Ignorance stands in the same relation to despair as it does to anxiety (cf. *The Concept of Anxiety* by Vigilius Haufniensis): the anxiety of spiritlessness is recognized precisely by its spiritless security. Yet the anxiety is there underneath nonetheless; so too the despair is there underneath, and when the spell of sensory illusion is broken, when existence begins to totter, then despair too immediately shows itself as what was there underneath all along.[4]

Compared with the one who is conscious of it, the person in despair who is ignorant that he is in despair is merely one negative step farther from the truth and from salvation. Despair itself is a negativity; ignorance of it is a new negativity. But to reach the truth one must pass through every negativity. Here the folk legend about breaking a certain spell holds true: the piece must be played all the way through backward, otherwise the spell is not broken. Yet it is only in one sense, a purely dialectical sense, that the one who is ignorant of his despair is farther from the truth and from what saves than the one who knows it and still remains in despair. In another sense, the ethical-dialectical, the person who consciously remains in despair is farther from salvation, since his despair is more intensive.[5]

But ignorance is so far from canceling despair, or from turning despair into non-despair, that on the contrary it can be the most dangerous form of despair. In his ignorance the person in despair is in a way secured against becoming aware, though to

3 The system-building thinker alludes chiefly to Hegel.
4 *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844), which Kierkegaard published under the pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis.
5 The legend is the folk belief that a spell cast by music can be broken only by playing the piece backward from end to beginning.

DANISH

opmærksom, det er, han er ganske sikker i Fortvivlelsens Vold.

I Uvidenheden om at være fortvivlet er Mennesket længst fra at være sig bevidst som Aand. Men just det ikke at være sig bevidst som Aand [160] er Fortvivlelse, der er Aandløshed, Tilstanden være saa forøvrigt enten en fuldkommen Uddøethed, et blot vegetativt Liv, eller et potentseret Liv, hvis Hemmelighed dog er Fortvivlelse. I sidste Tilfælde gaaer det saa den Fortvivlede, som det gaaer Den, der lider af Tæring: han befinder sig bedst, anseer sig for allersundest, synes maaskee Andre at blomstre af Sundhed, just naar Sygdommen er farligst.

SKS 11.161 Denne Form af Fortvivlelse (Uvidenheden om den) er den almindeligste i Verden, ja det som man kalder Verden, eller nøiagtigere bestemmet, det som Christendommen kalder Verden, Hedenskabet og det naturlige Menneske i Christenheden, Hedenskabet som det historisk var og er, og Hedenskabet i Christenheden, er netop den Art af Fortvivlelse, er Fortvivlelse, men veed ikke af det. Vel gjøres der nemlig ogsaa i Hedenskabet saavelsom af det naturlige Menneske Forskjel mellem at være fortvivlet og ikke at være fortvivlet, det er, der tales om Fortvivlelse, som var kun nogle Enkelte fortvivlede. Men denne Distinktion er lige saa svigefuld som den Hedenskabet og det naturlige Menneske gjør mellem Kjerlighed og Selvkjerlighed, som var ikke al denne Kjerlighed væsentlig Selvkjerlighed.

Dog videre end til denne svigefulde Distinktion kunde umuligt og kan umuligt Hedenskabet samt det naturlige Menneske komme, thi Fortvivlelsens Specifike er just dette, at være uvidende om, at det er Fortvivlelse.

Heraf seer man nu let, at det æsthetiske Begreb Aandløshed ingenlunde afgiver Maalestokken for at bedømme, hvad der er Fortvivlelse og hvad ikke, hvilket da forøvrigt er ganske i sin Orden; da det nemlig ikke æsthetisk lader sig bestemme, hvad Aand i Sandhed er, hvor skulde saa det Æsthetiske kunne besvare et Spørgsmaal, som slet ikke er til for det! Det vilde jo ogsaa være en uhyre Dumhed at negte, at saavel hedenske Nationer en masse, som enkelte Hedninger have udført forbausende Bedrifter, der baade have begeistret og ville begeistre Digtere, at negte, at Hedenskabet opviser Exempler paa, hvad man æsthetisk ikke noksom kan beundre.

ENGLISH

his own ruin. That is, he is quite securely in the power of despair.

In ignorance of being in despair a human being is farthest from being conscious of himself as spirit. But precisely not being conscious of oneself as spirit [160] is despair, which is spiritlessness. The condition may otherwise be a complete deadness, a merely vegetative life, or an intensified life whose secret is nevertheless despair. In the latter case the person in despair fares as someone does who suffers from consumption: he feels at his best, considers himself in the soundest health, perhaps seems to others to be blooming with health, precisely when the sickness is most dangerous.

This form of despair (ignorance of it) is the most common in the world. Indeed, what is called the world, or more precisely what Christianity calls the world, is precisely this kind of despair: paganism and the natural human being in Christendom, paganism as it historically was and is, and paganism within Christendom. It is despair but does not know it. It is true that paganism, like the natural human being, also makes a distinction between being in despair and not being in despair; that is, it talks about despair as if only some individuals were in despair. But this distinction is just as deceptive as the one paganism and the natural human being make between love and self-love, as if all this love were not essentially self-love.

Yet paganism, together with the natural human being, could not possibly get further than this deceptive distinction, and cannot possibly do so now. For what is specific to despair is precisely this: to be ignorant that it is despair.

From this one easily sees that the aesthetic concept of spiritlessness by no means provides the standard for judging what is despair and what is not. That is, incidentally, quite in order. Since what spirit truly is cannot be determined aesthetically, how could the aesthetic answer a question that does not exist for it at all! It would of course also be enormously stupid to deny that pagan nations en masse, as well as individual pagans, have accomplished astonishing feats that have inspired poets and will go on inspiring them. It would be just as stupid to deny that paganism offers ex-

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Det vilde ogsaa være en Daarskab at negte, at der i Hedenskabet er ført og af det naturlige Menneske kan føres et Liv riigt paa den største æsthetiske Nydelse, benyttende enhver Begunstigelse, der er forundt, paa den smagfuldeste Maade, og endog ladende Kunst og Videnskab tjene til at forhøie, forskjønne, forædle Nydelsen. Nei, ikke den æsthetiske Bestemmelse af Aandløshed afgiver [161] Maalestokken for hvad der er Fortvivlelse og hvad ikke, den Bestemmelse, der maa bruges, er den ethisk-religieuse: Aand eller negativt Mangel af Aand, Aandløshed.

SKS 11.16 Enhver menneskelig Existents, der ikke er sig bevidst som Aand eller sig for Gud personlig bevidst som Aand, enhver menneskelig Existents, der ikke saaledes gjennemsigtig grunder i Gud, men dunkelt hviler i og gaaer op i noget abstrakt Universelt (Stat, Nation o. d.), eller i Dunkelhed over sit Selv tager sine Evner blot som Virkekræfter uden i dybere Forstand at blive sig bevidst, hvorfor han har dem, tager sit Selv som et uforklarligt Noget, hvis det skulde forstaaes ind efter – enhver saadan Existents, hvad den end udfører, det meest Forbausende, hvad den end forklarer, hele Tilværelsen, hvor intensivt den end æsthetisk nyder Livet: enhver saadan Existents er dog Fortvivlelse.

Det var dette, de gamle Kirkelærere meente, naar de talte om, at Hedningenes Dyder ere glimrende Laster, de meente, at Hedningens Inderste var Fortvivlelse, at Hedningen ikke var sig bevidst for Gud som Aand. Heraf kom det ogsaa (at jeg skal anføre dette som et Exempel, medens det dog derhos tillige har et dybere Forhold til denne hele Undersøgelse), at Hedningen dømte saa mærkværdigt letsindigt om, ja anpriste Selvmord, hvad dog for Aanden er den meest afgjørende Synd, det saaledes at bryde ud af Tilværelsen, Oprøret mod Gud. Hedningen manglede Aandens Bestemmelse af et Selv, derfor dømte han saaledes om *Selv*mordet; og det gjorde den samme Hedning, der dog dømte sædelig strengt om Tyveri, Utugt o. d.

Han manglede Synspunktet for Selvmord, han manglede Guds-Forholdet og Selvet; reent hedensk tænkt er Selvmord det Indifferente, Det, Enhver kan gjøre som

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amples of what, aesthetically, can never be admired enough.

It would also be foolish to deny that in paganism a life rich in the greatest aesthetic enjoyment has been led, and can be led by the natural human being. Such a life makes use of every advantage granted to it in the most tasteful way, and even lets art and learning serve to heighten, beautify and ennoble the enjoyment. No, it is not the aesthetic definition of spiritlessness that provides [161] the standard for what is despair and what is not. The definition that must be used is the ethical-religious one: spirit, or, negatively, lack of spirit, spiritlessness.

Every human existence that is not conscious of itself as spirit, or not personally conscious of itself as spirit before God; every human existence that does not in this way rest transparently in God but dimly reposes in and is absorbed into some abstract universal (state, nation, etc.); or that, in the dark about its self, takes its capacities merely as powers to be put to work, without becoming conscious in a deeper sense of why it has them, and takes its self, if it were to be understood inwardly, as an inexplicable something—every such existence, whatever it accomplishes, be it the most astonishing, whatever it explains, be it the whole of existence, however intensely it enjoys life aesthetically: every such existence is nevertheless despair.

This is what the old teachers of the Church meant when they said that the virtues of the pagans are splendid vices. They meant that the pagan's innermost being was despair, that the pagan was not conscious of himself before God as spirit. That is also why the pagan judged suicide so remarkably lightly, indeed praised it (I cite this as an example, though it also has a deeper relation to this entire inquiry). Yet for spirit, breaking out of existence in this way is the most decisive sin, rebellion against God. The pagan lacked the spirit's definition of a self, and that is why he judged *self*-murder as he did. And the very same pagan judged theft, sexual immorality and the like with moral strictness.[6]

He lacked the standpoint for judging suicide; he lacked the God-relationship and the self. Thought of in purely pagan terms, suicide is a matter of in-

6 The idea goes back to Augustine (*City of God* XIX.25); the phrase "splendid vices" (*splendida vitia*) was coined later on his behalf.

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ham lyster, fordi det kommer Ingen ved. Skulde der fra Hedenskabets Standpunkt advares mod Selvmord, maatte det være ad den lange Omvei ved at vise, at man brød sit Pligtforhold mod andre Mennesker. Pointet i Selvmord, at det just er en Forbrydelse mod Gud, undgaaer ganske Hedningen. Man kan derfor ikke sige, at Selvmordet var Fortvivlelse, hvilket vilde være et tankeløst Hysteron-Proteron; man maa sige, det at Hedningen dømte saaledes om Selvmord som han gjorde var Fortvivlelse.

Imidlertid er og bliver der dog Forskjel, og det en qvalitativ, mellem Hedenskabet i strengere Forstand og Hedenskabet i Christenheden, den Forskjel, som Vigilius Haufniensis i Forhold til Angest har gjort opmærk [162] som paa, at Hedenskabet vel mangler Aand, men dog er bestemmet i Retning hen til Aand, medens Hedenskabet i Christenheden mangler Aand i Retningen bortfra, eller ved et Affald, og derfor i strengeste Forstand er Aandløshed.

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difference, something anyone may do as he pleases because it is nobody else's business. If suicide were to be warned against from paganism's standpoint, it would have to be by the long detour of showing that one was breaking one's relation of duty to other people. The point of suicide, that it is precisely a crime against God, entirely escapes the pagan. So one cannot say that the suicide was despair; that would be a thoughtless hysteron proteron. One must say that the pagan's judging suicide as he did was despair.[7]

Nevertheless there is and remains a difference, and a qualitative one, between paganism in the stricter sense and paganism within Christendom. It is the difference that Vigilius Haufniensis, with respect to anxiety, has pointed [162] out: paganism does lack spirit, but it is still oriented in the direction toward spirit, whereas paganism within Christendom lacks spirit in the direction away from it, or by a falling away, and is therefore spiritlessness in the strictest sense.

B. DESPAIR THAT IS CONSCIOUS OF BEING DESPAIR

Conscious despair requires a true idea of despair and clarity about one's own state.

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SKS 11.16 Her maa naturligviis gjøres den Distinction, om Den der er sig sin Fortvivlelse bevidst, har den sande Forestilling betræffende hvad Fortvivlelse er. En kan saaledes vel, efter den Forestilling han har, have Ret i at kalde sig fortvivlet, han kan ogsaa have Ret i, at han er fortvivlet, og dog er det endnu ikke sagt, at han har den sande Forestilling om Fortvivlelse, det kan være muligt, at man, betragtende hans Liv under denne, maa sige: Du er i Grunden endnu langt mere fortvivlet end Du veed af, Fortvivlelsen stikker endnu langt dybere.

Saaledes (for at minde om det Foregaaende) med Hedningen; naar han sammenlignelsesviis med andre Hedninger ansaae sig selv for fortvivlet, saa havde han vistnok Ret i, at han var fortvivlet, men Uret i, at de Andre ikke vare det, det er, han havde ikke den sande Forestilling om Fortvivlelse.

Til den bevidste Fortvivlelse fordres altsaa paa den ene Side den sande Forestilling om hvad Fortvivlelse er. Paa den anden Side fordres Klarhed over sig selv, det vil sige,

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Here, of course, a distinction must be made as to whether the one who is conscious of his despair has the true conception of what despair is. Someone may well be right, according to the conception he has, to call himself in despair; he may also be right that he is in despair. And yet that does not mean he has the true conception of despair. It may be that, looking at his life under that true conception, one must say: At bottom you are far more in despair than you know; the despair lies much deeper still.

So it was (to recall what was said earlier) with the pagan. When, comparing himself with other pagans, he considered himself in despair, he was certainly right that he was in despair, but wrong that the others were not. That is, he did not have the true conception of despair.

Conscious despair therefore requires, on the one hand, the true conception of what despair is. On the other hand it requires clarity about oneself,

7 *Hysteron proteron* (Greek, "the later first"): a figure that puts first what logically comes second.

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forsaavidt Klarhed og Fortvivlelse kunne tænkes sammen. Hvorvidt fuldkommen Klarhed over sig selv om, at man er fortvivlet, lader sig forene med at være fortvivlet, det er, om denne Erkjendelsens og Selverkjendelsens Klarhed ikke just maatte rive et Menneske ud af Fortvivlelsen, gjøre ham saa forfærdet for sig selv, at han ophørte at være fortvivlet: ville vi her ikke afgjøre, vi ville end ikke forsøge derpaa, da vi i det Senere ville finde en Plads for hele denne Undersøgelse.

Men uden at forfølge Tanken til dette dialektiske Yderste, gjøre vi her blot opmærksom paa, at som Bevidsthedens Grad om hvad Fortvivlelse er kan være saare forskjellig, saaledes ogsaa Bevidsthedens Grad betræffende sin egen Tilstand, at den er Fortvivlelse. [163] Virkelighedens Liv er for mangfoldigt til blot at udvise saadanne abstracte Modsætninger, som den mellem en Fortvivlelse, som er fuldkommen uvidende om at være det, og en, som fuldkommen er sig bevidst at være det. Som oftest er vistnok den Fortvivledes Tilstand en, dog igjen mangfoldig nuanceret, Halv-Dunkelhed over sin egen Tilstand.

SKS 11.16 Han veed det nok saadan til en vis Grad med sig selv, at han er fortvivlet, han mærker det paa sig selv, som En mærker det paa sig selv, at han gaaer med en Sygdom i Kroppen, men han vil ikke ret tilstaae hvilken Sygdommen er. I eet Øieblik er det næsten blevet ham tydeligt, at han er fortvivlet, men saa i det andet Øieblik er det ham dog, som havde hans Ildebefindende en anden Grund, som laae den i noget Udvortes, i Noget udenfor ham; og hvis Det forandredes, var han ikke fortvivlet. Eller han maaskee ved Adspredelser og paa andre Maader, f. Ex.

ved Arbeide og Travlhed som Adspredelses-Middel, søger for sig selv at bevare en Dunkelhed over sin Tilstand, dog saaledes igjen, at dette ikke bliver ham ganske tydeligt, at han gjør det derfor, at han gjør hvad han gjør, for at skaffe Dunkelhed. Eller han maaskee endog er sig bevidst, at han saaledes arbeider for at sænke Sjælen i Dunkelhed, gjør dette med en vis Skarpsindighed og klog Beregning, med psychologisk Indsigt, men ikke er i dybere Forstand sig klart bevidst, hvad han gjør, hvor fortvivlet det er, han bærer sig ad o. s. v.

Der er nemlig i al Dunkelhed og Uvidenhed et dialectisk Sammenspil af Erkjendelse og Villie, og man kan i at

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that is, insofar as clarity and despair can be thought together. Can complete clarity about oneself, about the fact that one is in despair, be combined with being in despair? That is, might not this clarity of knowledge and self-knowledge precisely tear a person out of despair, make him so terrified of himself that he ceased to be in despair? We will not decide this here; we will not even attempt it, since later on we will find a place for this whole inquiry.

But without pursuing the thought to this dialectical extreme, we will here merely point out the following. Just as the degree of consciousness of what despair is can vary greatly, so too can the degree of consciousness regarding one's own state, that it is despair. [163] Actual life is too multifarious to display merely such abstract opposites as that between a despair that is completely ignorant of being despair and one that is completely conscious of being so. Most often, no doubt, the state of the person in despair is a half-obscurity about his own state, and this too is shaded in many ways.

He knows it well enough in himself, up to a point, that he is in despair. He notices it in himself, as someone notices that he is carrying an illness in his body, but he will not quite admit what the illness is. At one moment it has almost become clear to him that he is in despair; but then the next moment it seems to him after all that his malaise has another cause, as if it lay in something external, in something outside him, and if that were changed, he would not be in despair. Or perhaps, by diversions and in other ways, for example

by work and busyness as a means of diversion, he tries to keep himself in obscurity about his state. Yet again he does it in such a way that it does not become quite clear to him that this is why he does it, that he does what he does in order to produce obscurity. Or perhaps he is even conscious that he is working in this way to sink his soul in obscurity, and does it with a certain acumen and shrewd calculation, with psychological insight, yet is not clearly conscious in a deeper sense of what he is doing, of how despairing his way of going about it is, and so on.

For in all obscurity and ignorance there is a dialectical interplay of knowing and willing, and in understanding a person one can go wrong by em-

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opfatte et Menneske tage feil: ved blot at accentuere Erkjendelsen og ved blot at accentuere Villien.

Men, som tidligere bemærket, Bevidsthedens Grad potentserer Fortvivlelsen. I samme Grad som et Menneske har den sandere Forestilling om Fortvivlelse, naar han dog bliver i den, og i samme Grad som han tydeligere er sig bevidst at være fortvivlet, naar han dog bliver i Fortvivlelsen, i samme Grad er denne intensivere. Den, der med Bevidsthed om, at et Selvmord er Fortvivlelse, og forsaavidt med den sande Forestilling om, hvad Fortvivlelse er, begaaer et Selvmord, hans Fortvivlelse er intensivere end Dens, der begaaer et Selvmord uden at have den sande Forestilling om, at Selvmord er Fortvivlelse; men derimod er hans usande Forestilling om Selvmord den mindre intensive Fortvivlelse.

Paa den anden Side med jo klarere Bevidsthed om sig selv (Selvbevidsthed) et Menneske begaaer et Selvmord, desto intensivere er hans [164] Fortvivlelse i Sammenligning med Dens, hvis Sjel er, sammenlignet med hans, i en forvirret og dunkel Tilstand.

SKS 11.161 I det Følgende skal jeg nu gjennemgaae den bevidste Fortvivlelses tvende Former saaledes, at der tillige eftervises en Stigen i Bevidstheden om hvad Fortvivlelse er, og i Bevidstheden om, at Ens Tilstand er Fortvivlelse, eller hvad der er det Samme og det Afgjørende, en Stigen i Bevidsthed om Selvet. Men Modsætningen til det at være fortvivlet er det at troe, derfor er ogsaa ganske rigtigt hvad der i det Foregaaende blev fremsat som Formelen, der beskriver en Tilstand, i hvilken der slet Intet af Fortvivlelse er, dette Samme er ogsaa Formelen for at troe: i at forholde sig til sig selv og i at ville være sig selv grunder Selvet gjennemsigtigt i den Magt, som satte det. (cfr. A, A.)

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phasizing only the knowing, or by emphasizing only the willing.

But, as noted earlier, the degree of consciousness intensifies despair. The truer a person's conception of despair, while he still remains in it, and the more clearly he is conscious of being in despair, while he still remains in despair, the more intensive the despair is. The one who commits suicide conscious that suicide is despair, and to that extent with the true conception of what despair is, is in more intensive despair than the one who commits suicide without having the true conception that suicide is despair. The latter's untrue conception of suicide, on the other hand, is the less intensive despair.

On the other hand, the clearer the consciousness of himself (self-consciousness) with which a person commits suicide, the more intensive is his [164] despair compared with that of one whose soul, compared with his, is in a confused and obscure state.

In what follows I shall go through the two forms of conscious despair in such a way that an ascent is shown at the same time: in the consciousness of what despair is, and in the consciousness that one's state is despair—or, what is the same thing and what is decisive, an ascent in consciousness of the self. But the opposite of being in despair is having faith. Therefore it is also quite correct that the formula set out earlier to describe a state in which there is no despair at all is also the formula for faith: in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it. (Cf. A, A.)

A) THE DESPAIR OF WEAKNESS

In despair not wanting to be oneself; a footnote contrasts feminine and masculine despair.

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Naar denne Form af Fortvivlelse kaldes Svaghedens, saa er deri allerede indeholdt en Reflexion paa den anden Form (β), fortvivlet at ville være sig selv. Det er saaledes kun relative Modsætninger. Ganske uden Trods er ingen Fortvivlelse; der ligger jo ogsaa Trods i Udtrykket selv: ikke at ville være. Paa den anden Side selv Fortvivlelsens høieste Trods er dog aldrig uden nogen Svaghed. Forskjellen er altsaa kun relativ. Den ene Form er saa at

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When this form of despair is called the despair of weakness, that already contains a reflection on the other form (β), in despair wanting to be oneself. So these are only relative opposites. No despair is entirely without defiance; indeed, defiance lies in the very expression: not wanting to be. On the other hand, even despair's highest defiance is never without some weakness. So the difference is only

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sige Qvindelighedens Fortvivlelse, den anden Mandlighedens*.

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relative. The one form is, so to speak, the despair of femininity, the other that of masculinity*.[8]

8 "Weakness" renders *Svaghed*.

9

* Og hvis man psychologisk vil see sig om i Virkeligheden, vil man stundom faae Leilighed til at forvisse sig om, at dette, som er tankerigtigt og altsaa skal og maa slaae til, ogsaa slaaer til, og at denne Inddeling omfatter Fortvivlelsens hele Virkelighed; thi hvad Barnet angaaer, taler man jo ikke om Fortvivlelse, men kun om Arrigskab, fordi man kun er berettiget til at forudsætte, at det Evige κατα δυναμιν er tilstede i Barnet, ei er berettiget til at fordre det af det, som man er berettiget til at fordre det af den Ældre, om hvem det gjælder, han skal have det.

* And if one looks around psychologically in actual life, one will sometimes have occasion to confirm that what is correct in thought, and therefore should and must hold, does in fact hold, and that this division covers the whole actuality of despair. For with regard to the child one does not speak of despair, only of bad temper, because one is only entitled to presuppose that the eternal is present in the child κατα δυναμιν [potentially]. One is not entitled to demand it of the child as one is entitled to demand it of the older person, of whom it holds that he ought to have it.

10

Imidlertid vil jeg dog langtfra negte, at der hos Qvinder kan forekomme Former af mandlig Fortvivlelse, og omvendt hos Mænd Former af qvindelig Fortvivlelse; men dette er Undtagelserne. Og det forstaaer sig, det Ideale er ogsaa kun sjeldent; og kun reent idealt er det dog ganske sandt med denne Forskjel mellem Mandlighedens og Qvindelighedens Fortvivlelse. Qvinden har hverken den selvisk udviklede Forestilling om Selvet, ei heller i afgjørende Forstand Intellectualitet, hvor langt mere ømt- og fiintfølende hun end kan være end Manden. Derimod er Qvindens Væsen Hengivenhed, Hengivelse; og det er uqvindeligt, hvis det ikke er saa.

However, I would by no means deny that forms of masculine despair can occur in women and, conversely, forms of feminine despair in men; but these are the exceptions. And of course the ideal is also only rare, and it is only in purely ideal terms that this distinction between the despair of masculinity and that of femininity is entirely true. Woman has neither the selfishly developed conception of the self nor intellectuality in the decisive sense, however much more tender and delicate in feeling she may be than man. On the other hand, woman's nature is devotion, self-giving; and it is unwomanly if it is not so.

11

Besynderligt nok, Ingen kan være saa knibsk (og dette Ord er jo af Sproget myntet paa Qvinden), saa næsten grusomt kræsen som en Qvinde – og dog er hendes Væsen Hengivenhed, og dog (just det Vidunderlige) er alt Dette egentlig Udtrykket for, at hendes Væsen er Hengivenhed. Thi just fordi hun i sit Væsen bærer den hele qvindelige Hengivenhed, derfor har Naturen kjerligt udstyret hende med et Instinkt, i Sammenligning med hvis Fiinhed den meest, den eminentest udviklede mandlige Reflexion er som Intet.

Strangely enough, no one can be so coy (and the language has coined this very word for woman), so almost cruelly fastidious as a woman—and yet her nature is devotion; and yet (this is precisely the wonderful thing) all this is really the expression of the fact that her nature is devotion. For precisely because she bears the whole of feminine devotion in her nature, nature has lovingly equipped her with an instinct compared with whose delicacy the most eminently developed masculine reflection is as nothing.

12

Denne en Qvindes Hengivenhed, denne, at jeg skal tale græsk, guddommelige Gave og Rigdom, er for stort et Gode til at den skulde slænges hen iblinde; og dog vilde ingen seende menneskelig Reflexion være istand til at see skarpt nok for at kunne anbringe den rigtigt. Derfor har Naturen taget sig af hende: instinctmæssigt seer hun iblinde klarere end den meest seende Reflexion, instinktmæssigt seer hun, hvor det er hun skal beundre, hvad det er, hvori hun skal hengive sig. Hengivenhed er det Eneste, Qvinden har, derfor paatog Naturen sig at være hendes Værge. Deraf kommer det ogsaa, at Qvindeligheden først bliver til i en Metamorphose; den bliver til, idet den uendelige Knibskhed forklarer sig som qvindelig Hengivenhed.

This devotion of a woman, this—to speak Greek—divine gift and treasure, is too great a good to be flung away blindly. And yet no clear-sighted human reflection would be able to see sharply enough to bestow it rightly. Therefore nature has taken care of her: instinctively, blindly, she sees more clearly than the most clear-sighted reflection; instinctively she sees where she is to admire, what it is to which she is to give herself. Devotion is the only thing woman has; that is why nature took it upon itself to be her guardian. That is also why femininity first comes into being through a metamorphosis: it comes into being when the infinite coyness is transfigured into feminine devotion.

13

Men at Hengivenhed er Qvindens Væsen, kommer saa igjen i Fortvivlelsen, er igjen Fortvivlelsens Modus. I Hengivelsen har hun tabt sig selv, og kun saaledes er hun lykkelig, kun saaledes er hun sig selv; en Qvinde, der er lykkelig uden Hengivelse, det er, uden at hengive sit Selv, hvad det saa end forresten er hun giver det hen til, er aldeles uqvindelig.

But that devotion is woman's nature comes back again in despair; it is again despair's mode. In self-giving she has lost herself, and only so is she happy, only so is she herself. A woman who is happy without self-giving, that is, without giving her self away, no matter to what she gives it, is altogether unwomanly.

14

En Mand giver sig ogsaa hen, og det er en daarlig Mand, som ikke gjør det; men hans Selv er ikke Hengivelse (dette er Udtrykket for den qvindelige substantielle Hengivelse), ei heller faaer han sit Selv ved Hengivelse, som Qvinden i en anden Forstand gjør det, han har sig selv; han giver sig hen, men hans Selv bliver endnu tilbage som en ædru Bevidsthed om Hengivelsen, hvorimod Qvinden ægte qvindeligt styrter sig i, styrter sit Selv i Det, til hvilket hun hengiver sig. Tages nu Dette bort, saa er ogsaa hendes Selv borte, og hendes Fortvivlelse: ikke at ville være sig selv. – Saaledes giver Manden sig ikke hen; men den anden Form af Fortvivlelse udtrykker ogsaa det Mandlige: fortvivlet at ville være sig selv.

A man also gives himself, and he is a poor sort of man who does not; but his self is not self-giving (this is the expression for feminine substantial devotion), nor does he gain his self through self-giving, as woman in another sense does. He has himself. He gives himself, but his self still remains behind as a sober consciousness of the self-giving, whereas woman, in a genuinely feminine way, throws herself, throws her self, into that to which she gives herself. If this is now taken away, then her self is gone too, and her despair is: not wanting to be herself.—Man does not give himself in this way; but the other form of despair also expresses the masculine: in despair wanting to be oneself.

1) DESPAIR OVER THE EARTHLY

The immediate person, struck by misfortune, wishes to be someone else, like the peasant who disowns his legs.

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SKS 11.16 Dette er den rene Umiddelbarhed, eller Umiddelbarhed med en qvantitativ Reflexion i sig. – Her er ingen uendelig Bevidsthed om Selvet, om hvad Fortvivlelse er, eller om, at Tilstanden er Fortvivlelse; Fortvivlelsen er en blot Liden, en Liggen under for Udvorteshedens Tryk, den kommer paa ingen Maade indvortes fra som Handling. Det er ved en, om man saa vil, uskyldig Misbrug af Sproget, en Leeg med Ord, ligesom naar Børnene lege Soldat, at der i Umiddelbarhedens Sprog forekomme saadanne Ord som: Selvet, Fortvivlelse.

Den *Umiddelbare* (forsaavidt da Umiddelbarhed kan i Virkeligheden forekomme ganske uden al Reflexion) er blot sjelelig bestemmet, hans Selv, og ham selv, et Noget med indenfor Timelighedens og Verdslighe [166] dens Omfang, i umiddelbar Sammenhæng med det Andet (το ετερον), og har kun et illusorisk Skin af som var der noget Evigt i det. Saaledes hænger Selvet umiddelbart sammen med det Andet, ønskende, begjerende, nydende o. s. v., men lidende; endog begjerende er dette Selv et Dativ som Barnets mig. Dets Dialektik er: det Behagelige og det Ubehagelige; dets Begreber: Lykke, Ulykke, Skjebne.

SKS 11.16 Nu *hænder* der da, der *tilstøder* (at støde – til) dette umiddelbare Selv Noget, som bringer det til Fortvivlelse; paa anden Maade kan det her ikke skee, da Selvet ingen Reflexion har i sig, Det der bringer til Fortvivlelse maa komme udvortes fra, og Fortvivlelsen er en blot Liden. Det, hvori den Umiddelbare har sit Liv, eller, forsaavidt han dog har en lille Smule Reflexion i sig, den Deel deraf, ved hvilken han især hænger, berøves ham »ved et Slag af Skjebnen«, kort, han bliver, som han kalder [167] det, ulykkelig, det er, Umiddelbarheden i ham faaer et

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This is pure immediacy, or immediacy with a quantitative reflection in it.—Here there is no infinite consciousness of the self, of what despair is, or of the state's being despair. The despair is merely a suffering, a succumbing to the pressure of externality; it in no way comes from within as an act. It is by what one might call an innocent misuse of language, a play with words, as when children play soldiers, that such words as "the self" and "despair" occur in the language of immediacy.

The *immediate* person (insofar as immediacy can in actuality occur entirely without any reflection) is determined merely as soul. His self, and he himself, is a something included within the scope of the temporal and the worldly, [166] in immediate connection with the other (το ετερον [to heteron: the other]), and has only an illusory appearance of there being something eternal in it. Thus the self hangs together immediately with the other, wishing, desiring, enjoying, and so on, but passively; even when desiring, this self is a dative, like the child's "me." Its dialectic is: the pleasant and the unpleasant; its concepts: good fortune, misfortune, fate.[16]

Now something *happens*, something *befalls* (literally, strikes against) this immediate self that brings it to despair. It cannot happen here in any other way: since the self has no reflection in it, what brings it to despair must come from outside, and the despair is merely a suffering. That in which the immediate person has his life—or, insofar as he does have a tiny bit of reflection in him, the part of it to which he especially clings—is taken from him "by a stroke of fate." In short, he becomes, as he calls [167] it, unhappy; that is, the im-

15

Dette angaaende Forholdet mellem Mandlighedens og Qvindelighedens Fortvivlelse. Dog maa erindres, at her ikke er Tale om Hengivelse til Gud, eller Tale om Guds-Forholdet, hvorom først Talen bliver i andet Afsnit. I Forholdet til Gud, hvor saadan Forskjel som: Mand – Qvinde forsvinder, gjælder for Manden som for Qvinden, at Hengivelse er Selvet, og at ved Hengivelse faaes Selvet. Dette gjælder ligeligt for Mand og Qvinde, om vel oftest i Virkeligheden Qvinden kun gjennem Manden forholder sig til Gud.

So much for the relation between the despair of masculinity and that of femininity. It must be remembered, however, that this is not about self-giving to God, or about the God-relationship, which will not be discussed until Part Two. In the relationship to God, where such a distinction as man–woman vanishes, it holds for the man as for the woman that self-giving is the self, and that through self-giving the self is gained. This holds equally for man and woman, even though in actuality the woman most often relates to God only through the man.

16 Small Danish children often say *mig* ("me") where adults say *jeg* ("I"): the self appears only as the one to whom things are given.

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saadant Knæk, at den ikke kan reproducere sig selv: han fortvivler.

SKS 11.16 Eller, hvad der dog i Virkeligheden sees sjeldnere, men dialektisk er aldeles i sin Orden, denne Umiddelbarhedens Fortvivlen indtræder ved hvad den Umiddelbare kalder en altfor stor Lykke; Umiddelbarheden er nemlig som saadan en uhyre Skrøbelighed, og ethvert quid nimis, der fordrer Reflexionen af den, bringer den til Fortvivlelse.

Altsaa han fortvivler, det vil sige, ved en besynderlig Bagvendthed og i en fuldkommen Mystification, sig selv betræffende, kalder han det at fortvivle. Men at fortvivle er at tabe det Evige – og dette Tab taler han jo ikke om, drømmer han ikke om. At tabe det Jordiske er som saadant ikke det at fortvivle, og dog er det derom han taler, og det kalder han at fortvivle. Hvad han siger, er i en vis Forstand sandt, kun ikke saaledes sandt, som han forstaaer det; han er bagvendt situeret, og hvad han siger maa forstaaes bagvendt: han staaer og peger paa det som ikke er det at fortvivle, forklarende at han er fortvivlet, og imidlertid foregaaer ganske rigtigt Fortvivlelsen bag ved ham, ham uafvidende.

Det er, som hvis En stod og vendte Ryggen til Raad- og Domhuset, pegede lige ud for sig og sagde: der ligger Raad- og Domhuset; Mennesket har Ret, det ligger der – naar han vender sig om. Han er ikke fortvivlet, det er ikke sandt, og dog faaer han Ret, idet han siger det. Men han kalder sig fortvivlet, han betragter sig selv som død, som en Skygge af sig selv. Død er han dog ikke, der er, om man saa vil, endnu Liv i Personen. Dersom saaledes Alt pludselig forandredes, alt det Udvortes, og Ønsket opfyldtes, saa kommer der Liv i ham igjen, saa reiser Umiddelbarheden sig atter, og han begynder at leve paa en frisk.

Men dette er den eneste Maade, paa hvilken Umiddelbarheden veed at stride, det Eneste, den veed: at fortvivle og daane – og dog veed den mindst af Alt, hvad Fortvivlelse er. Den fortvivler og daaner, og derpaa ligger den ganske stille som var den død, et Kunststykke liig det »at ligge todt«; det er med Umiddelbarheden som med visse lavere Dyrearter, der intet andet Vaaben eller Forsvars-Middel have end at ligge ganske stille og lade som vare de døde.

Imidlertid gaaer Tiden hen. Kommer der saa Hjælp i det Udvortes, saa kommer der ogsaa Liv igjen i den Fortvivlede, han begynder, hvor han slap, et Selv var han

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mediacy in him receives such a blow that it cannot reproduce itself: he despairs.

Or—and this is seen more rarely in actual life, but is dialectically quite in order—this despairing of immediacy sets in through what the immediate person calls an all too great good fortune. For immediacy as such is enormously fragile, and every quid nimis [too much] that demands reflection of it brings it to despair.

So he despairs; that is, by a strange reversal and in complete mystification about himself, he calls it despairing. But to despair is to lose the eternal—and of this loss he does not speak, does not dream. To lose the earthly is not as such despairing, and yet that is what he speaks of, and that is what he calls despairing. What he says is in a certain sense true, only not true in the way he understands it. He is positioned back to front, and what he says must be understood back to front: he stands pointing at what is not despairing, declaring that he is in despair, and meanwhile despair is indeed taking place behind him, without his knowing it.

It is as if someone stood with his back to the City Hall and Courthouse, pointed straight ahead and said: There is the City Hall and Courthouse. The man is right, it is there—when he turns around. He is not in despair, that is not true, and yet he is right when he says it. But he calls himself in despair; he regards himself as dead, as a shadow of himself. Yet dead he is not; there is, if you like, still life in the person. If everything were suddenly to change, all the externals, and the wish were fulfilled, then life comes back into him, immediacy rises again, and he begins to live afresh.[17]

But this is the only way immediacy knows how to fight, the only thing it knows: to despair and to faint—and yet it knows least of all what despair is. It despairs and faints, and then lies quite still as if it were dead, a trick like "at ligge todt" [playing dead]. Immediacy is like certain lower species of animals that have no weapon or means of defense but to lie quite still and pretend to be dead.

Meanwhile time passes. If help comes from outside, then life comes back into the person in despair as well; he begins where he left off. A self he

17 Copenhagen's combined City Hall and Courthouse on Nytorv, completed in 1815.

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ikke, og et Selv blev han ikke, men lever nu [168] videre fort, blot umiddelbart bestemmet. Kommer Udvorteshedens Hjælp ikke, saa skeer der i Virkeligheden oftest noget Andet. Der kommer saa dog alligevel Liv i Personen, men »sig selv bliver han aldrig mere«, siger han. Han faaer nu en Smule Forstand paa Livet, han lærer at efterabe de andre Mennesker, hvordan de bære sig ad med at leve – og saadan lever han nu ogsaa.

SKS 11.168 I Christenheden er han tillige Christen, gaaer hver Søndag i Kirke, hører og forstaaer Præsten, ja de forstaae hinanden; han døer; Præsten introducerer ham for 10 Rdlr. i Evigheden – men et Selv var han ikke, et Selv blev han ikke.

Denne Form af Fortvivlelse er: fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv, eller endnu lavere: fortvivlet ikke at ville være et Selv, eller allerlavest: fortvivlet at ville være en Anden end sig selv, at ønske sig et nyt Selv. Umiddelbarheden har egentligen intet Selv, den kjender ikke sig selv, kan saaledes heller ikke kjende sig selv igjen, der endes derfor gjerne i det Eventyrlige. Idet Umiddelbarheden fortvivler, har den ikke engang Selv nok til at ønske eller drømme, at den dog var blevet det, den ikke blev. Den Umiddelbare hjælper sig saa paa en anden Maade, han ønsker at være en Anden.

Dette vil man let forvisse sig om ved at iagttage umiddelbare Mennesker; der ligger i Fortvivlelsens Øieblik dem intet Ønske saa nær, som det, at være blevet en Anden eller at blive en Anden. Man kan i ethvert Tilfælde aldrig lade være at smile af en saadan Fortvivlet, der menneskelig talt, skjøndt fortvivlet, er saa saare uskyldig. Som oftest er en saadan Fortvivlet uendelig comisk. Man tænke sig et Selv (og næst Gud er der Intet saa evigt som et Selv), og saa at et Selv faaer det Indfald, om det ikke skulde kunne lade sig gjøre at det blev en Anden – end sig selv.

Og dog elsker en saadan Fortvivlet, hvis eneste Ønske er denne af alle afsindige Forvandlinger afsindigste, han elsker den Indbildning, at Changementet skulde kunne gaae lige saa let for sig som det at faae en anden Kjole paa. Thi den Umiddelbare kjender ikke sig selv, han kjender ganske bogstaveligen kun sig selv paa Kjolen, han kjender (og her er atter den uendelige Comik) det at have

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was not, and a self he did not become, but he now lives [168] on, determined merely by immediacy. If help from outside does not come, then in actuality something else usually happens. Life comes back into the person all the same, but "he will never be himself again," he says. He now acquires a little understanding of life; he learns to imitate other people, how they go about living—and so now he lives that way too.

In Christendom he is a Christian as well. He goes to church every Sunday, hears and understands the pastor—indeed, they understand each other. He dies; the pastor introduces him into eternity for ten rix-dollars—but a self he was not, and a self he did not become.[18]

This form of despair is: in despair not wanting to be oneself; or lower still: in despair not wanting to be a self; or lowest of all: in despair wanting to be someone other than oneself, wishing for a new self. Immediacy really has no self; it does not know itself, and so it cannot recognize itself either. That is why it tends to end up in the fabulous. When immediacy despairs, it does not even have self enough to wish or dream that it had become what it did not become. The immediate person then helps himself in another way: he wishes to be someone else.

One can easily confirm this by observing immediate people: in the moment of despair no wish lies so close to them as that of having become someone else, or of becoming someone else. In any case one can never help smiling at such a person in despair, who, humanly speaking, though in despair, is so very innocent. As a rule such a person in despair is infinitely comic. Imagine a self (and next to God there is nothing so eternal as a self), and then imagine that a self hits on the idea of whether it might not be possible for it to become someone else—than itself.

And yet such a person in despair, whose only wish is this maddest of all mad transformations, loves the fancy that the change could be made as easily as putting on a different coat. For the immediate person does not know himself; quite literally he knows himself only by his coat. He knows (and here again is the infinitely comic) having a self by

18 The sum is the pastor's fee for a funeral address.

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et Selv paa Udvortesheden. Der gives ikke let nogen latterligere Forvexling; thi et Selv er just uendelig forskjelligt fra Udvortesheden. Da nu hele Udvortesheden forandredes for den Umiddelbare, og han fortvivlede, saa gaaer han et Skridt videre, han tænker som saa, det bliver hans Ønske: hvad om jeg blev en Anden, fik mig et nyt Selv.

Ja, hvad om han [169] blev en Anden – mon han saa vilde kjende sig selv igjen? Man fortæller om en Bondemand, som barbenet var kommet til Hovedstaden, og der havde faaet saa mange Skillinger, at han kunde kjøbe sig et Par Strømper og Skoe, og dog beholdt saa Meget tilovers, at han kunde drikke sig fuld – man fortæller, at han, som han beruset vilde til at finde hjem, blev liggende midt paa Landeveien og faldt i Søvn. Saa kom der en Vogn kjørende, og Kudsken raabte ham an, at han skulde flytte sig, ellers kjørte han over hans Been.

SKS 11.167 Den fulde Bonde vaagnede, saae derpaa til sine Been, og da han paa Grund af Strømper og Skoe ikke kjendte dem, sagde han: kjør han kun, det er ikke mine Been. Saaledes med den Umiddelbare naar han fortvivler, det er umuligt sandt at fremstille ham uden comisk, det er, at jeg selv skal sige det, allerede et Slags Kunststykke at tale i den Jargon om et Selv og om Fortvivlelse.

Naar Umiddelbarheden antages at have en Reflexion i sig, modificeres Fortvivlelsen noget; der bliver noget mere Bevidsthed om Selvet, og derved igjen om, hvad Fortvivlelse er, og om, at Ens Tilstand er Fortvivlelse; der bliver nogen Mening i, at et saadant Menneske taler om at være fortvivlet: men Fortvivlelsen er væsentligen Svaghedens, en Liden; dens Form, fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv.

Fremskridtet i Sammenligning med den rene Umiddelbarhed viser sig strax heri, at Fortvivlelsen ikke altid fremkommer ved et Stød, ved at der hænder Noget, men kan foranlediges ved selve Reflexionen i sig, saa Fortvivlelsen, naar saa er, ikke er en blot Liden og Liggen under for Udvortesheden, men til en vis Grad Selvvirksomhed, Handling. Her er jo en vis Grad af Reflexion i sig, altsaa en vis Grad af Besindelse paa sit Selv; med denne visse Grad af Reflexion i sig begynder den Udsondrings-Akt, hvori Selvet bliver opmærksomt paa sig selv som væsentlig forskjelligt fra Omverdenen og Udvortesheden og dennes Indvirkning paa det. Men det er kun til en vis Grad.

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externals. There is hardly a more ludicrous confusion, for a self is precisely infinitely different from externality. So when all the externals changed for the immediate person and he despaired, he goes a step further; he thinks something like this, and it becomes his wish: What if I became someone else, got myself a new self?

Yes, what if he [169] became someone else—would he then recognize himself? There is a story about a peasant who had come barefoot to the capital and had come by enough coins there to buy himself a pair of stockings and shoes and still have enough left over to get drunk. The story goes that as he tried, drunk, to find his way home, he lay down in the middle of the highway and fell asleep. Then a carriage came along, and the driver shouted at him to move, or he would drive over his legs.

The drunken peasant woke up and looked at his legs, and since he did not recognize them because of the stockings and shoes, he said: "Go ahead and drive, they aren't my legs." So it is with the immediate person when he despairs: it is impossible to present him truthfully except as comic. It is already—if I may say so myself—a kind of feat to talk in that jargon about a self and about despair.

If immediacy is assumed to have some reflection in itself, despair is somewhat modified. There comes to be somewhat more consciousness of the self, and thereby in turn of what despair is, and of one's state being despair; there is some meaning in such a person's talking about being in despair. But the despair is essentially that of weakness, a suffering; its form: in despair not wanting to be oneself.

The advance over pure immediacy shows itself at once in the fact that despair does not always arise from a blow, from something happening, but can be occasioned by the reflection in itself. So when this is the case, despair is not merely a suffering and a succumbing to externality but to a certain degree self-activity, action. Here, after all, there is a certain degree of reflection in itself, and thus a certain degree of heedfulness of one's self. With this certain degree of reflection in itself begins the act of separation in which the self becomes aware of itself as essentially different from its surroundings and from externality and its effect on it. But only to a certain degree.

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Idet nu Selvet med en vis Grad af Reflexion i sig vil til at overtage Selvet, støder det maaskee paa en eller anden Vanskelighed i Selvets Sammensætning, i Selvets Nødvendighed. Thi som intet menneskeligt Legeme er det fuldkomne, saa heller intet Selv. Denne Vanskelighed, den være en hvilken, gyser han tilbage for. Eller der hænder ham Noget, som bryder med Umiddelbarheden i ham dybere, end han ved Reflexion i sig har gjort det; eller hans [170] Phantasi opdager en Mulighed, der, hvis den indtraadte, vilde saaledes blive Bruddet med Umiddelbarheden.

SKS 11.17 Saa fortvivler han. Hans Fortvivlelse er Svaghedens, Selvets Liden, i Modsætning til Selvhævdelsens Fortvivlelse; men ved Hjælp af den relative Reflexion i sig, han har, gjør han, deri atter forskjellig fra den reent Umiddelbare, Forsøg paa at værne om sit Selv. Han forstaaer, at det dog er en Omsætning dette med at slippe Selvet, han bliver ikke saaledes apoplectisk rørt af Slaget som den Umiddelbare gjør det, han forstaaer ved Hjælp af Reflexionen, at der er Meget, han kan tabe, uden at tabe Selvet; han gjør Indrømmelser, han er istand dertil, og hvorfor? fordi han til en vis Grad har udsondret sit Selv fra Udvortesheden, fordi han har en dunkel Forestilling om, at der endog maa være noget Evigt i Selvet.

Men forgjæves kjæmper han saaledes; Vanskeligheden, han er stødt paa, kræver et Brud med hele Umiddelbarheden og dertil har han ikke Selv-Reflexion eller ethisk Reflexion; han har ingen Bevidsthed om et Selv, der vindes ved den uendelige Abstraktion fra alt Udvortes, dette, i Modsætning til Umiddelbarhedens paaklædte, nøgne, abstrakte Selv, der er det uendelige Selvs første Form, og det Fremadskyndende i hele den Proces, hvorved et Selv uendeligt overtager sit virkelige Selv med dets Vanskeligheder og Fortrin.

Altsaa, han fortvivler, og hans Fortvivlelse er: ikke at ville være sig selv. Derimod falder det Latterlige ham rigtignok ikke ind, at ville være en Anden; han vedligeholder Forholdet til sit Selv, saavidt har Reflexionen knyttet ham til Selvet.

Det gaaer ham da i Forhold til Selvet, som det kan gaae en Mand i Forhold til hans Bopæl (det Comiske er, at i slet saa skjødesløst et Forhold, som en Mand staaer til sin Bopæl, staaer rigtignok Selvet ikke til sig selv), at den bliver ham modbydelig, fordi der er Røg, eller ligegyldigt

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Now when the self, with a certain degree of reflection in itself, sets about taking over the self, it perhaps runs into some difficulty or other in the self's makeup, in the self's necessity. For just as no human body is perfect, neither is any self. This difficulty, whatever it may be, he shrinks back from in horror. Or something happens to him that breaks with the immediacy in him more deeply than he has done by reflection in himself; or his [170] imagination discovers a possibility that, if it came about, would in this way become the break with immediacy.

Then he despairs. His despair is that of weakness, a suffering of the self, in contrast to the despair of self-assertion. But with the help of the relative reflection in himself that he has, he tries to protect his self, and in this again he differs from the purely immediate person. He understands that letting go of the self is no simple transaction; he is not struck apoplectic by the blow the way the immediate person is. With the help of reflection he understands that there is much he can lose without losing the self. He makes concessions; he is capable of that. And why? Because he has to some degree separated his self from externality, because he has a dim notion that there must even be something eternal in the self.

But he struggles in vain in this way. The difficulty he has run into demands a break with the whole of immediacy, and for that he has neither self-reflection nor ethical reflection. He has no consciousness of a self that is gained by the infinite abstraction from everything external—this naked, abstract self, in contrast to the clothed self of immediacy, which is the first form of the infinite self and the driving force in the whole process by which a self infinitely takes over its actual self with its difficulties and its advantages.

So he despairs, and his despair is: not wanting to be himself. On the other hand, the ridiculous idea of wanting to be someone else certainly does not occur to him. He maintains the relation to his self; reflection has bound him to the self that far.

It then goes with him in relation to the self as it can go with a man in relation to his dwelling (the comic thing is that the self certainly does not stand in anything like so casual a relation to itself as a man does to his dwelling). It becomes repug-

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af hvilkensomhelst Grund; han forlader den saa, men han vandrer ikke ud, han fæster ikke en ny Bopæl, han vedbliver at betragte den gamle som sin Bopæl; han regner paa, at det skal gaae over igjen. Saaledes med den Fortvivlende.

Saalænge dette staaer paa med den Vanskelighed, tør han, som det hedder med særlig Prægnants, ikke komme til sig selv, vil han ikke være sig selv; men det gaaer vel over, det forandrer sig maaskee, den mørke Mulighed glemmes vel. Saalænge kommer han derfor kun engang imellem saa at sige paa Besøg til sig selv, for at see efter, om Forandringen ikke er indtraadt. Og saa [171] snart den er indtraadt, saa flytter han hjem igjen, »er atter sig selv«, saa siger han, dog vil dette kun sige, han begynder hvor han slap, han var saadan til en vis Grad et Selv og blev heller ikke til mere.

SKS 11.17 Men indtræder der ingen Forandring, saa hjælper han sig paa en anden Maade. Han svinger aldeles bort fra Retningen ind efter, ad hvilken Vei han skulde have været fremad, for i Sandhed at blive et Selv. Det hele Spørgsmaal om Selvet i dybere Forstand bliver en Slags blind Dør i Baggrunden af hans Sjel, indenfor den er der Ingenting. Han overtager hvad han i sit Sprog kalder sit Selv, det vil sige, hvad Evner, hvad Talenter o. s. v.

der kan være givet ham, alt Dette overtager han dog med Retningen ud efter, mod, som det hedder, Livet, det virkelige, det virksomme Liv; han omgaaes meget forsigtigt den Smule Reflexion i sig han har i sig, han frygter det skulde komme op igjen, Det i Baggrunden. Saa lykkes det ham lidt efter lidt at glemme det; i Aarenes Løb finder han det saa næsten latterligt, især naar han er i godt Selskab med andre duelige og virksomme Mænd, der have Sands og Dygtighed for det virkelige Liv. Charmant!

Han er nu, som der staaer i Romanen, allerede i flere Aar lykkelig gift, en virksom og foretagende Mand, Fader og Borger, maaskee endog en stor Mand; hjemme i hans Huus kalde Tjenestefolkene ham »Han Selv«; i Byen er han blandt Honoratiores; hans Optræden er med Persons-Anseelse, eller med Anseelse af Person, det er efter al Anseelse at dømme en Person. I Christenheden er han Christen (aldeles i samme Forstand som han i Hedenskabet vilde være Hedning, og i Holland Hollænder), en af de dannede Christne.

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nant to him because there is smoke, or for whatever reason. So he leaves it, but he does not move out, he does not rent a new dwelling; he goes on regarding the old one as his dwelling; he counts on the trouble passing. So it is with the despairing person.

As long as this difficulty lasts, he dares not, as the expression has it with particular pregnancy, come to himself; he does not want to be himself. But surely it will pass, perhaps it will change, surely the dark possibility will be forgotten. So meanwhile he only now and then pays himself a visit, so to speak, to see whether the change has not occurred. And as [171] soon as it has occurred, he moves home again, "is himself again," as he says. Yet this only means that he begins where he left off: he was, up to a point, a self of sorts, and he did not become any more than that.

But if no change occurs, he helps himself in another way. He turns right away from the inward direction, the path along which he should have gone forward in order truly to become a self. The whole question of the self in a deeper sense becomes a kind of blind door at the back of his soul, behind which there is nothing. He takes over what in his language he calls his self, that is, whatever capacities, whatever talents, etc.

may have been given him. All this he takes over, but in the outward direction, toward life, as it is called, real life, active life. He treats the little bit of reflection in himself that he has very cautiously; he is afraid it might come up again, the thing at the back. Then little by little he manages to forget it. Over the years he comes to find it almost ridiculous, especially when he is in good company with other capable and active men who have a sense and a talent for real life. Charming!

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He has now, as the novels say, been happily married for several years, an active and enterprising man, father and citizen, perhaps even a great man. At home in his house the servants call him "Himself"; in town he is among the notables (*honoratiores*). His bearing shows respect of persons, or the look of a person; that is, to judge by all appearances, he is a person. In Christendom he is a Christian (in exactly the same sense as in paganism he would be a pagan, and in Holland a Dutchman), one of the cultivated Christians.[19]

Det Spørgsmaal om Udødeligheden har ofte beskjeftiget ham, og mere end een Gang har han spurgt Præsten, om der var en saadan Udødelighed til, om man virkelig vilde kjende sig selv igjen; hvad jo ogsaa maa have en ganske særdeles Interesse for ham, da han intet Selv har.

The question of immortality has often occupied him, and more than once he has asked the pastor whether there really was such an immortality, whether one would really recognize oneself again. This must indeed be of quite special interest to him, since he has no self.

Det er umuligt, sandt at fremstille denne Art Fortvivlelse uden en vis Tilsætning af det Satiriske. Det Comiske er, at han vil tale om, at have været fortvivlet; det Forfærdelige er, at hans Tilstand efter at have, som han mener det, overvundet Fortvivlelsen, just er Fortvivlelse. Det er uendelig comisk, at der til Grund for den i Verden saa meget prisede Livs-Klogskab, at der til Grund for alt det Satans Meget af gode Raad og kloge Vendinger, og Seen-Tiden-an, og Tagen sig i sin Skjebne og Skriven i Glemmebogen, ideelt forstaaet, ligger en fuldkommen Dumhed [172] paa, hvor Faren egentligen er, hvilken Faren egentligen er. Men denne ethiske Dumhed er igjen det Forfærdelige.

It is impossible to present this kind of despair truthfully without a certain admixture of the satirical. The comic thing is that he wants to talk about having been in despair; the terrible thing is that his state, after he has, as he thinks, overcome despair, is precisely despair. It is infinitely comic that at the bottom of the worldly wisdom so much praised in the world—at the bottom of all that devilish lot of good advice and clever turns of phrase, and waiting-and-seeing, and resigning oneself to one's fate, and writing things in the book of forgetting—there lies, understood ideally, a complete stupidity [172] about where the danger really lies, what the danger really is. But this ethical stupidity is in turn the terrible thing.

SKS 11.17 Fortvivlelse over det Jordiske eller over noget Jordisk er den almindeligste Art af Fortvivlelse, og især under den anden Form, som Umiddelbarhed med en qvantitativ Reflexion i sig. Jo mere gjennemreflekteret Fortvivlelsen bliver, desto sjeldnere sees den, eller forekommer den i Verden. Men dette beviser, at de fleste Mennesker end ikke ere komne synderligt dybt i det at fortvivle, ingenlunde derimod, at de ikke ere fortvivlede. Det er meget faae Mennesker, der endog kun nogenlunde leve under Bestemmelsen Aand; ja, det er end ikke Mange, der blot forsøge paa dette Liv, og af dem, der gjøre det, springe de fleste snart fra. De have ikke lært at frygte, ikke lært at skulle, ligegyldigt, uendelig ligegyldigt hvad der saa end forresten skeer.

Despair over the earthly or over something earthly is the most common kind of despair, especially in the second form, as immediacy with a quantitative reflection in itself. The more thoroughly reflected the despair becomes, the more rarely it is seen or occurs in the world. But this proves that most people have not even gone very deep in despairing—by no means that they are not in despair. There are very few people who live even approximately under the qualification of spirit; indeed, there are not even many who so much as attempt this life, and of those who do, most soon drop out. They have not learned to fear,

19 Servants in Danish households spoke of the master as *Han Selv*, "Himself." The sentence plays on *Anseelse* (regard, standing, appearance); *Persons-Anseelse* is the biblical "respect of persons," i.e. partiality.

DANISH

Derfor kunne de ikke udholde, hvad der allerede forekommer dem selv som en Modsigelse, hvilken da i Omverdenens Reflexion viser sig langt, langt grellere, at det at bekymres for sin Sjel og det at ville være Aand, i Verden seer ud som Tidsspilde, ja som uforsvarlig Tidsspilde, der om muligt burde straffes af de borgerlige Love, i ethvert Tilfælde straffes med Foragt og Bespottelse som en Art Forræderi mod Menneskene, som en trodsig Afsindighed, der vanvittigt udfylder Tiden med Ingenting. Saa er der et Øieblik i deres Liv, ak dette er deres bedste Tid, hvor de dog begynde paa at tage Retningen ind efter.

De komme saa omtrent til de første Vanskeligheder, der svinge de af; det er dem som førte denne Vei til en trøstesløs Ørken – und rings umher liegt schöne grüne Weide. Der søge de saa hen, og glemme snart hiin deres bedste Tid, ak, og glemme den som var den en Barnagtighed. De ere tillige Christne – beroligede af Præsterne i deres Saligheds-Sag. Som sagt, denne Fortvivlelse er den almindeligste, den er saa almindelig, at man kun deraf kan forklare sig den i Handel og Vandel temmelig almindelige Mening, at Fortvivlelse skulde være Noget, som tilhørte Ungdommen, som kun forekommer i de unge Aar, men som ikke findes hos den satte Mand, der er kommen til Skjels Aar og Alder.

Dette er en fortvivlet Vildfarelse, eller rigtigere en fortvivlet Feiltagelse, der overseer – ja, og hvad endnu værre er, den overseer, at Det, den overseer, dog næsten er det Bedste, der kan siges om Menneskene, da oftere det langt Værre skeer –, at de fleste Mennesker, væsentligen betragtet, egentligen ikke i hele deres Liv drive det til mere end til [173] at være hvad de vare i Barndommen og Ungdommen: Umiddelbarhed med Tilsætning af en lille Dosis Reflexion i sig. Nei, Fortvivlelse er sandeligen ikke Noget, der kun forekommer hos Ynglinge, Noget, man uden videre voxer fra – »som man voxer fra Illusion«. Men dette gjør man jo heller ikke, om man end er taabelig nok til at mene det.

SKS 11.173 Tværtimod, man kan ofte nok træffe paa Mænd og Koner og Oldinge, der have barnagtig Illusion trods nogen Yngling. Men man overseer, at Illusion væsentlig har to

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not learned to have to—regardless, infinitely regardless of whatever else may happen.

That is why they cannot endure what already strikes them as a contradiction, and what appears far, far more glaring as reflected in the world around them: that caring for one's soul and wanting to be spirit looks in the world like a waste of time. Indeed, it looks like an indefensible waste of time, which if possible ought to be punished by civil law, and in any case is punished with contempt and ridicule as a kind of treason against humanity, as a defiant madness that insanely fills up time with nothing. Then there is a moment in their lives—alas, it is their best time—when they do begin to take the inward direction.

They get about as far as the first difficulties; there they swerve off. It seems to them as if this road led to a desolate desert—und rings umher liegt schöne grüne Weide [and all around lies lovely green pasture]. So off they go there, and soon forget that best time of theirs, alas, and forget it as if it had been childishness. They are Christians as well—reassured by the pastors about the matter of their salvation. As I said, this despair is the most common. It is so common that it alone can explain the rather common opinion in everyday life that despair is something belonging to youth, which occurs only in the young years but is not found in the settled man who has reached the years of discretion.[20]

This is a despairing error, or more correctly a despairing mistake, which overlooks—yes, and what is even worse, it overlooks that what it overlooks is nevertheless almost the best that can be said of people, since far worse often happens—that most people, essentially regarded, never really in their whole lives get further than [173] being what they were in childhood and youth: immediacy with the addition of a small dose of reflection in itself. No, despair is truly not something that occurs only in the young, something one simply outgrows—"as one outgrows illusion." But one does not do that either, even if one is foolish enough to think so.

On the contrary, one can often enough come across men and women and old people who have childish illusions to rival any youth. But it is over-

20 Goethe, *Faust* I, spoken by Mephistopheles: a man who speculates is like a beast led round in circles on a barren heath, while all around lies green pasture.

DANISH

Former: Haabets og Erindringens. Ungdommen har Haabets Illusion, den Ældre Erindringens; men just fordi han er i Illusion, har han ogsaa den aldeles eensidige Forestilling om Illusion, at den kun er Haabets. Og det forstaaer sig, Haabets Illusion plages den Ældre ikke af, men derimod vel blandt Andet ogsaa af denne snurrige: fra et formeentlig høiere Standpunkt uden Illusion at see ned paa Ynglingens Illusion. Den Unge er i Illusion, han haaber det Overordentlige af Livet og af sig selv; til Gjengjeld finder man ofte hos den Ældre Illusion betræffende, hvorledes han erindrer sin Ungdom.

En ældre Kone, der nu formeentligen har opgivet al Illusion, befindes ofte at være, trods nogen ung Pige, phantastisk i Illusion med Hensyn til, hvorledes hun erindrer sig selv som ung Pige, hvor lykkelig hun var den Gang, hvor skjøn o. s. v. Dette fuimus, som saa ofte høres af en Ældre, er fuldt saa stor en Illusion som den Unges futuriske; de lyve eller digte begge.

Men ganske anderledes fortvivlet er den Feiltagelse, at Fortvivlelse kun tilhører Ungdommen. Det er overhovedet en stor Taabelighed, og er just Uforstand paa, hvad Aand er, derhos Miskjendelse af, at Mennesket er Aand, ikke blot en Dyre-Skabning, at mene, at det skulde gaae saa nemt til med Tro og Viisdom, at de virkeligen saadan uden videre kom med Aarene, som Tænder, Skjæg og deslige. Nei, hvad saa end et Menneske uden videre kommer til, og hvad der saa end kommer uden videre: Eet bestemt ikke, Tro og Viisdom. Men Sagen er denne, med Aarene kommer Mennesket, aandelig forstaaet, ikke uden videre til Noget, denne Kategori er netop Aandens argeste Modsætning; derimod gaaer det meget let, uden videre med Aarene at gaae fra Noget.

Og med Aarene gaaer man maaskee fra den Smule Lidenskab, Følelse, Phantasi, den Smule Inderlighed, man havde, og gaaer uden videre (thi Sligt gaaer uden videre) ind under Trivialitetens Bestemmelse af Forstand paa Livet. Denne – forbedrede Tilstand, som rigtignok er kommet med [174] Aarene, anseer han nu fortvivlet for et Gode, han forvisser sig let om (og i en vis satirisk

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looked that illusion essentially has two forms: that of hope and that of recollection. Youth has the illusion of hope, the older person that of recollection. But precisely because he is in illusion, he also has the entirely one-sided notion of illusion that it is only the illusion of hope. And of course the older person is not troubled by the illusion of hope; he is, however, troubled among other things by this odd one: looking down, from a supposedly higher standpoint free of illusion, on the illusion of the young. The young person is in illusion; he hopes for the extraordinary from life and from himself. In return one often finds in the older person illusion about how he remembers his youth.

An older woman who has now supposedly given up all illusion is often found to be, as much as any young girl, fantastically in illusion about how she remembers herself as a young girl: how happy she was then, how beautiful, and so on. This fuimus [we have been], so often heard from an older person, is just as great an illusion as the young person's future tense; they both lie, or make things up.[21]

But quite differently despairing is the mistake that despair belongs only to youth. It is in general a great foolishness to think that faith and wisdom come so easily that they really do simply arrive with the years, like teeth, beard and the like. It is precisely a lack of understanding of what spirit is, and moreover a failure to recognize that a human being is spirit, not merely an animal creature. No, whatever a person may arrive at as a matter of course, and whatever may come as a matter of course, one thing certainly does not: faith and wisdom. The point is this: spiritually understood, a human being does not arrive at anything as a matter of course with the years; this category is precisely the arch-opposite of spirit. On the other hand, it is very easy, as a matter of course, with the years to depart from something.

And with the years one perhaps departs from the little passion, feeling, imagination, the little inwardness one had, and passes as a matter of course (for such things happen as a matter of course) under triviality's category of an understanding of life. This—improved state, which has

21 *Fuimus* echoes Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.325, *fuimus Troes* ("we have been Trojans"), i.e. that glory is past.

DANISH

Forstand er Intet vissere), at det nu aldrig kunde falde ham ind at fortvivle – nei, han har sikkret sig, han er fortvivlet, aandløst fortvivlet. Thi hvorfor mon Socrates elskede Ynglinge, uden fordi han kjendte Mennesket!

SKS 11.17 Og skeer det ikke saaledes, at et Menneske med Aarene synker hen i den trivielleste Art Fortvivlelse, saa følger deraf dog vel ingenlunde, at Fortvivlelse blot skulde tilhøre Ungdommen. Udvikler et Menneske sig virkeligen med Aarene, modnes han i væsentlig Bevidsthed om Selvet, saa kan han maaskee fortvivle i en høiere Form. Og udvikler han sig ikke væsentlig med Aarene, medens han dog heller ikke synker reent hen i Trivialitet, det vil sige, bliver han saa omtrent ved at være et ungt Menneske, en Yngling, skjøndt Mand, Fader og Graahaaret, altsaa dog bevarende noget af det Gode hos Ynglingen, saa vil han jo ogsaa være udsat for at fortvivle som en Yngling, over det Jordiske eller over noget Jordisk.

En Forskjel kan der saa vel blive mellem en saadan Ældres og en Ynglings Fortvivlelse, men ingen væsentlig, en reen tilfældig. Ynglingen fortvivler over det Tilkommende, som et Præsens in futuro; der er noget Tilkommende, han ikke vil overtage, med det vil han ikke være sig selv. Den Ældre fortvivler over det Forbigangne som et Præsens in præterito, der ikke vil blive mere og mere forbigangent – thi saa fortvivlet er han da ikke, at det er lykkedes ham ganske at glemme det. Dette Forbigangne er maaskee endog Noget, som Angeren egentligen skulde have fat i. Men skulde Angeren frem, saa maatte der først fortvivles tilgavns, fortvivles ud, saa maatte Aands-Livet bryde igjennem fra Grunden af.

Men fortvivlet som han er, tør han ikke lade det komme til en saadan Afgjørelse. Der bliver han saa staaende, Tiden gaaer hen – med mindre det da lykkes ham, endnu mere fortvivlet, ved Hjælp af Glemsel at hele det, saa han istedetfor at blive en Angrende, bliver sin egen Hæler. Men væsentligen bliver en saadan Ynglings og en saadan Ældres Fortvivlelse den samme, det kommer ikke til nogen Metamorphose, i hvilken Bevidstheden om det

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indeed come with [174] the years, he now in despair regards as a good. He easily assures himself (and in a certain satirical sense nothing is surer) that it could now never occur to him to despair. No, he has made himself secure; he is in despair, spiritlessly in despair. For why did Socrates love young men, unless because he knew human beings![22]

And if it does not happen that a person sinks with the years into the most trivial kind of despair, it by no means follows that despair belongs only to youth. If a person really develops with the years, matures in essential consciousness of the self, then he may perhaps despair in a higher form. And suppose he does not develop essentially with the years, yet does not sink entirely into triviality either; that is, he more or less goes on being a young person, a youth, though a man, a father and gray-haired, and so still keeps something of what is good in the youth. Then he will of course also be liable to despair as a youth does, over the earthly or over something earthly.

A difference may well arise between the despair of such an older person and that of a youth, but not an essential one, only a purely accidental one. The youth despairs over the future, as a præsens in futuro [a present in the future]. There is something in the future he does not want to take upon himself, and with it he does not want to be himself. The older person despairs over the past, as a præsens in præterito [a present in the past] that refuses to become more and more past, for he is not so far gone in despair that he has managed to forget it entirely. This past may even be something that repentance really ought to take hold of. But if repentance were to come forward, there would first have to be despair in earnest, despair to the very end, and then the life of the spirit would have to break through from the ground up.

But in despair as he is, he dares not let it come to such a decision. So there he stays, and time passes. That is, unless he manages, still more in despair, to heal it over by means of forgetting, so that instead of becoming a penitent he becomes his own fence. But essentially the despair of such a youth and of such an older person remains the same. It never comes to a metamorphosis in which the

22 "Passion" renders *Lidenskab*.

DANISH

Evige i Selvet bryder igjennem, saa Kampen kunde begynde, der enten potentserer Fortvivlelse til en endnu høiere Form, eller fører til Troen.

Men er der dog ikke en væsentlig Forskjel mellem de tvende hidtil som identisk brugte Udtryk: at fortvivle over det Jordiske (Totalitets-Bestem [175] melsen), og at fortvivle over noget Jordisk (det Enkelte)? Jo der er. Idet Selvet med uendelig Lidenskab i Phantasi fortvivler over noget Jordisk, gjør den uendelige Lidenskab dette Enkelte, dette Noget til det Jordiske in toto, det vil sige Totalitets-Bestemmelsen ligger i og tilhører den Fortvivlende. Det Jordiske og Timelige som saadant er netop Det, som falder ud fra hinanden, i Noget, i det Enkelte. Det er umuligt, virkeligt at tabe eller berøves alt Jordisk, thi Totalitetsbestemmelsen er en Tankebestemmelse. Selvet forøger altsaa først det virkelige Tab uendeligt, og saa fortvivler det over det Jordiske in toto.

SKS 11.17 Men saasnart denne Forskjel (mellem at fortvivle over det Jordiske og over noget Jordisk) skal gjøres væsentligen gjældende, saa er der ogsaa gjort et væsentlig Fremskridt i Bevidsthed om Selvet. Denne Formel at fortvivle over det Jordiske er saa et dialektisk første Udtryk for den næste Form af Fortvivlelse.

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consciousness of the eternal in the self breaks through, so that the struggle could begin that either intensifies despair into a still higher form or leads to faith.[23]

But is there not, after all, an essential difference between the two expressions used so far as if they were identical: to despair over the earthly (the qualification [175] of totality) and to despair over something earthly (the particular)? Yes, there is. When the self in imagination despairs with infinite passion over something earthly, the infinite passion turns this particular thing, this something, into the earthly in toto [as a whole]. That is, the qualification of totality lies in, and belongs to, the one who despairs. The earthly and the temporal as such are precisely what falls apart into something, into the particular. It is impossible actually to lose, or be deprived of, everything earthly, for the qualification of totality is a qualification of thought. So the self first infinitely magnifies the actual loss, and then it despairs over the earthly in toto.

But as soon as this difference (between despairing over the earthly and despairing over something earthly) is to be made essentially valid, an essential advance in consciousness of the self has also been made. This formula, to despair over the earthly, is then a dialectical first expression for the next form of despair.

2) DESPAIR OF THE ETERNAL, OR OVER ONESELF

Despair over one's own weakness turns into inclosing reserve behind a carefully locked door.

DANISH

Fortvivlelse over det Jordiske eller over noget Jordisk er jo egentligen ogsaa Fortvivlelse om det Evige og over sig selv, forsaavidt den da er Fortvivlelse, thi det er jo Formelen for al Fortvivlelse*. Men den Fortvivlende, som han blev fremstillet i det Foregaaende, var ikke opmærksom [176] paa, hvad der, saa at sige, skeer bag ved ham; han mener at fortvivle over noget Jordisk og taler bestandigt om, hvorover det er han fortvivler, og dog fortvivler han om det Evige; thi det at han tillægger det Jordiske saa stort Værd, eller, videre udført, det at han tillægger noget Jordisk saa stort Værd, eller at han først gjør noget Jordisk til alt Jordisk, og saa tillægger det

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Despair over the earthly or over something earthly is, after all, really also despair of the eternal and over oneself, insofar as it is despair at all, for that is indeed the formula for all despair*. But the person in despair, as he was depicted in the preceding, did not notice [176] what is going on, so to speak, behind his back. He thinks he is despairing over something earthly and keeps talking about what it is he is despairing over, and yet he is despairing of the eternal. For to ascribe such great value to the earthly, or, to carry it further, to ascribe such great value to something earthly, or

23 Danish *hele* means both "to heal" and "to receive stolen goods"; a *Hæler* is a fence.

DANISH

Jordiske saa stort Værd, er jo just at fortvivle om det Evige.

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first to turn something earthly into everything earthly and then ascribe such great value to the earthly, is precisely to despair of the eternal.

2527

SKS 11.17 Denne Fortvivlelse er nu et betydeligt Fremskridt. Var den foregaaende *Svaghedens,* saa er denne: *Fortvivlelse over sin Svaghed,* medens den dog endnu bliver indenfor Væsens-Bestemmelsen: Svaghedens Fortvivlelse, som forskjellig fra β (Trods). Der er altsaa kun en relativ Forskjel. Denne er, at den foregaaende Form har Svaghedens Bevidsthed som sin sidste Bevidsthed, medens her Bevidstheden ikke standser derved, men potentserer sig til en ny Bevidsthed, den om sin Svaghed. Den Fortvivlende forstaaer selv, at det er Svaghed at tage sig det Jordiske saa nær, at det er Svaghed at fortvivle.

This despair is a significant advance. If the preceding was the despair of *weakness,* this is *despair over one's weakness,* while still remaining within the essential qualification of the despair of weakness, as distinct from β (defiance). So there is only a relative difference. It is this: the preceding form has the consciousness of weakness as its final consciousness, whereas here consciousness does not stop there but intensifies itself into a new consciousness, the consciousness of its weakness. The person in despair himself understands that it is

25

* Og derfor er det sproglig rigtigt at sige: at fortvivle *over* det Jordiske (Anledningen), *om* det Evige, men *over* sig selv, fordi dette igjen er et andet Udtryk for Anledningen til Fortvivlelsen, der i Begrebet altid er *om* det Evige, medens det hvor*over* der fortvivles kan være det Forskjelligste. Man fortvivler *over* Det, som sætter En fast i Fortvivlelsen: over sin Ulykke, over det Jordiske, over Tabet af sin Formue o. s. v.; men *om* Det, der, rigtigt forstaaet, løser En ud af Fortvivlelsen: om det Evige, om sin Frelse, om egen Kraft o. s. v. I Forhold til Selvet siger man baade: at fortvivle *over* og *om* sig selv, fordi Selvet er dobbelt dialektisk.

* And therefore it is linguistically correct to say: to despair *over* the earthly (the occasion), *of* the eternal, but *over* oneself. This last is in turn another expression for the occasion of the despair, which in its concept is always *of* the eternal, whereas what one despairs *over* can be the most diverse things. One despairs *over* what holds one fast in despair: over one's misfortune, over the earthly, over the loss of one's fortune, etc. But one despairs *of* what, rightly understood, releases one from despair: of the eternal, of one's salvation, of one's own strength, etc. With respect to the self one says both: to despair *over* oneself and *of* oneself, because the self is doubly dialectical.[24]

24 Danish distinguishes *fortvivle over* (the occasion of despair) from *fortvivle om* (its object); we render these "despair over" and "despair of."

27

Og dette er den Dunkelhed, som er, især da i alle lavere Former af Fortvivlelse, og næsten i enhver Fortvivlende, at han saa lidenskabeligt tydeligt seer og veed, hvor*over* det er han fortvivler, men det undgaaer ham, hvor*om* det er. Betingelsen for Helbredelsen er altid denne *Om*vendelse; og reent philosophisk kunde det da blive et spidsfindigt Spørgsmaal, om det er muligt, at En kan være fortvivlet med fuldkommen Bevidsthed om, hvorom det er han fortvivler.

And this is the obscurity found especially in all the lower forms of despair, and in almost everyone in despair: he sees and knows with such passionate clarity what it is he despairs *over*, but what he despairs *of* escapes him. The condition for healing is always this conversion, this turning to the *of*. And purely philosophically it could become a subtle question whether it is possible for someone to be in despair with full consciousness of what it is he despairs of.[26]

26 Danish *Omvendelse*, "conversion," literally "turning about," begins with *om*, the "of" in "despairing of."

DANISH

Men istedetfor nu at svinge rigtigt af bort fra Fortvivlelsen hen til Troen, for Gud ydmygende sig under sin Svaghed, fordyber han sig i Fortvivlelsen og fortvivler over sin Svaghed.

Derved vender saa hele Synspunktet sig om, han bliver sig nu tydeligere sin Fortvivlelse bevidst, at han fortvivler om det Evige, han fortvivler over sig selv, at han kunde være svag nok til at tillægge det Jordiske saa stor Betydning, hvilket nu bliver ham fortvivlet Udtrykket for, at han har tabt det Evige og sig selv.

Her er Stigen. Først i Bevidstheden om Selvet; thi at fortvivle om det Evige er da umuligt uden at have en Forestilling om Selvet, at der er noget Evigt i det, eller at det har havt noget Evigt i sig. Og skal man fortvivle over sig selv, maa man jo ogsaa være sig bevidst at have et Selv; dog er det derover han fortvivler, ikke over det Jordiske eller noget Jordisk, men over sig selv. Fremdeles er her større Bevidsthed om, hvad Fortvivlelse er, thi Fortvivlelse er ganske rigtigt at have tabt det Evige og sig selv. Selvfølgeligt er der ogsaa større Bevidsthed om, at Ens Tilstand er Fortvivlelse. Videre er Fortvivlelsen her ikke blot en Liden, men en Handling.

Thi naar det Jordiske tages fra Selvet, og han fortvivler, saa er det som kom Fortvivlelsen fra det Udvortes, om den dog altid kommer fra Selvet; men naar Selvet fortvivler over denne sin Fortvivlelse, saa kommer denne nye Fortvivlelse fra Selvet, indirecte-directe fra Selvet, som Modtryk (Reaktion), deri forskjellig fra Trods, der kommer [177] direkte fra Selvet. Endeligen er her ogsaa, om end i en anden Forstand, endnu et Fremskridt. Thi just fordi denne Fortvivlelse er intensivere, er den i en vis Forstand Frelsen nærmere. En saadan Fortvivlelse glemmes vanskelig, den er for dyb; men i ethvert Øieblik Fortvivlelsen holdes aaben, er der ogsaa Mulighed af Frelsen.

SKS 11.17 Dog er denne Fortvivlelse alligevel at henføre under Formen: fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv. Som naar en Fader gjør en Søn arveløs, saaledes vil Selvet ikke vedkjende sig sig selv efterat have været saa svag. Det kan fortvivlet ikke glemme denne Svaghed, det hader paa en Maade sig selv, det vil ikke troende ydmyge sig under sin

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weakness to take the earthly so much to heart, that it is weakness to despair. But instead of now turning properly away from despair toward faith, humbling himself before God under his weakness, he sinks deeper into despair and despairs over his weakness.

With that the whole point of view turns around. He now becomes more clearly conscious of his despair: that he despairs of the eternal. He despairs over himself, that he could be weak enough to attribute such great significance to the earthly, and this now becomes for him, in his despair, the expression of his having lost the eternal and himself.

Here is the ascent. First, in consciousness of the self. For to despair of the eternal is impossible without having a conception of the self, of there being something eternal in it, or of its having had something eternal in it. And if one is to despair over oneself, one must of course also be conscious of having a self. Yet it is over this that he despairs: not over the earthly or something earthly, but over himself. Furthermore, there is greater consciousness here of what despair is, for despair is quite rightly to have lost the eternal and oneself. Naturally there is also greater consciousness that one's condition is despair. Further, despair here is not merely something suffered but an act.

For when the earthly is taken from the self and he despairs, it is as if the despair came from outside, though it always comes from the self. But when the self despairs over this despair of its own, this new despair comes from the self, indirectly-directly from the self, as a counterpressure (reaction). In this it differs from defiance, which comes [177] directly from the self. Finally, there is here also, though in another sense, a further advance. For precisely because this despair is more intense, it is in a certain sense closer to salvation. Such despair is hard to forget; it is too deep. But at every moment that despair is kept open, there is also the possibility of salvation.

Nevertheless this despair still falls under the form: in despair not wanting to be oneself. As a father disinherits a son, so the self will not acknowledge itself after having been so weak. In despair it cannot forget this weakness; in a way it hates itself. It will not humble itself in faith under

DANISH

Svaghed for saaledes at gjenvinde sig selv, nei, det vil, saa at sige, fortvivlet Intet høre om sig selv, ikke vide af sig selv at sige.

Men at hjælpes ved Glemsel, kan der dog heller ikke være Tale om, ei heller om ved Hjælp af Glemsel at slippe ind under Bestemmelsen Aandløshed, og saa være Mand og Christen som andre Mænd og Christne; nei, dertil er Selvet for meget Selv. Som det vel ofte gik Faderen, der gjorde Sønnen arveløs: det udvortes Factum hjalp ham kun lidet, han blev derfor ikke af med Sønnen, hans Tanke idetmindste ikke; som det saa ofte gaaer med en Elskendes Forbandelse over den Forhadte (ɔ: over den Elskede): den hjælper ikke stort, den næsten fængsler mere – saaledes gaaer det det fortvivlede Selv med sig selv.

ENGLISH

its weakness in order thereby to regain itself. No, in despair it wants, so to speak, to hear nothing of itself, to know nothing of itself.

But there can be no question of being helped by forgetting, either, nor of slipping, with the help of forgetting, under the qualification of spiritlessness and then being a man and a Christian like other men and Christians. No, for that the self is too much a self. As must often have happened to the father who disinherited his son: the external fact helped him but little, it did not rid him of the son, at least not of the thought of him. As so often happens with a lover's curse upon the hated one (that is, upon the beloved): it does not help much, it almost binds all the more. So it goes with the despairing self in relation to itself.

INCLOSING RESERVE

The inclosed man lives a respectable outward life while guarding his self in solitude.

DANISH

Denne Fortvivlelse er en Qvalitet dybere end den foregaaende, og hører til den Fortvivlelse, som sjeldnere forekommer i Verden. Hiin Blinddør, om hvilken der taltes i det Foregaaende, bag hvilken der Ingenting var, er her en virkelig, men rigtignok omhyggelig lukket Dør, og bag den sidder Selvet ligesom og passer paa sig selv, beskjæftiget med eller udfyldende Tiden med ikke at ville være sig selv, og dog Selv nok til at elske sig selv. Det kalder man *Indesluttethed.* Og fra nu af komme vi til at handle om Indesluttethed, der er lige Modsætningen til Umiddelbarhed, og blandt Andet ogsaa, i Retning af Tænkning, har en stor Foragt for denne.

Men er da et saadant Selv ikke til i Virkeligheden, er han flygtet udenfor Virkeligheden, i Ørkenen, i Klosteret, i *[Sindssygeanstalten]*; er han ikke et virkeligt Menneske, paaklædt som Andre, eller som Andre iført det sædvanlige Overtøi? Ih, jo vist, hvorfor ikke det! Men dette med Selvet indvier han Ingen i, ikke en Sjel, det føler han ingen Trang til eller han har lært at betvinge den, hør blot ham selv tale derom.

»Det er da ogsaa [178] kun de reent umiddelbare Mennesker – hvilke under Bestemmelsen Aand omtrent staae paa

ENGLISH

This despair is one quality deeper than the preceding, and it belongs to the despair that occurs more rarely in the world. That blind door spoken of earlier, behind which there was nothing, is here a real door, though a carefully locked one, and behind it the self sits, as it were, keeping watch over itself, occupied with, or filling up the time with, not wanting to be itself, and yet self enough to love itself. This is called *inclosing reserve.* And from now on we shall be dealing with inclosing reserve, which is the exact opposite of immediacy and, among other things, also has a great contempt for it where thinking is concerned.[28]

But then does such a self not exist in actuality? Has he fled outside actuality, into the desert, into the monastery, into a mental institution? Is he not an actual human being, dressed like others, or like others wearing the usual overcoat? Why, of course he is, why not! But this business of the self he lets no one into, not a soul. He feels no need to, or he has learned to master the need. Just listen to him talk about it himself.

"After all, [178] it is only the purely immediate people —who in the qualification of spirit stand at

28 "Inclosing reserve" renders *Indesluttethed*: shutting oneself up in oneself. The "blind door," a sham door with nothing behind it, was used earlier for the despair of immediacy.

DANISH

samme Punkt, som Barnet i det første Afsnit af den første Barndom, hvor det med en heelt igjennem elskværdig Ugeneerthed lader Alt gaae fra sig – det er kun de reent umiddelbare Mennesker, der slet Intet kunne holde paa. Det er denne Art af Umiddelbarhed, der ofte med stor Prætension kalder sig »Sandhed, at være sand, et sandt Menneske og ganske som man er«, hvilket netop er lige saa sandt, som at det er Usandhed, naar en Ældre, ikke strax han føler en legemlig Trang, giver efter.

SKS 11.17 Ethvert blot en lille Smule reflecteret Selv har dog en Forestilling om at tvinge Selvet.« Og vor Fortvivlede er da indesluttet nok til at kunne holde enhver Uvedkommende, altsaa Enhver, borte fra dette med Selvet, medens han ud efter er ganske »et virkeligt Menneske.« Han er en studeret Mand, Mand, Fader, endogsaa en ualmindelig dygtig Embedsmand, en respektabel Fader, behagelig i Omgang, saare mild mod sin Kone, Omhyggeligheden selv mod sine Børn. Og Christen?

– nu ja, det er han ogsaa saadan, imidlertid undgaaer han helst at tale derom, om han end gjerne seer, og med en vis veemodig Glæde, at hans Kone til Opbyggelse beskjæftiger sig med det Gudelige, i Kirke gaaer han meget sjeldent, fordi det forekommer ham, at de fleste Præster egentligen ikke vide, hvad de tale om. Han gjør Undtagelse med en ganske enkelt Præst, om hvem han indrømmer, at han veed, hvad han taler om; men ham ønsker han af en anden Grund ikke at høre, da han har en Frygt for at det skulde føre ham for vidt. Derimod føler han ikke sjeldent Trang til Eensomhed, det er ham en Livsfornødenhed, stundom som det at aande, til andre Tider som det at sove.

At han har denne Livsfornødenhed mere end de fleste Folk, er da ogsaa et Tegn paa, at han er en dybere Natur. Overhovedet er Trangen til Eensomhed et Tegn paa, at der dog er Aand i et Menneske, og Maalestokken for hvad Aand der er. »De reent pjattede U- og Med-Mennesker« føle i den Grad ingen Trang til Eensomhed, at de, ligesom Selskabsfuglene, strax døe, blot de et Øieblik skulle være ene; som det lille Barn maa visses i Søvn, saaledes behøve disse det Selskabeliges beroligende Vissen for at kunne spise, drikke, sove, bede, forelske sig o. s. v.

ENGLISH

roughly the same point as the child in the earliest period of infancy, when with a thoroughly endearing lack of embarrassment it lets everything go from itself—it is only the purely immediate people who cannot hold anything in at all. It is this kind of immediacy that often, with great pretension, calls itself 'truth, being true, a true human being, and just as one is.' Which is exactly as true as it is untruth when a grown person does not give way the moment he feels a bodily need.

Every self that is even the least bit reflective does, after all, have some notion of restraining the self." And our man in despair is inclosed enough to be able to keep every outsider, and therefore everyone, away from this business of the self, while outwardly he is entirely "an actual human being." He is a university man, a husband, a father, even an unusually capable civil servant, a respectable father, pleasant company, very gentle with his wife, solicitude itself toward his children. And a Christian?

—well, yes, he is that too, after a fashion. He prefers, however, to avoid talking about it, though he likes to see, with a certain wistful joy, that his wife occupies herself with religious things for her upbuilding. He goes to church very seldom, because it seems to him that most pastors don't really know what they are talking about. He makes an exception for one particular pastor, of whom he admits that he does know what he is talking about; but for another reason he does not want to hear him, since he is afraid it might lead him too far. On the other hand, he quite often feels a need for solitude. It is a necessity of life for him, sometimes like breathing, at other times like sleeping.

That he has this necessity of life more than most people is also a sign that he is a deeper nature. In general, the need for solitude is a sign that there is, after all, spirit in a person, and it is the measure of what spirit there is. "The utterly silly non-humans and fellow humans" feel so little need for solitude that, like lovebirds, they die at once if they have to be alone for a moment. As the little child must be lulled to sleep, so these people need the soothing lullaby of company in order to be able to eat, drink, sleep, pray, fall in love, etc.[29]

29 The pun plays on Danish *Umennesker* (brutes, literally "non-humans") and *Medmennesker* (fellow humans).

DANISH

Men saavel i Oldtiden som i Middelalderen var man dog opmærksom paa denne Trang til Eensomhed, havde Respekt for hvad den betyder; i vore Tiders Bestandig-Selskabelige gyser man i den Grad for [179] Eensomhed, at man (o, ypperlige Epigram!) ikke veed at bruge den til Andet end til Straf for Forbrydere. Dog det er sandt, det er jo i vore Tider en Forbrydelse at have Aand, saa er det jo i sin Orden, at Saadanne, Eensomhedens Elskere, komme i Classe med Forbrydere.

SKS 11.17 Den indesluttede Fortvivlede lever da hen, horis succesivis, i Timer, der, om end ikke levede for Evigheden, dog have Noget med det Evige at skaffe, beskjæftiget med sit Selvs Forhold til sig selv; men han kommer egentligen ikke videre. Naar saa det er gjort, naar Trangen til Eensomhed er tilfredsstillet, saa gaaer han ligesom ud – selv naar han gaaer ind til eller indlader sig med sin Kone og sine Børn. Det, der som Ægtemand gjør ham saa mild, og som Fader saa omhyggelig, er, foruden hans naturlige Godmodighed og hans Pligtfølelse, den Tilstaaelse han i sit indesluttede Inderste har gjort sig selv, betræffende sin Svaghed.

Var det muligt for Nogen at blive Medvider i hans Indesluttethed, og man saa vilde sige til ham, det er jo Stolthed, Du er jo egentligen stolt af Dit Selv: saa vilde han vel neppe gjøre nogen Anden den Tilstaaelse. Naar han blev ene med sig selv, vilde han vel tilstaae, at der var Noget deri, men den Lidenskabelighed, med hvilken hans Selv havde opfattet hans Svaghed, vilde snart indbilde ham igjen, at det umuligt kunde være Stolthed, da det jo netop var over sin Svaghed han fortvivlede – ret som var det ikke Stoltheden, der lagde saa uhyre en Vægt paa Svagheden, ret som var det ikke, fordi han vilde være stolt af sit Selv, at han ikke kunde udholde denne Bevidsthed om Svaghed.

– Vilde man sige til ham »det er en besynderlig Forvikling, en besynderlig Art Knude; thi hele Ulykken ligger egentlig i den Maade, Tanken slynger sig paa; ellers er det jo endog normalt, det er jo just ad den Vei Du skal, Du skal gjennem den Fortvivlelse om Selvet til Selvet. Det med Svagheden er ganske rigtigt, men det er ikke det, Du skal fortvivle over; Selvet maa brydes for at blive selv, lad blot være at fortvivle derover« – vilde man tale saaledes til ham, saa vilde han i et lidenskabsløst Øieblik forstaae det, men snart vilde Lidenskaben igjen see feil, og saa gjør han igjen Svinget forkeert, ind i Fortvivlelsen.

ENGLISH

Yet both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages people were aware of this need for solitude and respected what it signifies. In the constant sociability of our times we shudder so at [179] solitude that (oh, splendid epigram!) we know no use for it except as a punishment for criminals. But it is true: in our times it is indeed a crime to have spirit, so it is quite in order that such people, lovers of solitude, are classed with criminals.

So the inclosed person in despair lives on, horis successivis [hour after hour], in hours which, though not lived for eternity, still have something to do with the eternal, occupied with his self's relation to itself; but he does not really get any further. Then, when that is done, when the need for solitude has been satisfied, he goes out, as it were, even when he goes in to his wife and children or engages with them. What makes him so gentle as a husband and so solicitous as a father is, besides his natural good nature and his sense of duty, the admission he has made to himself, in his inclosed innermost being, concerning his weakness.

If it were possible for someone to become privy to his inclosing reserve, and one then said to him: this is pride, after all, you are really proud of your self—he would hardly make that admission to anyone else. Alone with himself he might well admit that there was something in it. But the passion with which his self had grasped his weakness would soon persuade him again that it could not possibly be pride, since it was precisely over his weakness that he despaired. As if it were not pride that laid such enormous weight on the weakness! As if it were not because he wanted to be proud of his self that he could not bear this consciousness of weakness!

—If one were to say to him: "This is a strange entanglement, a strange kind of knot. For the whole trouble really lies in the way thought twists itself; otherwise it is even normal. This is precisely the way you have to go: you must go through this despair of the self to the self. What you say about weakness is quite right, but that is not what you should despair over. The self must be broken in order to become itself; just stop despairing over that." If one were to speak to him like this, he would understand it in a dispassionate moment. But soon passion would again see wrongly, and

DANISH

Som sagt, en saadan Fortvivlelse er sjeldnere i Verden. Bliver den nu ikke staaende paa dette Punkt, blot marscherende paa Stedet; og paa den anden Side, foregaaer der ikke en Omvæltning med den Fortvivlende, saa han kommer paa den rigtige Vei hen til Troen: saa vil enten en [180] saadan Fortvivlelse potentsere sig til en høiere Form af Fortvivlelse og vedblive at være Indesluttethed, eller den bryder igjennem ud efter og tilintetgjør den udvortes Omklædning, i hvilken en saadan Fortvivlet har levet hen som i et Incognito.

SKS 11.181 I sidste Tilfælde vil saa en saadan Fortvivlet styrte sig ud i Livet, maaskee i store Foretagenders Adspredelse, han vil blive en urolig Aand, hvis Tilværelse efterlader sig Spor nok, en urolig Aand, der vil glemme, og da det larmer for stærkt derinde maa der stærke Midler til, om end af en anden Art end de, som Richard III bruger for ikke at høre Moderens Forbandelser. Eller han vil søge Glemsel i Sandselighed, maaskee i Udsvævelser, han vil fortvivlet tilbage til Umiddelbarheden, men bestandigt med Bevidsthed om Selvet, som han ikke vil være.

I første Tilfælde, naar Fortvivlelsen potentseres, bliver den Trods, og det vorder nu aabenbart, hvor megen Usandhed der laae i dette med Svagheden, det bliver aabenbart, hvor dialektisk rigtigt det er, at det første Udtryk for Trods er just Fortvivlelse over sin Svaghed.

Dog lad os til Slutning see endnu engang en Smule ind til den Indesluttede, der i Indesluttetheden marscherer paa Stedet. Bevares denne Indesluttethed absolut, omnibus numeris absoluta, saa vil Selvmord blive den Fare, som ligger ham nærmest. Mennesker, som disse ere fleest, have naturligviis ingen Anelse om hvad en saadan Indesluttet formaaer at bære; fik de det at vide, vilde de forbauses. Men saa er Selvmord igjen Faren for den absolut Indesluttede. Taler han derimod til Een, aabner han sig for et eneste Menneske, saa er han efter al Sandsynlighed afspændt saa meget, eller spændt saa meget ned, at Selvmordet ikke resulterer af Indesluttetheden. En saadan Indesluttethed med een Medvider er en heel Tone mildere end den absolute. Han vil saa sandsynligviis undgaae Selvmordet.

ENGLISH

then once more he takes the wrong turn, into despair.

As was said, such despair is rather rare in the world. If it does not stop at this point, merely marking time, and if, on the other hand, no upheaval takes place in the person in despair that puts him on the right road to faith, then such [180] despair will either intensify itself into a higher form of despair and remain inclosing reserve, or it will break through outward and destroy the external disguise in which such a person in despair has been living as if incognito.

In the latter case such a person in despair will throw himself into life, perhaps into the distraction of great undertakings. He will become a restless spirit whose existence leaves traces enough behind it, a restless spirit who wants to forget; and since the noise inside is too loud, strong measures are needed, though of a different kind from those Richard III uses so as not to hear his mother's curses. Or he will seek forgetfulness in sensuality, perhaps in debauchery. In despair he wants to go back to immediacy, but always with consciousness of the self that he does not want to be.[30]

In the first case, when despair is intensified, it becomes defiance. And now it becomes evident how much untruth lay in this business of weakness; it becomes evident how dialectically correct it is that the first expression of defiance is precisely despair over one's weakness.

But in conclusion let us take one more little look in at the inclosed person who, in his inclosing reserve, is marking time. If this inclosing reserve is maintained absolutely, omnibus numeris absoluta [complete in every respect], then suicide will be the danger that lies closest to him. People as they generally are have, naturally, no inkling of what such an inclosed person is able to bear; if they found out, they would be astonished. But then again, suicide is the danger for the absolutely inclosed. If, on the other hand, he talks to someone, if he opens himself to a single human being, then in all probability he is relaxed so much, his tension let down so much, that suicide does not result from the inclosing reserve. Such an inclosing re-

30 In Shakespeare's *Richard III* (Act 4, scene 4) the king has trumpets and drums sounded to drown out the curses of his mother, the Duchess of York.

DANISH

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serve with one confidant is a whole tone milder than the absolute kind. He will then probably avoid suicide.

Dog kan det hænde, at han, just idet han har aabnet sig for en Anden, fortvivler derover, at det er ham, som maatte han dog uendelig langt hellere have holdt ud i Tausheden, end at have en Medvider. Sligt har man Exempler paa, at en Indesluttet just er bragt til Fortvivlelse ved at have faaet en Fortrolig. Saa kan dog et Selvmord blive Følgen. Digterisk vilde Katastrophen (poetice antaget, at Personen f. Ex. var Konge eller Keiser) ogsaa kunne være at danne saaledes, at han lod den Fortrolige slaae ihjel.

Yet it can happen that, precisely at the moment he has opened himself to another, he despairs over it. It seems to him that he would infinitely rather have held out in silence than have a confidant. There are examples of this, of an inclosed person being driven to despair precisely by having gained a confidant. Then suicide may be the result after all. In poetry the catastrophe (assuming, poetice [for poetic purposes], that the person was, say, a king or an emperor) could also be shaped so that he had the confidant put to death.

Man kunde tænke sig en saadan dæmonisk Tyran, der følte Trang til at tale med et [181] Menneske om sin Qval, og saa successive forbrugte en Slump Mennesker; thi at blive hans Fortrolige var den visse Død: saasnart Tyrannen havde udtalt sig for ham, blev han ihjelslaaet. – Det vilde være en Opgave for en Digter, at fremstille denne qvalfulde Selvmodsigelse i en Dæmonisk, ikke at kunne undvære en Fortrolig, og ikke at kunne have en Fortrolig, løst paa denne Maade.

One could imagine a demonic tyrant of this kind, who felt a need to talk with a [181] human being about his torment and so used up a whole string of people, one after another. For to become his confidant was certain death: as soon as the tyrant had unburdened himself to him, he was put to death.—It would be a task for a poet to portray this agonizing self-contradiction in a demonic person—being unable to do without a confidant and unable to have one—resolved in this way.[31]

B) THE DESPAIR OF DEFIANCE

In despair wanting to be oneself: the self tries to create itself on its own terms.

DANISH

ENGLISH

SKS 11.18 Som der blev viist, at man kunde kalde α Qvindelighedens Fortvivlelse, saaledes kan man kalde denne Fortvivlelse Mandlighedens. Den er derfor ogsaa i Forhold til den foregaaende: Fortvivlelse seet under Bestemmelsen Aand. Men saaledes er just ogsaa Mandlighed væsentlig hørende under Bestemmelsen Aand, medens Qvindelighed er en lavere Synthese.

Just as it was shown that α could be called the despair of femininity, so this despair can be called the despair of masculinity. In relation to the preceding, therefore, it is also despair seen under the qualification of spirit. But then masculinity, too, belongs essentially under the qualification of spirit, while femininity is a lower synthesis.

Den under α, 2 beskrevne Fortvivlelse var over sin Svaghed, den Fortvivlede vil ikke være sig selv. Men gaaes der dialektisk eet eneste Skridt videre, kommer den saaledes Fortvivlede til Bevidsthed om, hvorfor han ikke vil være sig selv, saa slaaer det om, saa er Trodsen der, thi saa er det just fordi han fortvivlet vil være sig selv.

The despair described under α, 2 was over one's weakness; the person in despair does not want to be himself. But if one goes a single dialectical step further, if the one who despairs in this way becomes conscious of why he does not want to be himself, then it turns around, then defiance is there. For then it is precisely because in despair he wants to be himself.

Først kommer Fortvivlelse over det Jordiske eller noget Jordisk, saa Fortvivlelse om det Evige over sig selv. Saa

First comes despair over the earthly or something earthly, then despair of the eternal, over oneself.

DANISH

kommer Trodsen, der egentlig er Fortvivlelse ved Hjælp af det Evige, den fortvivlede Misbrug af det Evige, der er i Selvet, til fortvivlet at ville være sig selv. Men just fordi den er Fortvivlelse ved Hjælp af det Evige, ligger den i en vis Forstand det Sande meget nær; og just fordi den ligger det Sande meget nær, er den uendelig langt borte.

Den Fortvivlelse, der er Gjennemgangen til Troen, er ogsaa ved Hjælp af det Evige; ved Hjælp af det Evige har Selvet Mod til at tabe sig selv for at vinde sig selv; her derimod vil det ikke begynde med at tabe sig selv, men vil være sig selv.

I denne Form af Fortvivlelse er nu Stigen i Bevidsthed om Selvet, altsaa større Bevidsthed om hvad Fortvivlelse er, og om, at Ens Tilstand er Fortvivlelse; her er Fortvivlelsen sig bevidst som en Gjerning, den kommer ikke fra det Udvortes som en Liden under Udvorteshedens Tryk, den kommer directe fra Selvet. Og saaledes er dog Trods, i Forhold til Fortvivlelse over sin Svaghed, en ny Qvalification.

SKS 11.18 For fortvivlet at ville være sig selv, maa der være Bevidsthed om et uendeligt Selv. Dette uendelige Selv er imidlertid egentligen kun den abstrakteste Form, den abstrakteste Mulighed af Selvet. Og det er dette Selv han fortvivlet vil være, løsrivende Selvet fra ethvert Forhold til en Magt, der har sat det, eller løsrivende det fra Forestillingen om, at der er en saadan Magt til. Ved Hjælp af denne uendelige Form vil Selvet fortvivlet raade over sig selv, eller skabe sig selv, gjøre sit Selv til det Selv, han vil være, bestemme hvad han i sit concrete Selv vil have med og hvad ikke. Hans concrete Selv eller hans Concretion har jo Nødvendighed og Grændse, er dette ganske Bestemte, med disse Evner, Anlæg, o. s.

v., i denne Forholdenes Concretion o. s. v. Men ved Hjælp af den uendelige Form, det negative Selv, vil han først paatage sig at danne dette Hele om, for saa at faae et Selv ud deraf som han vil, frembragt ved Hjælp af det negative Selvs uendelige Form – og saa vil han være sig selv. Det vil sige, han vil begynde lidt tidligere end andre Mennesker, ikke ved og med Begyndelsen, men »i Begyndelsen«; han vil ikke iføre sig sit Selv, ikke i det ham givne Selv see sin

ENGLISH

Then comes defiance, which is really despair by means of the eternal: the despairing misuse of the eternal that is in the self, in order in despair to want to be oneself. But precisely because it is despair by means of the eternal, it lies in a certain sense very close to the truth; and precisely because it lies very close to the truth, it is infinitely far away.

The despair that is the passage to faith is also by means of the eternal: by means of the eternal the self has the courage to lose itself in order to win itself. Here, on the other hand, it will not begin by losing itself but wants to be itself.

In this form of despair there is now the ascent in consciousness of the self, and thus greater consciousness of what despair is and of the fact that one's condition is despair. Here despair is conscious of itself as a deed; it does not come from outside as something suffered under the pressure of externality, it comes directly from the self. And so defiance, in relation to despair over one's weakness, is after all a new qualification.

To want in despair to be oneself, there must be consciousness of an infinite self. This infinite self, however, is really only the most abstract form, the most abstract possibility, of the self. And it is this self that he in despair wants to be, severing the self from every relation to a power that has established it, or severing it from the notion that there is such a power. By means of this infinite form the self in despair wants to have dominion over itself, or to create itself, to make its self into the self he wants to be, to decide what he will and will not have in his concrete self. His concrete self, or his concretion, has of course necessity and limits; it is this quite definite thing, with these abilities, aptitudes, etc.,

in this concretion of relationships, etc. But by means of the infinite form, the negative self, he wants first to undertake to refashion the whole of this, in order to get out of it a self such as he wants, produced by means of the infinite form of the negative self—and then he wants to be himself. That is, he wants to begin a little earlier than other people, not at and with the beginning, but "in the beginning." He does not want to put on his own

31 "The demonic" renders *det Dæmoniske*.

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Opgave, han vil ved Hjælp af at være den uendelige Form selv construere det.

Vilde man have et fælles Navn for denne Fortvivlelse, kunde man kalde den Stoicisme, dog saaledes, at man ikke blot tænkte paa hiin Sect. Og for nærmere at belyse denne Art Fortvivlelse gjør man bedst Forskjel mellem et handlende Selv og et lidende Selv, og viser, hvorledes Selvet, naar det er handlende, forholder sig til sig selv, og hvorledes Selvet, naar det er Lidende, i at lide forholder sig til sig selv, at Formelen bestandig er: fortvivlet at ville være sig selv.

Er det fortvivlede Selv en *Handlende,* forholder det sig egentlig bestandig blot experimenterende til sig selv, i hvad det saa end foretager, hvor stort, hvor forbausende, med hvor megen Udholdenhed. Det erkjender ingen Magt over sig, derfor mangler det i sidste Grund Alvor, og kan kun fremkogle et Skin af Alvor, naar det selv skjenker sine Experimenter sin allerhøieste Opmærksomhed. Dette er nu en tilløiet Alvor; som den Ild Prometheus stjal fra Guderne – saaledes er dette at stjæle fra Gud den Tanke, som er Alvoren, at Gud seer paa En, istedetfor hvilket det fortvivlede Selv nøies med at see paa sig selv, hvilket nu skal skjænke hans Foretagender den uendelige Interesse og Betydning, medens dog just dette gjør dem til Experimenter.

Thi om endog dette Selv [183] ikke gaaer saavidt i Fortvivlelse, at det bliver en experimenteret Gud: intet afledet Selv kan dog ved at see paa sig selv give sig selv mere end det selv er; det bliver dog Selvet først og sidst, i Selvfordoblelsen bliver det dog til hverken Mere eller Mindre end Selvet. Forsaavidt arbeider Selvet, i sin fortvivlede Stræben for at ville være sig selv, sig ind i lige det Modsatte, det bliver egentligen intet Selv. Der er i den hele Dialektik, indenfor hvilken det handler, intet Fast; hvad Selvet er, staaer i intet Øieblik fast, det er, evig fast.

SKS 11.18 Den negative Form af Selvet udøver ligesaa meget den løsende, som den bindende Magt; det kan ganske vilkaarligt hvert Øieblik begynde forfra, og hvor længe end een Tanke forfulgtes, den hele Handling er indenfor en Hypothese. Det er saa langt fra at det lykkes Selvet mere og mere at blive sig selv, at det blot mere og mere bliver aabenbart, at det er et hypothetisk Selv. Selvet er

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self, does not want to see his task in the self given to him; by means of being the infinite form he wants to construct it himself.[32]

If one wanted a general name for this despair, one could call it Stoicism, though without thinking only of that sect. And to shed more light on this kind of despair, it is best to distinguish between an acting self and a suffering self, and to show how the self, when it is acting, relates itself to itself, and how the self, when it is suffering, relates itself to itself in suffering, and that the formula is always: in despair wanting to be oneself.

If the despairing self is *acting,* it really always relates itself to itself only experimentally, whatever it undertakes, however great, however astonishing, with however much perseverance. It acknowledges no power over itself; therefore it ultimately lacks earnestness and can only conjure up a semblance of earnestness when it bestows its very highest attention on its experiments. This is a counterfeit earnestness. Like the fire Prometheus stole from the gods, this is stealing from God the thought that is earnestness: that God is looking at one. Instead, the despairing self is content to look at itself, and this is supposed to give its undertakings infinite interest and significance, whereas precisely this is what makes them experiments.[33]

For even if this self [183] does not go so far in despair as to become an experimental god, no derived self can, by looking at itself, give itself more than it itself is. It remains the self, first and last; in its self-doubling it becomes neither more nor less than the self. To that extent the self, in its despairing striving to want to be itself, works its way into the very opposite: it really becomes no self. In the whole dialectic within which it acts there is nothing firm. What the self is does not stand firm at any moment—that is, eternally firm.

The negative form of the self exercises the power of loosing as much as the power of binding. It can quite arbitrarily start all over again at any moment, and however long a single thought is pursued, the entire action takes place within a hypothesis. So far is the self from succeeding in becoming more and more itself that it only becomes

32 "In the beginning" echoes Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1: he wants to start where God starts.
33 Prometheus, the Titan of Greek myth, stole fire from the gods for humankind and was punished by being chained to a rock.

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sin egen Herre, absolut, som det hedder, sin egen Herre, og just dette er Fortvivlelsen, men ogsaa hvad det anseer for sin Lyst, sin Nydelse.

Dog forvisser man sig ved et nærmere Eftersyn let om, at denne absolute Hersker er en Konge uden Land, han regjerer egentligen over Intet; hans Tilstand, hans Herredom underligger den Dialektik, at i ethvert Øieblik Oprøret er Legitimitet. Dette beroer nemlig til syvende og sidst vilkaarligt paa Selvet selv.

Det fortvivlede Selv bygger altsaa bestandigt kun Luftcasteller, og fægter bestandigt blot i Luften. Det seer brillant ud med alle disse experimenterede Dyder; de fortrylle et Øieblik som en østerlandsk Digtning; en saadan Selvbeherskelse, en saadan Urokkelighed, en saadan Ataraxi o. s. v., grændser næsten til det Fabelagtige. Ja, det gjør den rigtignok; og til Grund for det Hele ligger ogsaa Intet. Selvet vil fortvivlet nyde hele Tilfredsstillelsen af at gjøre sig til sig selv, at udvikle sig selv, at være sig selv, det vil have Æren af dette digteriske, mesterlige Anlæg, hvorledes det har forstaaet sig selv.

Og dog er det i sidste Grund en Gaade hvad det forstaaer ved sig selv; lige i det Øieblik, hvor det synes at det er allernærmest ved at have Bygningen færdig, kan det vilkaarligt løse det Hele op i Intet.

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more and more evident that it is a hypothetical self. The self is its own master, absolutely, as they say, its own master, and precisely this is the despair; but it is also what the self takes for its pleasure, its delight.[34]

Yet on closer inspection one easily ascertains that this absolute ruler is a king without a country; he really rules over nothing. His condition, his sovereignty, is subject to the dialectic that at every moment rebellion is legitimate. For in the end this depends arbitrarily on the self itself.

So the despairing self is always only building castles in the air, always only fencing in the air. All these experimented virtues look brilliant; for a moment they enchant like an Eastern poem. Such self-control, such steadfastness, such ataraxia, etc., borders almost on the fabulous. Yes, it certainly does; and at the bottom of the whole thing there is also nothing. The self in despair wants to enjoy the entire satisfaction of making itself into itself, of developing itself, of being itself; it wants to have the honor of this poetic, masterly plan, of the way it has understood itself.[35]

And yet in the final analysis it is a riddle what it understands by itself. At the very moment when it seems closest to having the building finished, it can arbitrarily dissolve the whole thing into nothing.

THE SUFFERING SELF AND THE DEMONIC

Clinging to a torment it refuses to have removed, defiance becomes a demonic rage against existence.

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Er det fortvivlende Selv en *Lidende,* er Fortvivlelsen dog: fortvivlet at ville være sig selv. Maaskee støder et saadant experimenterende Selv, der fortvivlet vil være sig selv, idet det foreløbigt orienterer sig i sit concrete Selv, paa en eller anden Vanskelighed, Noget hvad den [184] Christne vilde kalde et Kors, en Grund-Skade, denne være nu en hvilken. Det negative Selv, den uendelige Form af Selvet, vil maaskee først kaste dette reent bort, lade som var dette ikke til, ikke vide af det at sige. Men det lykkes ikke, saavidt strækker dets Færdighed i at experimentere ikke, end ikke dets Færdighed i at abstrahere strækker saavidt; promethisk føler det uendelige, negative Selv sig naglet til denne Servitut. Det er altsaa her et lidende Selv.

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If the despairing self is *suffering,* the despair is still: in despair wanting to be oneself. Perhaps such an experimenting self, which in despair wants to be itself, runs into some difficulty or other while provisionally finding its bearings in its concrete self, something the [184] Christian would call a cross, a fundamental injury, whatever it may be. The negative self, the infinite form of the self, will perhaps at first throw this away entirely, pretend it does not exist, want to know nothing of it. But it does not succeed. Its skill at experimenting does not reach that far; not even its skill at ab-

34 "Loosing" and "binding" echo the power given to Peter and the disciples in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18.
35 *Ataraxia,* "unperturbedness," was the ideal of tranquility of the Stoics and Epicureans.

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stracting reaches that far. Like Prometheus, the infinite, negative self feels itself nailed to this servitude. So here it is a suffering self.

SKS 11.183 Hvorledes viser nu sig Fortvivlelsen der er, fortvivlet at ville være sig selv?

How, then, does the despair that is in despair wanting to be oneself show itself?

See, der er i det Foregaaende fremstillet den Form af Fortvivlelse: at fortvivle over det Jordiske eller noget Jordisk saaledes forstaaet at dette i Grunden er, ogsaa viser sig at være, at fortvivle om det Evige, ɔ: ikke at ville lade sig trøste af og helbrede ved det Evige, at anslaae det Jordiske saa høit, at det Evige ingen Trøst kan være. Men det er ogsaa en Form af Fortvivlelse, det ikke at ville haabe paa Muligheden af, at en jordisk Nød, et timeligt Kors kan hæves. Det vil nu denne Fortvivlede, der fortvivlet vil være sig selv, ikke.

Look: in the preceding, we presented the form of despair that is to despair over the earthly or something earthly, understood in such a way that this is basically, and also shows itself to be, despairing of the eternal, that is, not wanting to let oneself be comforted and healed by the eternal, valuing the earthly so highly that the eternal can be no comfort. But it is also a form of despair not to want to hope in the possibility that an earthly need, a temporal cross, can be lifted. That is what this person in despair, who in despair wants to be himself, does not want.

Har han forvisset sig om, at denne Pæl i Kjødet (hvad enten det nu virkelig er saa, eller hans Lidenskab gjør at det er ham saa) nager saa dybt, at han ikke kan abstrahere fra den*, saa vil han evigt ligesom overtage den. Han forarges saa paa den, eller rettere, han tager af den Anledning til at forarges paa hele Tilværelsen; han vil saa tiltrods være sig selv, ikke tiltrods for den være sig [185] selv uden den (det er jo at abstrahere fra den, og det kan han ikke, eller det er Bevægelsen i Retning af Resignationen), nei han vil tiltrods for eller paa Trods mod hele Tilværelsen være sig selv med den, tage den med, næsten trodsende paa sin Qval.

If he has convinced himself that this thorn in the flesh (whether it really is so, or his passion makes it so for him) gnaws so deeply that he cannot abstract from it*, then he wants, as it were, to take it upon himself eternally. He takes offense at it, or rather, he takes it as an occasion to take offense at the whole of existence. He wants to be himself in defiance—not in spite of it to be himself [185] without it (that would be to abstract from it, and that he cannot do, or that is the movement in the direction of resignation). No, in spite of, or in defiance of, the whole of existence he wants to be himself with it, take it along, almost flaunting his torment in defiance.[36]

SKS 11.184 Thi haabe paa Mulighed af Hjælp, især da i Kraft af det Absurde, at for Gud er Alt muligt, nei, det vil han ikke. Og søge Hjælp hos nogen Anden, nei, det vil han for Alt i Verden ikke, han vil hellere, om saa skulde være, med alle Helvedes Qvaler være sig selv end søge Hjælp.

For to hope in the possibility of help, especially by virtue of the absurd, that for God everything is possible—no, that he does not want. And to seek help from anyone else—no, not for anything in the world does he want that. If it came to that, he would rather be himself with all the torments of hell than seek help.[37]

36 The "thorn in the flesh" is Paul's phrase (2 Corinthians 12:7). "Takes offense" renders *forarges*, from *Forargelse*, "offense": the New Testament *skandalon*, a stumbling block.
37 "By virtue of the absurd" renders *i Kraft af det Absurde*, as in *Fear and Trembling*.
38 "Resignation" renders *Resignation*, as in "the infinite movement of resignation" in *Fear and Trembling*.

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Og sandeligen det er dog just ikke saa ganske sandt, Det der tales om, »at det da følger af sig selv at en Lidende saa gjerne vil hjælpes, naar blot Nogen kan hjælpe ham« – det er langtfra saa, om det Modsatte end ikke altid er saa fortvivlet som her. Sagen er denne. En Lidende har gjerne en eller flere Maader, paa hvilke han kunde ønske at hjælpes. Bliver han saaledes hjulpen, ja saa vil han gjerne hjælpes.

Men naar det i dybere Forstand bliver Alvor med at skulle hjælpes, især da af en Høiere, eller den Høieste – dette Ydmygende at maatte tage mod Hjælpen ubetinget paa enhver Maade, at blive som et Intet i »Hjælperens« Haand, for hvem Alt er muligt, eller blot det at maatte bøie sig for et andet Menneske, saalænge man søger Hjælpen at maatte opgive at være sig selv: o, der er vistnok megen, endog langvarig og qvalfuld Lidelse, i hvilken dog ikke Selvet ømmer sig saaledes, og som det derfor i Grunden foretrækker med Bibehold af at være sig selv.

Men jo mere Bevidsthed der er i en saadan Lidende, som fortvivlet vil være sig selv, desto mere potentserer Fortvivlelsen sig ogsaa, og bliver det Dæmoniske. Dets Oprindelse er gjerne denne. Et Selv, der fortvivlet vil være sig selv, ømmer sig i en eller anden Piinagtighed, der nu engang ikke lader sig borttage eller adskille fra hans concrete Selv. Just paa denne Qval kaster han saa hele sin Lidenskab, der tilsidst bliver en dæmonisk Rasen.

Om det nu var saa, om Gud i Himlen og alle Engle tilbøde ham at hjælpe ham af dermed, nei, nu vil han ikke, nu er

And truly, what people say is not quite so entirely true: "that it goes without saying that a sufferer would so gladly be helped, if only someone could help him." It is far from being so, even if the opposite is not always as despairing as it is here. The matter is this. A sufferer usually has one or more ways in which he might wish to be helped. If he is helped in that way, why, then he is glad to be helped.

But when, in a deeper sense, it becomes a serious matter of having to be helped, especially by a higher one, or by the Highest—this humiliation of having to accept help unconditionally, in any way whatever, of becoming like a nothing in the hand of the "Helper," for whom everything is possible, or merely of having to bow before another human being, of having to give up being oneself as long as one is seeking help: oh, there is certainly much suffering, even long and agonizing suffering, at which the self does not wince like this, and which it therefore basically prefers, as long as it can go on being itself.

But the more consciousness there is in such a sufferer, who in despair wants to be himself, the more the despair intensifies itself and becomes the demonic. Its origin is usually this. A self that in despair wants to be itself winces at some torment or other that simply cannot be taken away from, or separated from, his concrete self. On precisely this torment he then throws all his passion, which in the end becomes a demonic rage.

Now even if it were so, even if God in heaven and all the angels offered to help him out of it—no,

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* Man vil forøvrigt, for dog at minde derom, her, just fra dette Synspunkt, see, at Meget af Det, som i Verden pyntes ud under Navn af Resignation, er en Art Fortvivlelse, den, fortvivlet at ville være sit abstrakte Selv, fortvivlet at ville have nok i det Evige, og dermed at kunne trodse eller ignorere Lidelsen i det Jordiske og Timelige.

* Incidentally, just to point it out, one will see here, precisely from this standpoint, that much of what is decked out in the world under the name of resignation is a kind of despair: that of in despair wanting to be one's abstract self, in despair wanting to be content with the eternal, and thereby being able to defy or ignore suffering in the earthly and temporal.[38]

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Resignationens Dialektik er egentlig den: at ville være sit evige Selv, og saa i Henseende til noget Vist, hvori Selvet lider, ikke at ville være sig selv, trøstende sig ved, at det dog maa falde bort i Evigheden, og derfor menende sig berettiget til ikke at overtage det i Timeligheden, Selvet vil, skjøndt lidende derunder, dog ikke gjøre det den Indrømmelse, at det hører med til Selvet, det er, dog ikke troende ydmyge sig derunder. Resignation betragtet som Fortvivlelse er saaledes væsentlig forskjellig fra: fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv, thi den vil fortvivlet være sig selv, dog med Undtagelse af et Enkelt, i Henseende til hvilket den fortvivlet ikke vil være sig selv.

The dialectic of resignation is really this: to want to be one's eternal self, and then, with respect to some particular thing in which the self suffers, not to want to be oneself, consoling oneself that it must after all fall away in eternity, and therefore thinking oneself justified in not taking it on in time. Though suffering under it, the self will not grant it the concession that it belongs to the self, that is, will not humble itself under it in faith. Resignation viewed as despair is thus essentially different from in despair not wanting to be oneself. For it does in despair want to be itself, but with the exception of one particular thing, with respect to which it in despair does not want to be itself.

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det for sildigt, han havde engang gjerne givet Alt for at blive denne Qval qvit, man lod ham vente, nu er det bagefter, nu, nu vil han hellere rase mod Alt, være den af hele Verden, af Tilværelsen Forurettede, hvem det just er af Vigtighed at passe paa at han har sin Qval ved Haanden, at Ingen tager den fra ham – thi saa kan han jo ikke bevise og overbevise sig selv, at han har Ret.

Dette sætter sig tilsidst saadan fast i Hovedet paa [186] ham, at han af en ganske egen Grund er bange for Evigheden, at den nemlig skal skille ham af med hans, dæmonisk forstaaede, uendelige Fortrin for andre Mennesker, hans, dæmonisk forstaaet, Berettigelse til at være den han er. – Sig selv vil han være; han begyndte med den uendelige Abstraktion af Selvet, og nu er han tilsidst blevet saa concret, at det vilde være en Umulighed i den Forstand at blive evig, og dog vil han fortvivlet være sig selv. O, dæmoniske Afsindighed, han raser allermeest ved Tanken om, at Evigheden kunde faae isinde at tage hans Elendighed fra ham.

SKS 11.18 Denne Art Fortvivlelse sees sjeldent i Verden, saadanne Skikkelser forekomme egentligen kun hos Digterne, de virkelige at sige, der altid laane deres Skabninger den »dæmoniske« Idealitet, dette Ord taget i reen græsk Forstand. Imidlertid forekommer en saadan Fortvivlelse dog ogsaa i Virkeligheden. Hvilken er saa den tilsvarende Udvorteshed? Ja, der er ingen »tilsvarende«, som da en tilsvarende Udvorteshed, tilsvarende til Indesluttethed er en Selvmodsigelse; thi er den tilsvarende er den jo aabenbarende. Men Udvortesheden er her det aldeles Ligegyldige, her hvor Indesluttetheden, eller hvad man kunde kalde en Inderlighed der er gaaet i Baglaas, er saa overveiende Det, der maa paaagtes.

De laveste Former af Fortvivlelse, hvor der egentligen ingen Inderlighed var, og hvor der i ethvert Tilfælde Intet var at sige om den, de laveste Former af Fortvivlelse maatte man fremstille ved at beskrive eller ved at tale Noget om saadanne Fortvivledes Udvorteshed. Men jo mere aandelig Fortvivlelsen bliver, jo mere Inderligheden bliver en egen Verden for sig i Indesluttetheden, desto ligegyldigere er det med det Udvortes, hvorunder Fortvivlelsen skjuler sig. Men netop jo mere aandelig Fortvivlelsen bliver, desto mere er den selv opmærksom

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now he does not want it, now it is too late. Once he would gladly have given everything to be rid of this torment; he was made to wait; now it is past. Now, now he would rather rage against everything, be the one wronged by the whole world, by existence itself, the one for whom it is of the utmost importance to make sure he has his torment at hand and that no one takes it from him. For then he could not prove, and convince himself, that he is in the right.

In the end this becomes so fixed in his [186] head that he is afraid of eternity for a quite peculiar reason: namely, that it will separate him from his infinite advantage, demonically understood, over other people, from his justification, demonically understood, for being what he is.—Himself he wants to be. He began with the infinite abstraction of the self, and now at last he has become so concrete that it would be an impossibility to become eternal in that sense; and yet in despair he wants to be himself. Oh, demonic madness: he rages most of all at the thought that eternity might take it into its head to take his misery from him.

This kind of despair is seldom seen in the world. Such figures really occur only in the poets, the real ones, that is, who always lend their creations "demonic" ideality, taking the word in the pure Greek sense. Nevertheless such despair does occur in actuality too. What, then, is the corresponding externality? Well, there is no "corresponding" one, since a corresponding externality, corresponding to inclosing reserve, is a self-contradiction: if it corresponded, it would be disclosing. But here externality is the altogether indifferent thing, here where inclosing reserve, or what could be called an inwardness with a jammed lock, is so overwhelmingly what must be attended to.[41]

The lowest forms of despair, where there really was no inwardness, or in any case nothing to say about it—the lowest forms of despair had to be presented by describing, or saying something about, the externals of such people in despair. But the more spiritual despair becomes, the more inwardness becomes a world of its own in inclosing reserve, the more indifferent are the externals under which despair hides. And precisely the more

41 In Greek, a *daimōn* is a divine or semi-divine power, not necessarily evil, like the *daimonion* of Socrates.

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paa med dæmonisk Kløgt at holde Fortvivlelsen indesluttet i Indesluttetheden, og desto mere opmærksom derfor paa at sætte det Udvortes i Indifferents, gjøre det saa ubetydeligt og ligegyldigt som muligt.

Som i Overtroens Fortælling Trolden forsvinder gjennem en Rift, hvilken Ingen kan see, saaledes er det Fortvivlelsen, netop jo mere aandelig den er, desto mere magtpaaliggende at boe i en Udvorteshed, bag hvilken ordentligviis Ingen vilde falde paa at søge den. Denne Skjulthed er just noget Aandeligt, og et af Betryggelses-Midlerne for at sikkre sig at have ligesom bag Virkeligheden et *Inde*lukke, en Verden *ude*lukkende for sig selv, [187] en Verden, hvor det fortvivlede Selv rastløs og tantalisk er beskjæftiget med at ville være sig selv.

SKS 11.18 Vi begyndte (α 1) med den laveste Form af Fortvivlelse, som fortvivlet ikke vil være sig selv. Den dæmoniske Fortvivlelse er den meest potentserede af den Fortvivlelse, der fortvivlet vil være sig selv. Denne Fortvivlelse vil end ikke i stoisk Forgabelse i sig selv og Selvforgudelse være sig selv, vil ikke som den, vistnok løgnagtigt, men dog i en vis Forstand efter sin Fuldkommenhed være sig selv; nei, den vil i Had til Tilværelsen være sig selv, være sig selv efter sin Elendighed; den vil end ikke i Trods eller trodsigt, men paa Trods være sig selv; den vil end ikke i Trods rive sit Selv løs fra den Magt, der satte det, den vil paa Trods paanøde sig den, paatrodse sig den, vil af Malice holde sig til den – og det forstaaer sig, en ondskabsfuld Indvending maa jo ogsaa for Alt passe paa at holde sig til Det, hvorimod den er Indvendingen.

Den mener, oprørende sig mod hele Tilværelsen, at have faaet et Beviis mod denne, mod dennes Godhed. Dette Beviis mener den Fortvivlede sig selv at være, og det er det han vil være, derfor vil han være sig selv, sig selv i sin Qval, for med denne Qval at protestere hele Tilværelsen. Medens den svagt Fortvivlende Intet vil høre om, hvad Trøst Evigheden har for ham, saa vil en saadan Fortvivlet heller Intet høre derom, men af en anden Grund: just denne Trøst vilde jo være hans Undergang – som Indvending mod hele Tilværelsen.

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spiritual despair becomes, the more careful it itself is, with demonic shrewdness, to keep despair shut up in inclosing reserve, and so the more careful to reduce the external to indifference, to make it as insignificant and indifferent as possible.

As in the tales of superstition the troll vanishes through a crack no one can see, so for despair, precisely the more spiritual it is, it matters all the more to dwell in an externality behind which no one would ordinarily think of looking for it. This hiddenness is itself something spiritual, and one of the safeguards for securing, as it were, behind actuality an *in*closure, a world *ex*clusively its own, [187] a world in which the despairing self, restless and tantalized, is occupied with wanting to be itself.[42]

We began (α 1) with the lowest form of despair, which in despair does not want to be itself. Demonic despair is the most intensified form of the despair that in despair wants to be itself. This despair does not even want to be itself in Stoic infatuation with itself and self-deification; it does not want, like that despair, falsely to be sure but still in a certain sense, to be itself according to its perfection. No, it wants to be itself in hatred of existence, to be itself according to its misery. It does not even want to be itself in defiance or defiantly, but out of spite. It does not even want in defiance to tear its self loose from the power that established it; out of spite it wants to force itself on that power, to thrust itself defiantly upon it, out of malice to hold on to it. And of course a malicious objection must above all take care to hold on to that which it is an objection against.

Rebelling against the whole of existence, it thinks it has obtained a proof against it, against its goodness. The person in despair thinks that he himself is this proof, and that is what he wants to be. Therefore he wants to be himself, himself in his torment, in order to protest with this torment against the whole of existence. Whereas the weak person in despair wants to hear nothing of the comfort eternity has for him, such a person in despair does not want to hear of it either, but for a different reason: precisely this comfort would be his

42 Tantalus, in Greek myth, was punished by standing in water and beneath fruit that always receded out of his reach.

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Det er, for at beskrive det billedligt, som hvis der for en Forfatter indløb en Skrivfeil, og denne blev sig bevidst som saadan – maaskee var det dog egentligen ingen Feil, men i en langt høiere Forstand et væsentligt Medhenhørende i hele Fremstillingen – det er som hvis nu denne Skrivfeil vilde giøre Oprør mod Forfatteren, af Had til ham formene ham at rette, og i vanvittig Trods sige til ham: nei, jeg vil ikke udslettes, jeg vil staae som et Vidne mod Dig, et Vidne om, at Du er en maadelig Forfatter.

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undoing—as an objection against the whole of existence.

It is, to describe it figuratively, as if an author made a slip of the pen, and this slip became conscious of itself as such—perhaps it was really no mistake at all but, in a far higher sense, an essential part of the whole work—it is as if this slip of the pen now wanted to rebel against the author, out of hatred for him forbid him to correct it, and in insane defiance say to him: No, I will not be erased; I will stand as a witness against you, a witness that you are a second-rate author.

Despair Is Sin

Andet Afsnit, A
The self before God; the Socratic definition of sin; sin as a position, not a negation.

DANISH

SKS 11.19 Synd er: *for Gud, eller med Forestillingen om Gud fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv, eller fortvivlet at ville være sig selv.* Synd er saaledes den potentserede Svaghed eller den potentserede Trods: Synd er Potentsationen af Fortvivlelse. Det hvorpaa Eftertrykket ligger, er: *for Gud,* eller at Guds-Forestillingen er med; det, der dialectisk, ethisk, religieust gjør Synd til hvad Juristerne kalde »qvalificeret« Fortvivlelse, er Guds-Forestillingen.

ENGLISH

Sin is: *before God, or with the conception of God, in despair not wanting to be oneself, or in despair wanting to be oneself.* Sin is thus intensified weakness or intensified defiance: sin is the intensification of despair. The emphasis lies on *before God,* or on the conception of God being present. What makes sin, dialectically, ethically, religiously, into what lawyers call "aggravated" despair is the conception of God.[1]

THE POET OF THE RELIGIOUS

A poet who loves God but will not accept his torment stands on the border between despair and sin.

DANISH

Skjøndt der i dette Afsnit, mindst da i A, ikke er Plads til eller Sted for psychologisk Skildring, maa dog her som det meest dialektiske Confinium mellem Fortvivlelse og Synd anføres, hvad man kunde kalde en Digter-Existents i Retning af det Religieuse, en Existents, der har noget tilfælles med Resignationens Fortvivlelse, kun at Guds-Forestillingen er med. En saadan Digter-Existents vil, hvad der sees af Kategoriernes Conjunktion og Stilling være den eminenteste Digter-Existents. Christelig betragtet er (trods al Æsthetik) enhver Digter-Existents Synd, den Synd: at digte istedetfor at være, at forholde sig til det Gode og Sande gjennem Phantasi istedetfor at være det, det er, existentielt stræbe at være det.

Den Digter-Existents, om hvilken vi her tale, er deri forskjellig fra Fortvivlelse, at den har Guds-Forestillingen med sig, eller er for Gud; men den er uhyre dialektisk, og som et uigjennemtrængeligt dialectisk Virvar over, om hvorvidt den dunkelt er sig bevidst at være Synd. En saadan Digter kan have meget dyb religieus Trang, og Forestillingen om Gud er medoptaget i hans Fortvivlelse.

ENGLISH

Although in this part, least of all in A, there is no room or place for psychological description, we must nevertheless mention here, as the most dialectical confinium [border zone] between despair and sin, what might be called a poet-existence in the direction of the religious. It is an existence that has something in common with the despair of resignation, except that the conception of God is present. Such a poet-existence will, as can be seen from the conjunction and position of the categories, be the most eminent poet-existence. Viewed Christianly, every poet-existence (in spite of all aesthetics) is sin: the sin of poetizing instead of being, of relating to the good and the true through imagination instead of being it, that is, existentially striving to be it.

The poet-existence we are speaking of here differs from despair in that it has the conception of God with it, or is before God. But it is enormously dialectical, and is like an impenetrable dialectical tangle as to how far it is obscurely conscious of being sin. Such a poet may have a very deep reli-

1 "Sin" renders *Synd*; "before God" renders *for Gud* throughout. *Qvalificeret*, "aggravated," is the legal term for an offense made more serious by its circumstances.

DANISH

Han elsker Gud over Alt, Gud som er ham hans eneste Trøst i hans hemmelige Qval, og [192] dog elsker han Qvalen, den vil han ikke slippe.

SKS 11.19 Han vil saa gjerne være sig selv for Gud, dog ikke i Henseende til det faste Punkt, hvori Selvet lider, der vil han fortvivlet ikke være sig selv; han haaber paa at Evigheden vil tage det bort, og her i Timeligheden kan han, hvormeget han end lider derunder, ikke beslutte sig til at overtage det, ikke troende ydmyge sig derunder.

Og dog vedbliver han at forholde sig til Gud, og dette er hans eneste Salighed; det vilde være ham den største Rædsel at skulle undvære Gud, »det vilde være til at fortvivle over;« og dog tillader han sig egentligen, men maaskee ubevidst, at digte Gud en lille Smule anderledes end Gud er, lidt mere a la en kjerlig Fader, som altformeget føier Barnets – eneste Ønske. Som En der blev ulykkelig i Elskov, og derved blev Digter, livsaligt priser Elskovens Lykke: saaledes bliver han Religieusitetens Digter.

Han blev ulykkelig i Religieusitet, han forstaaer dunkelt, at det der fordres af ham er at slippe denne Qval, ɔ: troende at ydmyge sig under den og overtage den som hørende med til Selvet – thi han vil holde den ude fra sig og just derved holder han den fast, skjøndt han rigtignok (hvad der, som hvert Ord af en Fortvivlet, er bagvendt rigtigt og altsaa at forstaae omvendt) mener, at dette skal betyde, at skille sig af med den, saa godt som muligt, at slippe den, saa godt som det er et Menneske muligt. Men troende at overtage den, det kan han ikke, det er, det vil han i sidste Forstand ikke, eller, her ender hans Selv i Dunkelhed.

Men som hiin Digters Beskrivelse af Elskov, saaledes har denne Digters Beskrivelse af det Religieuse en Fortryllelse, et lyrisk Sving, som ingen Ægtemands og ingen Velærværdigheds. Det er heller ikke usandt hvad han siger, ingenlunde, hans Fremstilling er just hans lykkeligere, hans bedre Jeg. Han er i Forhold til det Religieuse en ulykkelig Elsker, ɔ: han er ikke i streng Forstand en Troende; han har kun det Første af Troen: Fortvivlelsen, og i den en brændende Længsel efter det Religieuse. Hans Kollision er egentligen denne: er han den Kaldede, er Pælen i Kjødet Udtrykket for, at han skal bruges til det Overordentlige, er det for Gud ganske i sin Orden med det Overordentlige, han er blevet?

ENGLISH

gious need, and the conception of God is taken up into his despair. He loves God above all, God who is his only comfort in his secret torment, and [192] yet he loves the torment; he will not let it go.

He would so much like to be himself before God, but not with respect to the fixed point where the self suffers; there in despair he does not want to be himself. He hopes that eternity will take it away, and here in time, however much he suffers under it, he cannot make up his mind to take it on, to humble himself under it in faith.

And yet he continues to relate himself to God, and this is his only bliss. It would be the greatest horror for him to have to do without God; "that would be enough to make one despair." And yet he really allows himself, though perhaps unconsciously, to poetize God a little bit differently from what God is, a little more à la a loving father who all too readily indulges the child's—only wish. Like one who became unhappy in love, and so became a poet, and blissfully praises the happiness of love: so he becomes a poet of religiousness.

He became unhappy in religiousness. He dimly understands that what is required of him is to let go of this torment, that is, in faith to humble himself under it and take it on as belonging to the self. For he wants to keep it away from himself, and precisely in this way he holds on to it, although he does think (which, like every word of a person in despair, is right backward and so to be understood the other way around) that this is supposed to mean getting rid of it as well as possible, letting go of it as far as is humanly possible. But in faith to take it on—that he cannot do, that is, in the final sense he will not, or here his self ends in obscurity.

But like that other poet's description of love, this poet's description of the religious has an enchantment, a lyrical sweep, such as no married man's and no Reverend's has. Nor is what he says untrue, by no means; his portrayal is precisely his happier, his better self. In relation to the religious he is an unhappy lover, that is, he is not in the strict sense a believer. He has only the first element of faith, despair, and in it a burning longing for the religious. His collision is really this: Is he the one who is called? Is the thorn in the flesh the expression that he is to be used for the extraordinary?

DANISH

eller er Pælen i Kjødet Det, han skal ydmyge sig under, for at naae det almene Menneskelige? – Dog nok herom, jeg kan med Sandhedens Eftertryk sige: til hvem taler jeg? Saadanne psychologiske Undersøgelser i nte Potents, hvo bryder sig om Sligt; de Nürnberger-Billeder, som Præsten maler, kan man bedre for [193] staae, de ligne Alle og Enhver, skuffende, Folk som de ere fleest, og, aandeligt forstaaet, Ingenting.

ENGLISH

Before God, is the extraordinary that he has become entirely in order?

Or is the thorn in the flesh what he must humble himself under in order to attain the universally human?—But enough of this. I can say with the emphasis of truth: to whom am I speaking? Psychological investigations like these to the nth power—who cares about such things? The Nuremberg pictures the pastor paints are easier [193] to understand. They resemble each and every one, deceptively so, people as they generally are, and, spiritually understood, nothing at all.[2]

CHAPTER 1. THE SELF BEFORE GOD

A self measured by God gains infinite reality, and its despair before God becomes sin.

DANISH

SKS 11.191 I det foregaaende Afsnit er der stadigt efterviist en Gradation i Bevidsthed om Selvet; først kom Uvidenhed om at have et evigt Selv (C. B. a.), saa en Viden om at have et Selv, hvori der dog er noget Evigt (C. B. b.), og herindenfor (α. 1. 2. β) blev igjen efterviist Gradationer. Denne hele Betragtning maa nu dialektisk vendes paa en ny Maade. Sagen er denne. Den Gradation i Bevidstheden om Selvet, vi hidtil have beskjæftiget os med, er indenfor Bestemmelsen: det menneskelige Selv, eller det Selv, hvis Maalestok er Mennesket. Men en ny Qvalitet og Qvalification faaer dette Selv derved, at det er Selvet lige over for Gud.

Dette Selv er ikke mere det blot menneskelige Selv, men er, hvad jeg, haabende ikke at blive misforstaaet, vilde kalde det theologiske Selv, Selvet lige over for Gud. Og hvilken uendelig Realitet faaer Selvet ikke ved at være sig bevidst at være til for Gud, ved at blive et menneskeligt Selv, hvis Maalestok er Gud! En Røgter, der (hvis dette var muligt) er Selv lige over for Kjøer, er et meget lavt Selv; en Hersker, der er Selv lige over for Trælle, ligeledes, og egentligen intet Selv – thi i begge Tilfælde mangler der Maalestok.

Barnet, der hidtil blot har havt Forældrenes Maalestok, bliver Selv ved som Mand at faae Staten til Maalestok; men hvilken uendelig Accent falder der paa Selvet ved at faae Gud til Maalestok! Maalestokken for Selvet er altid:

ENGLISH

In the preceding part a gradation in consciousness of the self was pointed out throughout. First came ignorance of having an eternal self (C. B. a.), then a knowledge of having a self in which there is, after all, something eternal (C. B. b.), and within this (α. 1. 2. β) further gradations were pointed out. This whole consideration must now be turned dialectically in a new way. The point is this. The gradation in consciousness of the self that we have dealt with so far falls within the qualification: the human self, or the self whose measure is the human being. But this self acquires a new quality and qualification by being the self directly before God.[3]

This self is no longer the merely human self but is what I would call, hoping not to be misunderstood, the theological self, the self directly before God. And what infinite reality the self gains by being conscious of existing before God, by becoming a human self whose measure is God! A cowherd who (if this were possible) is a self directly before cows is a very low self. So is a ruler who is a self directly before slaves—and in fact he is no self at all, for in both cases a measure is lacking.

The child, who until now has had only his parents as his measure, becomes a self when, as a man, he gets the state as his measure. But what infinite accent falls on the self when it gets God as its measure! The measure for the self is always this: that

2 Nuremberg pictures were cheap mass-produced prints with stock figures that could stand for anyone.
3 *Lige over for Gud*, "directly before God": the qualification on which the whole of Part Two turns.

DANISH

hvad Det er, lige over for hvilket det er Selv, men Dette er jo igjen Definitionen paa hvad »Maalestok« er.

Som man kun kan addere eensartede Størrelser, saaledes er enhver Ting qvalitativt Det, hvormed den maales; og Det, der qvalitativt er dens Maalestok, er ethisk dens Maal; og Maalestokken og Maalet er qvalitativt Det, Noget er, med Undtagelse da af Forholdet i Frihedens Verden, hvor imidlertid En ved ikke qvalitativt at være Det, som er hans Maal og hans Maalestok, selv maa have forskyldt denne Disqvalification, saa [194] Maalet og Maalestokken dog – dømmende bliver den samme, gjør det aabenbart, hvad det er han ikke er, Det nemlig, som er hans Maal og Maalestok.

SKS 11.19 Det var en meget rigtig Tanke, til hvilken saa ofte en ældre Dogmatik recurrerede, medens en senere Dogmatik saa ofte opholdt sig over den, fordi den manglede Forstand derpaa og Sands derfor – det var en meget rigtig Tanke, om der end stundom gjordes forkeert Anvendelse af den: at Det, der gjorde Synden til det Frygtelige var, at den var for Gud. Deraf beviste man saa Helvedesstraffenes Evighed. Senere blev man kløgtig, og sagde: Synd er Synd; Synden er ikke større, fordi den er mod Gud eller for Gud. Besynderligt! selv Juristerne tale om qvalificerede Forbrydelser, selv Juristerne gjøre Forskjel, om en Forbrydelse f. Ex. er udøvet mod en Embedsmand, eller mod en Privatmand, gjøre Forskjel i Straf for et Fadermord og et almindeligt Mord.

Nei, deri havde den ældre Dogmatik Ret, at det at Synden var mod Gud, uendelig potentserede den. Feilen laae i, at man betragtede Gud som noget Udvortes, og i, at det var, som om man antog, at der kun stundom syndedes mod Gud. Men Gud er ikke noget Udvortes i den Forstand som en Politibetjent. Det der maa sees paa, er, at Selvet har Forestillingen om Gud, og at det saa dog ikke vil som han vil, saa dog er ulydigt. Ei heller er det kun stundom der syndes for Gud; thi enhver Synd er for Gud, eller rettere, Det, der egentligen gjør den menneskelige Skyld til Synd, er, at den Skyldige havde Bevidstheden om at være til for Gud.

Fortvivlelsen potentseres i Forhold til Bevidsthed om Selvet; men Selvet potentseres i Forhold til Maalestokken for Selvet, og uendeligt naar Gud er Maalestokken. Jo mere Guds-Forestilling, jo mere Selv; jo mere Selv, jo

ENGLISH

directly before which it is a self. But this, in turn, is the very definition of what a "measure" is.

Just as one can add only quantities of the same kind, so everything is qualitatively that by which it is measured; and what is qualitatively its measure is ethically its goal; and the measure and the goal are qualitatively what a thing is. The exception is the relation in the world of freedom. There, however, someone who is not qualitatively what is his goal and his measure must himself be to blame for this disqualification, so [194] that the goal and the measure nevertheless remain the same—as judgment—making plain what it is he is not, namely, that which is his goal and measure.

It was a very sound thought, one to which an older dogmatics so often returned, while a later dogmatics so often found fault with it because it lacked the understanding and the feeling for it—it was a very sound thought, even if it was sometimes misapplied: that what made sin terrible was that it was before God. From this people then proved the eternity of the punishments of hell. Later people grew clever and said: sin is sin; sin is no greater because it is against God or before God. Strange! Even lawyers speak of aggravated crimes; even lawyers distinguish whether a crime, for example, has been committed against a public official or against a private person, and they distinguish in punishment between parricide and ordinary murder.

No, the older dogmatics was right in this: that sin's being against God intensified it infinitely. The error lay in regarding God as something external, and in its being as if one assumed that people sinned against God only now and then. But God is not something external in the way a police officer is. What must be looked at is that the self has the conception of God and yet does not will as he wills, and so is disobedient. Nor is it only now and then that people sin before God. For every sin is before God—or rather, what really makes human guilt into sin is that the guilty one had the consciousness of existing before God.

Despair is intensified in relation to consciousness of the self; but the self is intensified in relation to the measure for the self, and infinitely when God is the measure. The more conception of God, the

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mere Guds-Forestilling. Først naar et Selv, som dette bestemte enkelte, er sig bevidst at være til for Gud, først da er det det uendelige Selv; og dette Selv synder saa for Gud. Hedenskabets Selviskhed er derfor, trods Alt hvad der kan siges om den, dog ikke nær saa qvalificeret som Christenhedens, forsaavidt ogsaa her er Selviskhed; thi Hedningen havde ikke sit Selv lige over for Gud. Hedningen og det naturlige Menneske har det blot menneskelige Selv som Maalestok.

Man kan derfor vel have Ret i fra et høiere Synspunkt at see Hedenskabet liggende i Synd, men Hedenskabets Synd var egentlig den fortviv [195] lede Uvidenhed om Gud, om at være til for Gud; den er: »at være uden Gud i Verden.« Fra en anden Side er det derfor sandt, at Hedningen ikke i strengeste Forstand syndede, thi han syndede ikke for Gud; og al Synd er for Gud. Det er fremdeles ogsaa i een Forstand ganske vist, at mange Gange er en Hedning hjulpet til at slippe saadan upaaklageligt gjennem Verden, just fordi hans pelagiansk-letsindige Forestilling frelste ham; men saa er hans Synd en anden: denne pelagiansk-letsindige Opfattelse.

SKS 11.19 Derimod er det paa den anden Side ogsaa ganske vist, at mangen Gang er et Menneske, just ved at være strengt opdraget i Christendom, i en vis Forstand styrtet i Synd, fordi den hele christelige Anskuelse var ham for alvorlig, især i en tidligere Tid af hans Liv; men saa er dog i en anden Forstand dette igjen noget til Hjelp for ham, denne dybere Forestilling om, hvad Synd er.

Synd er: for Gud fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv, eller for Gud fortvivlet at ville være sig selv. Men er denne Definition, om den end i andre Henseender dog maaskee indrømmes at have sine Fortrin (og deriblandt det vigtigste af alle at være den eneste skriftmæssige; thi Skriften definerer altid Synd som Ulydighed), er den ikke for aandelig? Dertil maa først og fremmest svares: en Definition af Synd kan aldrig være for aandelig (naar den da ikke bliver saa aandelig, at den afskaffer Synd); thi Synd er just en Bestemmelse af Aand. Og dernæst: hvorfor skulde da den være for aandelig? Fordi den ikke taler om Mord, Tyveri, Utugt o. D.? Men taler den da ikke derom?

ENGLISH

more self; the more self, the more conception of God. Only when a self, as this particular single self, is conscious of existing before God—only then is it the infinite self; and this self then sins before God. The selfishness of paganism, therefore, whatever may be said about it, is still not nearly so aggravated as that of Christendom, insofar as there is selfishness here too; for the pagan did not have his self directly before God. The pagan and the natural human being have the merely human self as their measure.

One may therefore well be right, from a higher standpoint, to see paganism as lying in sin. But the sin of paganism was really the despairing [195] ignorance of God, of existing before God; it is "to be without God in the world." From another side, therefore, it is true that the pagan did not sin in the strictest sense, for he did not sin before God; and all sin is before God. It is also quite certain, in one sense, that a pagan has many times been helped to slip through the world in this way without reproach, precisely because his Pelagian-frivolous conception saved him. But then his sin is another one: this Pelagian-frivolous view.[4]

On the other hand, it is also quite certain that many a person, precisely by being strictly brought up in Christianity, has in a certain sense been plunged into sin, because the whole Christian outlook was too earnest for him, especially at an earlier period of his life. Yet in another sense this, in turn, is of some help to him: this deeper conception of what sin is.

Sin is: before God in despair not wanting to be oneself, or before God in despair wanting to be oneself. But is this definition—even if it may perhaps be granted to have its merits in other respects (among them the most important of all, that it is the only scriptural one; for Scripture always defines sin as disobedience)—is it not too spiritual? To this it must first and foremost be answered: a definition of sin can never be too spiritual (unless it becomes so spiritual that it abolishes sin); for sin is precisely a qualification of spirit. And next: why should it be too spiritual? Because it does not speak of murder, theft, fornication, and the like? But does it not speak of them?

4 The quotation is Ephesians 2:12. "Pelagian" refers to Pelagius (c. AD 360–420), who taught that human beings can avoid sin by their own will.

DANISH

Er det ikke ogsaa en Selvraadighed mod Gud, en Ulydighed, der trodser hans Bud? Men derimod, naar man i at tale om Synd kun taler om saadanne Synder, glemmes saa let, at alt Sligt saadan til en vis Grad, menneskelig talt, kan være i sin Orden, og dog det hele Liv Synd, den bekjendte Art Synd: de glimrende Laster, Selvraadighed, der enten aandløst eller frækt forbliver eller vil være uvidende om, i hvilken uendelig langt dybere Forstand et menneskeligt Selv er Gud forpligtet i Lydighed betræffende hver dets lønligste Ønske og Tanke, betræffende Lydhørethed til at opfatte og Villighed til at følge hvert det mindste Guds Vink om, hvad hans Villie er med dette Selv.

Kjødets Synder er det lavere Selvs Selvraadighed; men hvor ofte uddrives ikke een Djævel ved Djævelens Hjælp, og det Sidste bliver værre end det Første. Thi saaledes gaaer det jo just til i Verden: først synder et Menneske af Skrøbelighed og Svaghed; og [196] saa – ja saa maaskee lærer han at flye til Gud, og hjælpes til Troen, der frelser fra al Synd; men derom tale vi nu ikke her – saa fortvivler han over sin Svaghed, og bliver enten en Pharisæer, som fortvivlet driver det til en vis legal Retfærdighed, eller han fortvivlet styrter sig i Synden igjen.

SKS 11.19 Definitionen omfatter derfor vistnok enhver tænkelig og enhver virkelig Form af Synd; den udhæver dog vistnok rigtigt det Afgjørende, at Synd er Fortvivlelse (thi Synd er ikke Kjød og Blods Vildhed, men er Aandens Samtykke deri), og er: for Gud. Som Definition er den Bogstavregning; det vilde i dette lille Skrift være paa urette Sted og desuden et Forsøg, som maatte mislykkes, hvis jeg vilde begynde paa at beskrive de enkelte Synder. Hovedsagen er her blot, at Definitionen som et Net omfatter alle Former. Og det gjør den, hvilket ogsaa kan sees, naar man gjør Prøve paa den ved at stille Modsætningen, Definitionen paa: Tro, efter hvilken jeg i hele dette Skrift styrer som efter det sikkre Sømærke.

Tro er: at Selvet i at være sig selv og i at ville være sig selv gjennemsigtigt grunder i Gud.

Men dette er ofte nok blevet overseet, at Modsætningen til Synd ingenlunde er Dyd. Dette er en tildeels hedensk Betragtning, som nøies med en blot menneskelig

ENGLISH

Are these not also self-will against God, a disobedience that defies his commandment? But on the other hand, when in speaking of sin one speaks only of such sins, it is so easily forgotten that one may, humanly speaking, be more or less in order in all such matters, and yet the whole of one's life be sin—the well-known kind of sin: the splendid vices, self-will that, spiritlessly or brazenly, remains or wants to remain ignorant of the infinitely deeper sense in which a human self owes God obedience with respect to its every most secret wish and thought, with respect to a ready ear to perceive, and a willingness to follow, God's every slightest hint as to what his will is with this self.

The sins of the flesh are the self-will of the lower self. But how often is one devil not driven out with the devil's help, so that the last state becomes worse than the first. For this is exactly how it goes in the world: first a person sins out of frailty and weakness; and [196] then—well, then perhaps he learns to flee to God and is helped to faith, which saves from all sin; but that is not what we are speaking of here—then he despairs over his weakness and either becomes a Pharisee, who in despair drives himself to a certain legal righteousness, or in despair plunges into sin again.[5]

The definition therefore certainly embraces every conceivable and every actual form of sin; and it certainly brings out correctly the decisive point, that sin is despair (for sin is not the wildness of flesh and blood but the spirit's consent to it), and is: before God. As a definition it is algebra. It would be out of place in this little book, and moreover an attempt bound to fail, if I were to begin describing the particular sins. The main thing here is only that the definition, like a net, embraces all the forms. And that it does, as can also be seen when one tests it by setting up its opposite: the definition of faith, by which I steer throughout this whole book as by a sure sea-mark.

Faith is: that the self, in being itself and in wanting to be itself, rests transparently in God.

But it has often enough been overlooked that the opposite of sin is by no means virtue. That is in part a pagan view, content with a merely human

5 Allusions to Matthew 12:24–27 (casting out devils by the prince of devils) and Matthew 12:45 ("the last state of that man is worse than the first").

DANISH

Maalestok, som netop ikke veed, hvad Synd er, at al Synd er for Gud. Nei, *Modsætningen til Synd er Tro,* som det derfor hedder Rom. 14, 23: Alt hvad der ikke er af Tro er Synd. Og dette er en af de for hele Christendommen meest afgjørende Bestemmelser, at Modsætningen til Synd ikke er Dyd, men Tro.

ENGLISH

measure, which precisely does not know what sin is—that all sin is before God. No, *the opposite of sin is faith*, which is why it says in Romans 14:23: Everything that is not of faith is sin. And this is one of the most decisive qualifications for the whole of Christianity: that the opposite of sin is not virtue but faith.

APPENDIX. THE POSSIBILITY OF OFFENSE

The single human being existing before God is too high a thought, and so people take offense.

DANISH

Modsætningen: Synd – Tro er den christelige, der, christelig, omdanner alle ethiske Begrebsbestemmelser, giver dem eet Udtræk mere. Til Grund for Modsætningen ligger det afgjørende Christelige: for Gud, hvilken Bestemmelse igjen har det Christeliges afgjørende Criterium: det Absurde, Paradoxet, Forargelsens Mulighed. Og at dette paavises [197] ved enhver Bestemmelse af det Christelige, er af yderste Vigtighed, da Forargelsen er det Christeliges Værge mod al Speculation. Hvor er da her Forargelsens Mulighed? Den er, at et Menneske skulde have den Realitet: som *enkelt* Menneske at være til lige over for Gud, og altsaa igjen, hvad deraf følger, at Menneskets Synd skulde beskjæftige Gud. Dette om det enkelte Menneske – for Gud faaer Speculationen aldrig i sit Hoved; den universaliserer blot de enkelte Mennesker phantastisk i Slægten.

ENGLISH

The opposition sin–faith is the Christian one, which, in Christian fashion, reshapes all ethical concepts and pulls out one more stop in them. At the root of the opposition lies the decisive Christian qualification: before God—a qualification which in turn has the decisive criterion of the Christian: the absurd, the paradox, the possibility of offense. And that this be demonstrated [197] in every qualification of the Christian is of the utmost importance, since offense is Christianity's safeguard against all speculation. Where, then, is the possibility of offense here? It is that a human being should have this reality: to exist as a *single* human being directly before God; and so, in turn, what follows from it, that a human being's sin should concern God. This thought of the single human being—before God—never enters speculation's head; it merely universalizes individual human beings fantastically into the race.

SKS 11.19

Just derfor var det ogsaa, at en vantro Christendom udfandt, at Synd er Synd, om den er lige over for Gud eller ikke, gjør jo hverken fra eller til. Det vil sige, man vilde have Bestemmelsen: for Gud bort, og dertil opfandt man en høiere Viisdom, der dog, besynderligt nok, hverken var mere eller mindre end, hvad den høiere Viisdom vistnok oftest er, det gamle Hedenskab.

It was precisely for this reason that an unbelieving Christianity discovered that sin is sin, and that whether it is directly before God or not makes no difference either way. That is, people wanted to get rid of the qualification: before God. And for this purpose they invented a higher wisdom, which, strangely enough, was neither more nor less than what higher wisdom most often is: the old paganism.

Der er nu saa ofte talet om, at man forargedes paa Christendommen, fordi den er saa mørk og dunkel, forargedes paa den, fordi den er saa streng o. s. v.; det bliver dog nok rigtigst eengang at oplyse, at det hvorfor Mennesket egentligen forarges paa Christendommen er, fordi den er for høi, fordi dens Maal ikke er Menneskets Maal, fordi den vil gjøre Mennesket til noget saa Overordentligt, at han ikke kan faae det i sit Hoved.

People have so often talked about taking offense at Christianity because it is so dark and gloomy, taking offense at it because it is so severe, and so on. But it would surely be most correct, for once, to make clear that the real reason human beings take offense at Christianity is that it is too high, that its goal is not the human being's goal, that it wants to

DANISH

Dette vil ogsaa en ganske simpel psychologisk Udvikling af, hvad Forargelse er, opklare, og tillige vise, hvor uendelig taabelig man har baaret sig ad med at forsvare Christendommen, saa man tog Forargelsen bort; hvor dumt eller frækt man har ignoreret Christi egen Anviisning, der ofte og saa bekymret advarer mod Forargelsen, det er, selv paapeger, at dens Mulighed er der, og skal være der; thi skal den ikke være der, er den ikke et evig væsentlig Medhenhørende til det Christelige, saa er det jo menneskelig Nonsens af Christus: istedetfor at tage den bort, at gaae bekymret og advare mod den.

ENGLISH

make the human being into something so extraordinary that he cannot get it into his head.

A quite simple psychological account of what offense is will also make this clear. At the same time it will show how infinitely foolishly people have gone about defending Christianity, taking offense away; how stupidly or brazenly they have ignored Christ's own instructions, which so often and with such concern warn against offense—that is, which themselves point out that its possibility is there and is meant to be there. For if it is not meant to be there, if it is not an eternally essential part of the Christian, then it is human nonsense on Christ's part to go about with concern warning against it instead of taking it away.

THE DAY LABORER AND THE EMPEROR

A laborer invited to become the emperor's son-in-law would find the offer too much to believe.

DANISH

Dersom jeg tænkte mig en fattig Dagleier og den mægtigste Keiser, der nogensinde har levet, og denne den mægtigste Keiser pludselig fik det Indfald at sende Bud efter Dagleieren, der da aldrig havde drømt om, »og i hvis Hjerte det aldrig var opkommet,« at Keiseren vidste, han var til, der da vilde prise sig ubeskrivelig lykkelig blot ved engang at faae Lov til at see Keiseren, hvad han i saa Fald vilde fortælle Børn og Børnebørn som den vigtigste Begivenhed i sit Liv – dersom Keiseren sendte Bud efter ham og lod ham vide, at han vilde have ham til [198] Svigersøn: hvad saa?

SKS 11.19 Saa vilde Dagleieren paa menneskelig Viis blive noget eller meget forlegen, flau og generet derved, det vilde (og dette er det Menneskelige), menneskeligt, forekomme ham som noget høist besynderligt, afsindigt Noget, hvorom han da mindst af Alt turde tale til noget andet Menneske, da han selv allerede i sit stille Sind ikke var langt fra den Forklaring, som Nabo og Gjenbo snarest muligt vilde faae yderst travlt med: at Keiseren vilde gjøre Nar af ham, saa Dagleieren vilde blive til Latter for hele Byen, han aftegnet i Bladet, Historien om hans Formæling med Keiserens Datter solgt af Visekjerlingerne.

ENGLISH

Suppose I imagined a poor day laborer and the mightiest emperor who ever lived, and this mightiest emperor suddenly took it into his head to send for the day laborer—who had never dreamed, "and in whose heart it had never arisen," that the emperor knew he existed; who would count himself indescribably happy merely to be allowed to see the emperor once, something he would tell his children and grandchildren as the most important event of his life—suppose the emperor sent for him and let him know that he wanted him for his [198] son-in-law: what then?[6]

Then the day laborer, being human, would become somewhat or very bewildered, embarrassed and uneasy about it. It would seem to him (and this is the human thing), humanly, something most peculiar, something mad, which he would least of all dare mention to anyone else, since in his own quiet mind he was already not far from the explanation his neighbors next door and across the street would lose no time in busily spreading: that the emperor meant to make a fool of him, so that the day laborer would become the laughingstock of the whole town, his caricature in the paper, the story of his wedding to the emperor's daughter sold by the ballad-women.[7]

6 The inner quotation echoes 1 Corinthians 2:9: what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, "nor has arisen in the human heart."
7 Ballad-women (*Visekjerlinger*) sold printed broadside songs on topical events in the streets of Copenhagen.

DANISH

Dog det med at blive Keiserens Svigersøn, det maatte da vel snart vorde en udvortes Virkelighed, saa Dagleieren paa sandselig Maade kunde forvisse sig om, hvorvidt det var Keiserens Alvor dermed, eller han blot vilde have det stakkels Menneske til Bedste, gjøre ham ulykkelig for hele hans Levetid, og hjælpe ham til at ende i *[en Sindssygeanstalt]*; thi det quid nimis er tilstede, som saa uendeligt let kan slaae om til sit Modsatte.

En lille Gunstbeviisning, det vilde Dagleieren kunde faae i sit Hoved; det vilde blive forstaaet i Kjøbstaden, af det høistærede dannede Publicum, af alle Visekjerlinger, kort af de 5 Gange 100,000 Mennesker, som boede i hiin Kjøbstad, der rigtignok i Henseende til Folkemængde var endog en meget stor Stad, derimod i Henseende til at have Forstand paa og Sands for det Overordentlige, en meget lille Kjøbstad – men dette, med at blive Svigersøn, ja, det var meget for meget.

Og sæt nu, at det ikke var en udvortes Virkelighed, der var Tale om, men om en indvortes, saa altsaa Facticiteten ikke kunde hjælpe Dagleieren til Vished, men Troen selv var den eneste Facticitet, og Alt altsaa overladt til Troen, om han havde ydmygt Mod nok til at turde troe det (thi frækt Mod kan ikke hjælpe til at *troe*): hvor mange Dagleiere var der saa vel, som havde dette Mod? Men Den, der ikke havde dette Mod, han vilde forarges; det Overordentlige vilde for ham lyde næsten som en Spot over ham.

Han vilde saa maaskee ærligt og ligefrem tilstaae: Sligt er mig for høit, jeg kan ikke faae det i mit Hoved, det er, at jeg skal sige det lige ud, mig en Daarskab.

Og nu Christendommen! Christendommen lærer, at dette enkelte Menneske, og saaledes ethvert enkelt Menneske, hvad han saa forresten er, Mand, Kone, Tjenestepige, Minister, Kjøbmand, Barbeer, Studiosus o. s. v., dette enkelte Menneske er til *for Gud* – dette enkelte Menneske, [199] som maaskee vilde være stolt af een Gang i sit Liv at have talt med Kongen, dette Menneske, som ikke bilder sig lidt ind af, at leve paa en fortrolig Fod med Den og Den, dette Menneske er til for Gud, kan tale med Gud, hvad Øieblik han vil, sikker paa at blive hørt af ham, kort, dette Menneske tilbydes det at leve paa den fortroligste Fod med Gud!

ENGLISH

Still, becoming the emperor's son-in-law would surely soon have to become an outward actuality, so that the day laborer could assure himself through his senses whether the emperor was in earnest or merely wanted to make fun of the poor man, make him unhappy for the rest of his life, and help him end up in a mental institution. For the quid nimis [the "too much"] is present, which can so infinitely easily turn into its opposite.

A small mark of favor—that the day laborer could get into his head. That would be understood in the market town, by the highly esteemed educated public, by all the ballad-women, in short by the 5 times 100,000 people who lived in that market town—which, as regards population, was indeed a very large city, but as regards understanding of and feeling for the extraordinary, a very small market town. But this, becoming son-in-law—no, that was far too much.

And suppose now that it was not an outward actuality in question but an inward one, so that facticity could not help the day laborer to certainty, but faith itself was the only facticity, and so everything was left to faith—whether he had humble courage enough to dare to believe it (for brazen courage cannot help anyone to *believe*): how many day laborers would there be who had this courage? But whoever lacked this courage would take offense; the extraordinary would sound to him almost like mockery of him.

He would then perhaps honestly and plainly admit: Such a thing is too high for me, I cannot get it into my head; it is, to put it bluntly, foolishness to me.

And now Christianity! Christianity teaches that this single human being—and so every single human being, whatever else he may be, man, woman, housemaid, cabinet minister, merchant, barber, student, and so on—this single human being exists *before God*. This single human being, [199] who would perhaps be proud to have spoken with the king once in his life, this human being, who is more than a little vain about being on familiar terms with So-and-so—this human being exists before God, can speak with God whenever he wants, sure of being heard by him; in short, this human being is offered a life on the most intimate terms with God!

DANISH

SKS 11.199 Videre, for dette Menneskes, ogsaa for dette Menneskes Skyld kommer Gud til Verden, lader sig føde, lider, døer; og denne lidende Gud, han næsten beder og bønfalder dette Menneske om dog at tage mod Hjælpen, som tilbydes ham! Sandeligen er Noget til at tabe Forstanden over, saa dog vel dette! Hver Den, der ikke har ydmygt Mod til at turde troe det, han forarges. Men hvorfor forarges han? fordi det er ham for høit, fordi han ikke kan faae det i sit Hoved, fordi han ikke kan faae sin Frimodighed lige over for det, og derfor maa have det bort, gjort til Intet, til Galskab og Nonsens, thi det er som skulde det qvæle ham.

Thi hvad er Forargelse? Forargelse er ulykkelig Beundring. Den er derfor i Slægt med Misundelse, men den er en Misundelse, som vender sig mod En selv, i endnu strengere Forstand, værst mod sig selv. Det naturlige Menneskes Snæverhjertethed kan ikke unde sig selv det Overordentlige, som Gud har tiltænkt ham; saa forarges han.

Forargelsens Grad beroer nu paa, hvad Lidenskab i Forhold til Beundring et Menneske har. Mere prosaiske Mennesker uden Phantasi og Lidenskab, som altsaa heller ikke ere ret skikkede til at beundre, de forarges vel ogsaa, men de indskrænke sig til at sige: Sligt kan jeg ikke faae i mit Hoved, jeg lader det staae. Det er Skeptikerne. Men jo mere Lidenskab og Phantasi et Menneske har, jo nærmere han altsaa i en vis Forstand, i Muligheden nemlig, er ved at kunne blive troende, NB. ved tilbedende at ydmyge sig under det Overordentlige, desto mere lidenskabelig Forargelse, der tilsidst ikke kan nøies med Mindre end at faae dette udryddet, tilintetgjort, traadt i Snavset.

Vil man lære at forstaae sig paa Forargelse, saa studere man den menneskelige Misundelse, et Studium, som jeg giver op uden om, og indbilder mig at have gjort grundigt. Misundelse er skjult Beundring. En Beundrende, der føler, at han ikke kan blive lykkelig ved at give sig hen, han vælger at blive misundelig paa Det, han beundrer. Saa taler han et andet Sprog; i hans Sprog hedder det nu, at Det, som han egentlig beundrer, er Ingenting, noget dumt og flaut og sært og overspændt [200] Noget. Beundring er lykkelig Selvfortabelse, Misundelse ulykkelig Selvhævdelse.

ENGLISH

Further: for this human being's sake, for this human being's sake too, God comes into the world, lets himself be born, suffers, dies; and this suffering God almost begs and implores this human being to accept the help that is offered him! Truly, if there is anything to lose one's mind over, surely it is this! Whoever lacks the humble courage to dare to believe it takes offense. But why does he take offense? Because it is too high for him, because he cannot get it into his head, because he cannot find the boldness to face it, and therefore must get rid of it, reduce it to nothing, to madness and nonsense—for it is as if it would suffocate him.

For what is offense? Offense is unhappy admiration. It is therefore akin to envy, but it is an envy that turns against oneself—in an even stricter sense, that is worst toward oneself. The narrow-heartedness of the natural human being cannot grant himself the extraordinary that God has intended for him; so he takes offense.

The degree of offense depends on how much passion a person has in relation to admiration. More prosaic people without imagination and passion, who are therefore not really suited to admire either, also take offense, to be sure, but they confine themselves to saying: I can't get such a thing into my head; I'll leave it alone. These are the skeptics. But the more passion and imagination a person has—and so the closer he is in a certain sense, namely in possibility, to being able to become a believer, NB by humbling himself in worship under the extraordinary—the more passionate the offense, which in the end cannot be content with less than having it rooted out, annihilated, trampled in the dirt.

If you want to learn to understand offense, then study human envy—a study I offer as an extra, beyond the required syllabus, and flatter myself I have made thoroughly. Envy is concealed admiration. An admirer who feels he cannot become happy by giving himself up to it chooses to become envious of what he admires. Then he speaks another language; in his language it is now said that what he really admires is nothing, something stupid and insipid and odd and overwrought. [200] Admiration is happy self-abandonment; envy, unhappy self-assertion.

DANISH

SKS 11.20 Saaledes ogsaa med Forargelse; thi hvad der i Forholdet mellem Menneske og Menneske er: Beundring – Misundelse, det er i Forholdet mellem Gud og Menneske: Tilbedelse – Forargelse. Summa summarum af al menneskelig Viisdom er dette »gyldne«, eller maaskee rigtigere dette pletterede: ne quid nimis, for lidt og for meget fordærver Alt. Dette tages og gives mellem Mand og Mand som Viisdom, honoreres med Beundring; dets Cours fluctuerer aldrig, hele Menneskeheden garanterer dets Værd. Saa lever der engang imellem et Geni, som gaaer en lille Smule ud derover, han erklæres gal – af de Kloge. Men Christendommen gjør et uhyre Kjæmpeskridt ud over dette: ne quid nimis, ind i det Absurde; der begynder Christendommen – og Forargelsen.

Man seer nu, hvor (for at der dog kunde blive noget Overordentligt tilbage) hvor overordentlig dumt det er at forsvare Christendommen, hvor liden Menneskekundskab det forraader, hvorledes det, om end ubevidst, spiller under Dække med Forargelsen, ved at gjøre det Christelige til noget saadant kummerligt Noget, der am Ende skulde reddes ved et Forsvar. Derfor er det vist og sandt, at den, der først opfandt, i Christenheden at forsvare Christendommen, de facto er en Judas No. 2; ogsaa han forraader med et Kys, kun at hans Forræderi er Dumhedens. At forsvare Noget er altid at disrecommandere det.

Lad En have et Pakhuus fuldt af Guld, lad ham være villig til at udgive hver en Dukat til de Fattige – men lad ham derhos være dum nok til at begynde dette sit velgjørende Foretagende med et Forsvar, hvori han af tre Grunde beviser det Forsvarlige deri: og det skal ikke være langt fra, at Menneskene næsten finde det tvivlsomt, om han gjør noget Godt. Men nu det Christelige! Ja Den, der forsvarer det, han har aldrig troet paa det. Troer han, saa er Troens Begeistring – ikke et Forsvar, nei, den er Angrebet, og Seieren; en Troende er en Seierherre.

Saaledes med det Christelige og Forargelsen. Dens Mulighed er da ganske rigtigt tilstede ved den christelige Definition paa Synden. Den er dette: for Gud. En Hedning, det naturlige Menneske er meget villig til at indrømme, at der er Synd til, men dette »for Gud«, som dog egentlig

ENGLISH

So too with offense. For what in the relation between human being and human being is admiration–envy is, in the relation between God and human being, worship–offense. The sum total of all human wisdom is this "golden"—or perhaps more correctly, this gold-plated—ne quid nimis [nothing too much]: too little and too much spoil everything. This is passed from man to man as wisdom and honored with admiration; its rate of exchange never fluctuates; the whole human race guarantees its value. Then now and then a genius lives who goes a tiny bit beyond it; he is declared mad—by the sensible. But Christianity takes a tremendous giant stride beyond this ne quid nimis, into the absurd; there Christianity begins—and offense.[8]

One sees now how (so that there might still be something extraordinary left) how extraordinarily stupid it is to defend Christianity, how little knowledge of human beings it betrays, how it plays, if unconsciously, into the hands of offense by making the Christian into such a miserable something that am Ende [in the end] has to be rescued by a defense. It is therefore certain and true that whoever first thought of defending Christianity within Christendom is de facto [in fact] a Judas No. 2: he too betrays with a kiss, only his betrayal is that of stupidity. To defend something is always to discredit it.[9]

Let someone have a warehouse full of gold, let him be willing to give away every ducat to the poor—but let him also be stupid enough to begin this charitable undertaking of his with a defense, in which he proves on three grounds that it is justifiable: and people will come close to doubting whether he is doing any good at all. But now the Christian! Yes, whoever defends it has never believed in it. If he believes, then the enthusiasm of faith is—not a defense, no, it is the attack and the victory; a believer is a victor.

So it is with the Christian and offense. Its possibility, then, is quite rightly present in the Christian definition of sin. It is this: before God. A pagan, the natural human being, is very willing to admit that sin exists; but this "before God," which is what

8 "Golden" alludes to Horace's "golden mean" (*aurea mediocritas*); *ne quid nimis* is a Latin proverb, found in Terence.
9 Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss (Luke 22:47–48).

DANISH

gjør Synden til Synd, det er ham meget for meget. Det er (om end paa en anden Maade end den her paaviste) ham at gjøre Meget for Meget af det [201] at være Menneske; lidt mindre, saa er han villig til at gaae ind derpaa – »men for Meget er for Meget«.

ENGLISH

really makes sin sin, is far too much for him. It is (though in a different way from the one shown here) making far too much [201] of being a human being; a little less, and he is willing to go along with it—"but too much is too much."

CHAPTER 2. THE SOCRATIC DEFINITION OF SIN

Anti-Climacus examines Socrates' claim that sin is ignorance and finds it lacks the will.

DANISH

SKS 11.20 Synd er Uvidenhed. Dette er, som bekjendt, den socratiske Definition, der som alt Socratisk altid er en Instants, der er værd at agte paa. Imidlertid er det gaaet i Forhold til dette Socratiske som i Forhold til saa meget andet Socratisk, man har lært at føle en Trang til at gaae videre. Hvor utallig Mange have ikke følt Trang til at gaae videre end den socratiske Uvidenhed – formodentligen fordi de følte, det var dem en Umulighed at blive staaende ved den; thi hvor mange ere vel i hver Generation De, som vare istand til endog blot een Maaned at udholde, existentielt at udtrykke Uvidenhed om Alt.

Den socratiske Definition vil jeg derfor ingenlunde affærdige med, at man ikke kan blive staaende ved den; men med det Christelige in mente vil jeg benytte den til at faae dette frem i sin Skarphed – just fordi den socratiske Definition er saa ægte græsk; saa her som altid enhver anden Definition, der ikke i strengeste Forstand er streng christelig, det er, enhver Mellem-Definition viser sig i sin Tomhed.

Misligheden ved den socratiske Definition er nu, at den lader det ubestemt, om hvorledes Uvidenheden selv nærmere er at forstaae, dens Oprindelse o. s. v. Dette vil sige, selv om Synd er Uvidenhed (eller hvad Christendommen maaskee snarere vilde kalde Dumhed), hvilket i een Forstand slet ikke lader sig negte: er dette en oprindelig Uvidenhed, er Tilstanden altsaa Dens, der ikke har vidst, og hidtil ikke har kunnet vide Noget om Sandheden; eller er det en frembragt, en senere Uvidenhed? Er den det Sidste, saa maa jo Synden egentligen stikke i noget Andet end i Uvidenheden, den maa stikke i den Virksomhed i Mennesket, ved hvilken han har arbeidet paa at fordunkle sin Erkjendelse.

ENGLISH

Sin is ignorance. This, as is well known, is the Socratic definition, which, like everything Socratic, is always an authority worth heeding. However, it has gone with this Socratic point as with so much else that is Socratic: people have learned to feel a need to go further. How countless are those who have felt the need to go further than Socratic ignorance—presumably because they felt it impossible for them to stop there. For how many are there in each generation who could endure, even for a single month, expressing existentially ignorance of everything?[10]

I will therefore by no means dismiss the Socratic definition on the grounds that one cannot stop with it. Rather, with the Christian in mente [in mind], I will use it to bring out the Christian in all its sharpness—precisely because the Socratic definition is so genuinely Greek. So here, as always, every other definition that is not in the strictest sense strictly Christian, that is, every intermediate definition, is shown up in its emptiness.

The defect of the Socratic definition is that it leaves undetermined how the ignorance itself is to be more precisely understood, its origin, and so on. That is, even if sin is ignorance (or what Christianity would perhaps rather call stupidity), which in one sense cannot be denied at all: is this an original ignorance, so that the state is that of someone who has not known, and until now has not been able to know, anything about the truth? Or is it a produced, a later ignorance? If it is the latter, then sin must really lie in something other than ignorance; it must lie in the activity within a person by which he has worked at obscuring his knowledge.

10 Socrates claimed to know only that he knew nothing.

DANISH

Men ogsaa dette antaget, kommer denne haardnakkede og meget seiglivede Mislighed igjen, idet Spørgsmaalet bliver, om Mennesket da i det Øieblik, han begyndte paa at fordunkle sin Erkjendelse, er sig dette tydelig [202] bevidst. Er han sig det ikke tydeligt bevidst, saa er jo Erkjendelsen allerede noget fordunklet, førend han begyndte derpaa; og Spørgsmaalet kommer blot atter igjen. Antages derimod, at han, da han begyndte at fordunkle Erkjendelsen, er sig dette tydeligt bevidst, saa ligger jo Synden (om den end er Uvidenhed, forsaavidt denne er Resultatet) ikke i Erkjendelsen men i Villien, og det Spørgsmaal, der maatte fremkomme, er om Erkjendelsens og Villiens Forhold til hinanden.

SKS 11.20 Alt Sligt (og her kunde man da vedblive at spørge i mange Dage) indlader den socratiske Definition sig egentlig ikke paa. Socrates var vistnok en Ethiker (hvad Oldtiden jo ubetinget vindicerer ham, Ethikens Opfinder), den første, som han er og bliver den Første i sit Slags; men han begynder med Uvidenheden. Intellectuelt er det Uvidenheden han tenderer til, det Intet at vide. Ethisk forstaaer han ved Uvidenhed noget ganske Andet, og begynder saa med den. Men derimod er, som naturligt, Socrates ingen væsentlig religieus Ethiker, endnu mindre, hvad der er det Christelige, en Dogmatiker.

Derfor kommer han egentligen slet ikke ind i den hele Undersøgelse, med hvilken Christendommen begynder, ikke ind i det Prius, i hvilket Synden forudsætter sig selv, og som christeligt forklares i Dogmet om Arvesynden, til hvilket Dogme vi i denne Undersøgelse dog blot komme som til Grændsen.

Socrates kommer derfor egentligen ikke til Bestemmelsen Synd, hvilket vistnok er en Mislighed ved en Definition paa Synd. Hvorledes dette? Er nemlig Synd Uvidenhed, saa er jo Synd egentlig ikke til; thi Synd er jo netop Bevidsthed. Er Synden det at være uvidende om det Rigtige, saa man derfor gjør det Urigtige, saa er Synd ikke til. Er dette Synd, saa antages jo, hvad Socrates ogsaa antog, at det Tilfælde ikke forekommer, at En, vidende det Rette, gjør det Urette, eller vidende, at det er det Urette, gjør dette Urette. Altsaa, er den socratiske Definition rigtig, saa er Synd slet ikke til. Men see, dette, just dette er christelig ganske i sin Orden, i en dybere Forstand ganske rigtigt, i christelig Interesse quod erat demonstrandum.

ENGLISH

But even granting this, the stubborn and very tenacious defect returns, for the question becomes whether a person, at the moment he began to obscure his knowledge, is clearly [202] conscious of doing so. If he is not clearly conscious of it, then his knowledge is already somewhat obscured before he began, and the question simply comes back again. If, on the other hand, it is assumed that when he began to obscure his knowledge he is clearly conscious of it, then sin (even if it is ignorance, insofar as ignorance is the result) lies not in knowledge but in the will, and the question that would have to arise concerns the relation of knowledge and will to each other.

All this (and here one could go on asking for many days) the Socratic definition does not really go into. Socrates was certainly an ethicist (indeed, antiquity unconditionally claims him as the inventor of ethics), the first, as he is and remains the first of his kind; but he begins with ignorance. Intellectually it is ignorance he tends toward, knowing nothing. Ethically he understands by ignorance something quite different, and then he begins with that. But on the other hand, naturally, Socrates is not essentially a religious ethicist, still less—which is what the Christian is—a dogmatician.

Therefore he does not really enter at all into the whole inquiry with which Christianity begins, into the prius [that which comes before] in which sin presupposes itself, and which is explained in Christian terms in the dogma of original sin—a dogma that in this inquiry we reach only as a boundary.

Socrates therefore does not really arrive at the category of sin, which is certainly a defect in a definition of sin. How so? If sin is ignorance, then sin does not really exist; for sin is precisely consciousness. If sin is being ignorant of what is right, so that one therefore does what is wrong, then sin does not exist. If this is sin, then it is assumed, as Socrates also assumed, that it never happens that someone, knowing what is right, does what is wrong, or, knowing that it is wrong, does that wrong. So if the Socratic definition is correct, sin does not exist at all. But look, this, precisely this, is quite in order from the Christian point of view, in a deeper sense quite correct; in the Christian in-

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Netop det Begreb, ved hvilket Christendommen meest afgjørende qvalitativt differentierer sig fra Hedenskabet, er: Synden, Læren om Synden; og derfor antager Christendommen ogsaa ganske conseqvent, at hverken Hedenskabet eller det naturlige Menneske veed hvad Synd er, ja, den antager, at der maa en Aabenbaring fra Gud til for at gjøre det aabenbart, hvad Synd er. Ikke er det [203] nemlig saa, som en overfladisk Betragtning antager, at Læren om Forsoningen er den qvalitative Differents mellem Hedenskab og Christendom. Nei, Begyndelsen maa gjøres langt dybere, med Synden, med Læren om Synden, som Christendommen ogsaa gjør. Hvilken farlig Indvending derfor mod Christendommen, hvis Hedenskabet havde en Definition paa Synd, som Christendommen maatte erkjende for rigtig.

SKS 11.20 Hvad er det da for en Bestemmelse, Socrates i at bestemme Synden mangler? Det er: Villien, Trods. Den græske Intellectualitet var for lykkelig, for naiv, for æsthetisk, for ironisk, for vittig – for syndig til at kunne faae det i sit Hoved, at En med sit Vidende kunde lade være at gjøre det Gode, eller med sit Vidende, med Viden om det Rette, gjøre det Urette. Græciteten statuerer et intellectuelt kategorisk Imperativ.

Det Sande heri bør nu ingenlunde oversees, og gjøres vel fornødent at indskjærpes i Tider som disse, der ere løbne vild i saare megen tomt opblæsende og ufrugtbar Viden, saa det vistnok nu, aldeles som paa Socrates's Tid, kun endnu mere, gjordes Behov, at Menneskene udhungredes en lille Smule socratisk.

Det er baade til at lee og til at græde over, saavel alle disse Forsikkringer om at have forstaaet og begrebet det Høieste, som ogsaa den Virtuositet, med hvilken Mange in abstracto vide at fremstille det, i en vis Forstand ganske rigtigt – det er baade til at lee og til at græde over, naar man saa seer, at al denne Viden og Forstaaen slet ingen Magt udøver over Menneskenes Liv, at dette ikke i fjerneste Maade udtrykker hvad de have forstaaet, men snarere lige det Modsatte. Man udbryder uvilkaarligt ved Synet af dette lige saa sørgelige som latterlige Misforhold: men hvor i al Verden er det dog muligt at de

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terest, quod erat demonstrandum [which was to be proved].

Precisely the concept by which Christianity most decisively distinguishes itself qualitatively from paganism is: sin, the doctrine of sin. And so Christianity also quite consistently assumes that neither paganism nor the natural human being knows what sin is; indeed, it assumes that a revelation from God is needed to make manifest what sin is. For it is not [203] the case, as a superficial view assumes, that the doctrine of the Atonement is the qualitative difference between paganism and Christianity. No, the beginning must be made much deeper, with sin, with the doctrine of sin, as Christianity also does. What a dangerous objection to Christianity, then, if paganism had a definition of sin that Christianity had to acknowledge as correct.

What, then, is the qualification Socrates lacks in defining sin? It is: the will, defiance. The Greek intellect was too happy, too naive, too aesthetic, too ironic, too witty—too sinful to be able to get it into its head that someone, knowingly, could refrain from doing the good, or, knowingly, with knowledge of what is right, do what is wrong. The Greek mind posits an intellectual categorical imperative.[11]

The truth in this must by no means be overlooked, and it surely needs to be impressed upon times like these, which have run wild in a great deal of empty, puffed-up and fruitless knowledge. So now, just as in Socrates' time, only even more so, it would certainly be needful that people be starved a little, Socratically.

It is enough to make one both laugh and weep—all these assurances of having understood and grasped the highest, and also the virtuosity with which many know how to present it in abstracto [in the abstract], in a certain sense quite correctly—it is enough to make one both laugh and weep when one then sees that all this knowing and understanding exerts no power at all over people's lives, that their lives do not in the remotest way express what they have understood, but rather the very opposite. At the sight of this discrepancy, as sad as it is ridiculous, one involuntarily exclaims:

11 The "categorical imperative" is Kant's term for the unconditional moral command.

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kunne have forstaaet det, er det ogsaa sandt at de have forstaaet det?

Her svarer hiin gamle Ironiker og Ethiker: o, Kjere, tro aldrig det; de have ikke forstaaet det, thi havde de i Sandhed forstaaet det, saa udtrykte deres Liv det ogsaa, saa gjorde de hvad de havde forstaaet.

At forstaae og forstaae er altsaa to Ting? Ganske vist; og den som har forstaaet dette – dog vel at mærke ikke i Betydning af den første Art Forstaaen, han er eo ipso indviet i alle Ironiens Hemmeligheder. Det er egentligen denne Modsigelse, der beskjæftiger Ironien. At opfatte det comisk, at et Menneske virkelig er uvidende om Noget, er en meget lav Art Comik, og under Ironiens Værdighed. Noget dybere Comisk er der egentlig ikke i, at der har levet Mennesker, som antoge at Jorden staaer [204] stille – naar de ikke vidste bedre. Det vil formodentlig paa en lignende Maade igjen gaae vor Tid i Forhold til en mere physikalsk vidende Tid.

SKS 11.20 Modsigelsen er mellem to forskjellige Tider, der fattes et dybere Coincidentspunkt, en saadan Modsigelse er ikke væsentlig og altsaa heller ei væsentlig comisk. Nei, men at et Menneske staaer og siger det Rigtige – og altsaa har forstaaet det; og naar han saa skal handle, gjør det Urigtige – og altsaa viser, at han ikke har forstaaet det: ja det er uendelig comisk.

Det er uendelig comisk, at et Menneske rørt indtil Taarer, saa altsaa ikke blot Sveden men Taarerne hagle ned af ham, kan sidde og læse eller høre Fremstillingen af Selvfornegtelse, af det Ædle i at offre sit Liv for Sandheden – og saa i næste Øieblik, ein, zwei, drei, vupti, næsten endnu med Taarerne i Øinene, er i fuld Gang med, i sit Ansigts Sveed, efter fattig Leilighed, at hjælpe Usandheden til at seire.

Det er uendelig comisk, at en Taler med Sandhed i Stemme og Mimik, dybt grebet og dybt gribende, rystende kan fremstille det Sande, træde alt det Onde, alle Helvedes-Magter under Øinene, med en Aplomb i Skikkelsen, med en Freidighed i Blikket, en Rigtighed i Pas'ene som er beundringsværdig – det er uendelig comisk, at han, næsten i samme Øieblik, næsten endnu med »Adriennen paa«, kan feigt og frygtagtigt løbe af Veien for den mindste Ulempe. Det er uendelig comisk, at

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but how in the world is it possible that they could have understood it? Is it really true that they have understood it?

Here that old ironist and ethicist answers: Oh, my dear fellow, never believe it; they have not understood it. For if they had truly understood it, their lives would express it too; they would do what they had understood.

So to understand and to understand are two things? Certainly; and whoever has understood this—though, mark well, not in the sense of the first kind of understanding—is eo ipso [by that very fact] initiated into all the secrets of irony. It is really this contradiction that occupies irony. To find it comic that a person is really ignorant of something is a very low kind of comedy, beneath the dignity of irony. There is nothing really deeply comic in the fact that people once lived who assumed the earth stands [204] still—when they knew no better. Our own age will presumably fare similarly in relation to an age with more knowledge of physics.

The contradiction is between two different ages that lack a deeper point of coincidence; such a contradiction is not essential, and so not essentially comic either. No, but that a person stands there and says what is right—and so has understood it; and then, when he has to act, does what is wrong—and so shows that he has not understood it: yes, that is infinitely comic.

It is infinitely comic that a person moved to tears—so that not only sweat but tears pour down him—can sit and read or listen to an account of self-denial, of the nobility of sacrificing one's life for the truth, and then the next moment, ein, zwei, drei, vupti [one, two, three, hey presto], almost with the tears still in his eyes, is in full swing, in the sweat of his brow and as best his modest means allow, helping untruth to victory.

It is infinitely comic that a speaker, with truth in his voice and gestures, deeply moved and deeply moving, can portray the truth so that it shakes you, can look all evil, all the powers of hell, in the eye, with an aplomb in his bearing, a boldness in his glance, a correctness in his steps that is admirable—it is infinitely comic that he, almost in the same moment, almost with his "adrienne" still on, can run cowardly and timidly out of the way of the

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En kan forstaae hele Sandheden, om hvor ussel og smaalig Verden er o. s. v.

– at han kan forstaae det, og saa ikke kan kjende Det igjen, han har forstaaet; thi næsten i samme Øieblik gaaer han selv hen og er med i den samme Smaalighed og Usselhed, tager Ære af den og æres af den, det er, anerkjender den.

O, naar man seer En, der forsikkrer aldeles at have forstaaet, hvorledes Christus gik omkring i en ringe Tjeners Skikkelse, fattig, foragtet, bespottet, som Skriften siger: bespyttet – naar jeg da seer den Samme saa omhyggeligt at flye hen, hvor der verdsligt er godt at være, indrette sig der paa det tryggeste, naar jeg seer ham saa ængstelig, som var det Livet om at gjøre, at undflye ethvert en ugunstig Vinds Pust fra Høire eller Venstre, saa lyksalig, saa høistlyksalig, saa kisteglad – ja, for at gjøre det complet, saa kisteglad, at han endog rørt takker Gud derfor – ved ubetinget at være æret og anseet af Alle, Alle: da har jeg ofte sagt til mig selv og ved mig selv »Socrates, Socrates, Socrates, skulde det være muligt, at dette Menneske har forstaaet hvad han siger sig at have forstaaet?«.

Saaledes har jeg sagt, ja jeg har tillige ønsket, at [205] Socrates havde Ret. Thi det er mig dog, som var Christendommen for streng, jeg kan ei heller bringe det i Samklang med min Erfaring, at gjøre en Saadan til en Hykler. Nei, Sokrates, Dig kan jeg forstaae; Du gjør ham til en Spasmager, en Slags lystig Broder, Du gjør ham til en Prise for Latteren, Du har Intet mod, det har endog Dit Bifald, at jeg serverer og anretter ham comisk – det vil da sige, naar jeg gjør det godt.

SKS 11.20 Socrates, Socrates, Socrates! Ja, man maa nok nævne Dit Navn tre Gange, det var ikke for meget at nævne det ti Gange, dersom det kunde hjælpe Noget. Man mener, Verden behøver en Republik, og man mener at behøve en ny Samfunds-Orden, og en ny Religion: men Ingen tænker paa, at en Socrates er det dog nok denne, just ved megen Viden forvirrede, Verden behøver. Dog det forstaaer sig, tænkte Nogen derpaa, end sige, hvis Mange tænkte derpaa, da behøvedes han mindre. Det en

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slightest inconvenience. It is infinitely comic that someone can understand the whole truth about how wretched and petty the world is, and so on.[12]

—that he can understand it, and then cannot recognize what he has understood; for almost in the same moment he himself goes off and joins in the same pettiness and wretchedness, takes honor from it and is honored by it, that is, acknowledges it.

Oh, when one sees someone who assures us that he has fully understood how Christ went about in the form of a lowly servant, poor, despised, mocked—as Scripture says: spat upon—when I then see the same man so carefully fleeing to where, in worldly terms, it is good to be, settling himself there as securely as possible; when I see him so anxiously, as if his life depended on it, avoiding every breath of an unfavorable wind from right or left, so blissful, so supremely blissful, so happy as a lark—yes, to make it complete, so happy as a lark that he is even moved to thank God for it—at being unconditionally honored and esteemed by all, all: then I have often said to myself and within myself, "Socrates, Socrates, Socrates, can it be possible that this man has understood what he says he has understood?"[13]

So I have said; indeed, I have also wished that [205] Socrates were right. For it seems to me as if Christianity were too severe, nor can I square it with my experience to make such a person a hypocrite. No, Socrates, you I can understand. You make him a joker, a sort of merry fellow, you make him fair game for laughter; you have nothing against it—indeed, it even has your approval—if I serve him up and dish him up comically, that is, provided I do it well.

Socrates, Socrates, Socrates! Yes, one may well say your name three times; it would not be too much to say it ten times, if that would help at all. People think the world needs a republic, and they think it needs a new social order and a new religion; but no one considers that what this world, confused precisely by so much knowledge, needs is surely a Socrates. But of course, if anyone thought of it, not to mention if many thought of it, he would be less

12 An *adrienne* was a loose, flowing gown named after an eighteenth-century stage costume; here the speaker's robe, as if still in costume.

13 The servant form alludes to Philippians 2:7; "spat upon" to the passion predictions and narrative (Mark 10:34; Matthew 27:30).

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Vildfarelse meest behøver, er altid Det, den mindst tænker paa – naturligt, thi ellers var det jo ikke en Vildfarelse.

Altsaa en saadan ironisk-ethisk Correction kunde vor Tid saare godt behøve, er maaskee egentligen det Eneste, den har Behov – thi det er aabenbart Det den mindst tænker paa; det gjordes høiligt fornødent, at vi, istedetfor at gaae videre end Socrates, blot kom tilbage til dette Socratiske: at forstaae og forstaae er to Ting, – ikke som et Resultat, der tilsidst hjælper Menneskene i den dybeste Elendighed, da det just hæver Forskjellen mellem at forstaae og forstaae, men som den ethiske Opfattelse af Livets Daglighed.

Den socratiske Definition hjælper sig da saaledes. Naar En ikke gjør det Rette, saa har han heller ikke forstaaet det; hans Forstaaen er en Indbildning; hans Forsikkring om at have forstaaet en feil Direction; hans gjentagne Forsikkring om Fanden gale ham at have forstaaet, en uhyre, uhyre Fjernhed ad den størst mulige Omvei. Men saa er jo Definitionen rigtig. Gjør En det Rigtige, saa synder han dog vel ikke; og gjør han ikke det Rigtige, saa har han heller ikke forstaaet det; havde han i Sandhed forstaaet det, vilde det snart bevæge ham til at gjøre det, snart gjøre ham til en Klangfigur for hans Forstaaen: ergo er Synd Uvidenhed.

Men hvor stikker da Misligheden? Den stikker i, hvad det Socratiske, men kun til en vis Grad, selv er opmærksomt paa, og afhjælper, at der mangler en dialektisk Bestemmelse betræffende Overgangen fra det at have forstaaet Noget til det at gjøre det. I denne Overgang begynder det [206] Christelige; ved saa at gaae ad den Vei, kommer det til at vise Synden liggende i Villien, til Begrebet Trods; og for saa at gjøre Enden rigtig fast, føies Dogmet om Arvesynden til – ak thi Spekulationens Hemmelighed med det at begribe er just Det at sye uden at fæste Ende og uden at slaae Knude paa Traaden, og derfor kan den, vidunderligt, blive ved at sye og sye, ɔ: at trække Traaden igjennem.

SKS 11.20 Christendommen derimod fæster Ende ved Hjælp af Paradoxet.

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needed. What an error most needs is always what it least thinks of—naturally, for otherwise it would not be an error.

So such an ironic-ethical correction is something our age could very well use; perhaps it is really the only thing it needs—for it is obviously what it least thinks of. It would be highly necessary that, instead of going further than Socrates, we simply came back to this Socratic principle: to understand and to understand are two things—not as a result that in the end helps people into the deepest misery, since it precisely cancels the difference between understanding and understanding, but as the ethical view of everyday life.

The Socratic definition, then, gets by as follows. When someone does not do what is right, then he has not understood it either; his understanding is an illusion; his assurance of having understood is a wrong direction; his repeated assurance, devil take him, that he has understood is an enormous, enormous distance by way of the greatest possible detour. But then the definition is correct. If someone does what is right, then surely he does not sin; and if he does not do what is right, then he has not understood it either. If he had truly understood it, it would soon move him to do it, would soon make him a Chladni figure of his understanding: ergo, sin is ignorance.[14]

But where, then, does the defect lie? It lies in something the Socratic itself is aware of and remedies, but only to a certain degree: that a dialectical qualification is lacking concerning the transition from having understood something to doing it. In this transition the [206] Christian begins. By going this way it comes to show that sin lies in the will, arriving at the concept of defiance; and then, to make the end really fast, the dogma of original sin is added—alas, for the secret of speculation in comprehending is precisely to sew without fastening the end and without tying a knot in the thread, and that is why it can, marvelously, go on sewing and sewing, i.e., pulling the thread through.

Christianity, on the other hand, fastens the end by means of the paradox.

14 A Chladni figure (*Klangfigur*) is the pattern that sand forms on a vibrating plate, making the sound visible; here, a life that visibly expresses its understanding.

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I den rene Idealitet, hvor der ikke er Tale om det enkelte virkelige Menneske, der er Overgangen nødvendig (i Systemet gaaer jo ogsaa Alt for sig med Nødvendighed), eller der er slet ingen Vanskelighed forbunden med Overgangen fra det at forstaae til det at gjøre. Dette er Græciteten (dog ikke det Socratiske, thi dertil er Socrates for meget Ethiker). Og ganske dette Samme er egentlig hele den nyere Philosophies Hemmelighed; thi det er dette: cogito ergo sum, at tænke er at være; (christeligt derimod hedder det: Dig skeer, som Du troer, eller, som Du troer, saa er Du, at troe er at være). Man vil saaledes see, at den nyere Philosophi hverken er mere eller mindre end Hedenskab.

Dette er nu endda ikke det Værste; at være i Slægtskab med Socrates ikke det Ringeste. Men det aldeles Usocratiske i den nyere Philosophi er, at den vil bilde sig og os ind, at dette er Christendom.

I Virkelighedens Verden derimod, hvor der er Tale om det enkelte Menneske, der er denne lille bitte Overgang fra at have forstaaet til at gjøre, den er ikke altid cito citissime, ikke, at jeg, i Mangel af at tale philosophisk, skal tale tydsk, geschwind wie der Wind. Tværtimod, her begynder en meget vidtløftig Historie.

I Aands-Livet er der ingen Stilstand (egentlig heller ingen Tilstand, Alt er Actualitet); dersom altsaa et Menneske ikke i samme Secund, som han har erkjendt det Rette, gjør det – ja saa gaaer nu for det første Erkjendelsen af Kog. Og dernæst saa bliver Spørgsmaalet, hvad synes Villien om det Erkjendte. Villien er et Dialektisk, og har igjen under sig hele den lavere Natur i Mennesket. Synes denne nu ikke om det Erkjendte, saa følger deraf vel ikke, at Villien gaaer hen og gjør det Modsatte af hvad Erkjendelsen forstod, saa stærke Modsætninger forekomme vistnok sjeldnere; men saa lader Villien nogen Tid gaae hen, det bliver et Interim, det hedder: vi vil dog see det an til imorgen.

Under alt Dette bliver Erkjendelsen dunklere og dunklere, og det Lavere seirer [207] mere og mere; ak, thi det Gode maa gjøres strax, strax idet det er erkjendt (og derfor gaaer det i den rene Idealitet saa let med

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In pure ideality, where there is no question of the single actual human being, the transition is necessary (in the system, after all, everything proceeds with necessity), or there is no difficulty at all connected with the transition from understanding to doing. This is the Greek mind (though not the Socratic, for Socrates is too much of an ethicist for that). And exactly this same thing is really the whole secret of modern philosophy; for it is this: cogito ergo sum [I think, therefore I am], to think is to be; (in Christian terms, on the other hand, it runs: be it done to you as you believe; or, as you believe, so you are; to believe is to be). So one will see that modern philosophy is neither more nor less than paganism.[15]

Yet this is not the worst; to be related to Socrates is no mean thing. But what is utterly un-Socratic in modern philosophy is that it wants to make itself and us believe that this is Christianity.

In the world of actuality, on the other hand, where it is a question of the single human being, there is this tiny little transition from having understood to doing. It is not always cito citissime [quickly, most quickly], not—to speak German, for want of speaking philosophically—geschwind wie der Wind [swift as the wind]. On the contrary, here a very long-winded story begins.

In the life of the spirit there is no standstill (really no state either; everything is actuality). So if a person does not do what is right in the very second he has recognized it—well, then, first of all, the knowledge goes off the boil. And next the question becomes what the will thinks of what has been recognized. The will is a dialectical factor and has in turn beneath it the whole lower nature in a human being. If the will does not like what has been recognized, it does not follow that it goes and does the opposite of what the knowledge understood—such strong opposites are doubtless rarer. But the will lets some time pass; there is an interim; it says: let's wait and see until tomorrow.

Through all this the knowledge grows dimmer and dimmer, and the lower wins out [207] more and more. Alas, for the good must be done at once, at once, the moment it is recognized (and that is why

15 *Cogito ergo sum* is Descartes's founding principle; the Christian saying echoes Matthew 8:13.

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Overgangen fra at tænke til at være, thi der er Alt strax), men det Lavere har sin Styrke i at trække ud. Saa smaat har Villien ikke noget mod, at dette skeer, den seer næsten igjennem Fingre dermed. Og naar saa Erkjendelsen er blevet behørig dunkel, saa kan Erkjendelsen og Villien bedre forstaae hinanden; tilsidst samtykke de ganske, thi nu er Erkjendelsen gaaet over paa Villiens Side, og erkjender, at det er ganske rigtigt som den vil det.

SKS 11.20 Og saaledes lever maaskee en stor Mængde Mennesker; de arbeide saa smaat paa at fordunkle deres ethiske og ethisk-religieuse Erkjenden, der vil føre dem ud i Afgjørelser og Conseqventser, som det Lavere i dem ikke elsker; derimod udvide de deres æsthetiske og metaphysiske Erkjenden, hvilket, ethisk, er Adspredelse.

Dog med Alt dette ere vi endnu ikke komne videre end til det Socratiske; thi, vilde Socrates sige, skeer dette, saa viser det jo, at et saadant Menneske dog ikke har forstaaet det Rette. Dette vil sige, til at udsige, at En med sit Vidende gjør det Urette, med Viden om det Rette gjør det Urette, har Græciteten ikke Mod, saa hjælper den og siger: naar En gjør det Urette, har han ikke forstaaet det Rette.

Ganske rigtigt, og videre kan heller intet *Menneske* komme; intet Menneske kan ved sig selv og af sig selv udsige, hvad Synd er, just fordi han er i Synden; al hans Talen om Synden er i Grunden Besmykkelse for Synden, en Undskyldning, en syndig Formildelse. Derfor begynder Christendommen ogsaa paa en anden Maade, med, at der maa en Aabenbaring fra Gud til, for at oplyse Mennesket om, hvad Synd er, at Synden dog ikke ligger i, at Mennesket ikke har forstaaet det Rette, men i at han ikke vil forstaae det, og i at han ikke vil det.

Allerede med Hensyn til den Distinktion: ikke at *kunne* forstaae og ikke at *ville* forstaae, oplyser Socrates egentligen Intet, medens han derimod er Stormesteren for alle Ironikere i at operere ved Hjælp af den Distinktion mellem at forstaae og forstaae. Socrates forklarer, at Den, som ikke gjør det Rette, heller ikke har forstaaet det; men Christendommen gaaer lidt længere tilbage og siger, det er fordi han ikke vil forstaae det, og dette igjen, fordi han ikke vil det Rette.

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in pure ideality the transition from thinking to being goes so easily, for there everything is at once); but the lower has its strength in dragging things out. Little by little the will has nothing against this happening; it almost turns a blind eye to it. And when the knowledge has become duly obscured, knowledge and will can understand each other better; in the end they agree completely, for now the knowledge has gone over to the side of the will and acknowledges that it is quite right, just the way the will wants it.

And that is perhaps how a great many people live. Little by little they work at obscuring their ethical and ethical-religious knowing, which would lead them out into decisions and consequences that the lower in them does not love; instead they expand their aesthetic and metaphysical knowing, which, ethically, is distraction.

Yet with all this we have still got no further than the Socratic; for, Socrates would say, if this happens, it only shows that such a person has not understood what is right after all. That is, the Greek mind lacks the courage to state that someone knowingly does what is wrong, with knowledge of what is right does what is wrong; so it helps itself out and says: when someone does what is wrong, he has not understood what is right.

Quite right; and no *human being* can get any further. No human being can, by himself and of himself, state what sin is, precisely because he is in sin; all his talk about sin is at bottom a whitewashing of sin, an excuse, a sinful mitigation. That is why Christianity also begins in another way: with the claim that a revelation from God is needed to enlighten a human being about what sin is—that sin lies not in a person's not having understood what is right, but in his not wanting to understand it, and in his not wanting it.

Even as regards the distinction between not *being able* to understand and not *wanting* to understand, Socrates really sheds no light, whereas he is the grand master of all ironists in operating with the distinction between understanding and understanding. Socrates explains that whoever does not do what is right has not understood it either; but Christianity goes a little further back and says it is because he does not want to understand it, and

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this in turn because he does not want what is right.

Og dernæst lærer den, at et Menneske gjør det Urette (den egentlige Trods), uagtet han forstaaer det Rette, eller lader være at gjøre det Rette, uagtet han forstaaer det; [208] kort, den christelige Lære om Synden er lutter Nærgaaenhed mod Mennesket, Beskyldning paa Beskyldning, den er den Paastand, hvilken det Guddommelige som Aktor tillader sig at nedlægge mod Mennesket.

And next it teaches that a person does what is wrong (defiance proper) even though he understands what is right, or refrains from doing what is right even though he understands it; [208] in short, the Christian doctrine of sin is nothing but impertinence toward the human being, accusation upon accusation; it is the charge that the divine, as prosecutor, takes the liberty of bringing against the human being.

SKS 11.20 Men kan noget Menneske begribe dette Christelige? Ingenlunde, det er jo ogsaa det Christelige, altsaa til Forargelse. Det maa troes. At begribe er Menneskets Omfang i Forhold til det Menneskelige; men at troe er Menneskets Forhold til det Guddommelige. Hvorledes forklarer da Christendommen dette Ubegribelige? Ganske conseqvent, paa en ligesaa ubegribelig Maade, ved Hjælp af, at det er aabenbaret.

But can any human being comprehend this Christian teaching? By no means; it is, after all, the Christian teaching, and therefore an offense. It must be believed. To comprehend is the range of a human being's relation to the human; but to believe is a human being's relation to the divine. How, then, does Christianity explain this incomprehensible thing? Quite consistently, in an equally incomprehensible way: by its having been revealed.

Christelig forstaaet ligger Synden altsaa i Villien, ikke i Erkjendelsen; og denne Villiens Fordærvethed gaaer ud over den Enkeltes Bevidsthed. Dette er det ganske Conseqvente; thi ellers maatte jo betræffende hver Enkelt det Spørgsmaal opkomme, hvorledes Synden begyndte.

Understood in Christian terms, then, sin lies in the will, not in knowing; and this corruption of the will goes beyond the consciousness of the single individual. This is entirely consistent; for otherwise the question of how sin began would have to arise with regard to each single individual.

Her er da igjen Forargelsens Kjendetegn. Forargelsens Mulighed ligger i: at der skal en Aabenbaring fra Gud til for at oplyse Mennesket om, hvad Synd er, og hvor dybt den stikker. Det naturlige Menneske, Hedningen, tænker som saa: »lad gaae, jeg indrømmer, at jeg ikke har forstaaet alle Ting i Himlen og paa Jorden, skal der en Aabenbaring til, saa lad den oplyse os om det Himmelske; men at der skulde en Aabenbaring til for at oplyse hvad Synd er, er da det Urimeligste af Alt.

Here again, then, is the mark of offense. The possibility of offense lies in this: that a revelation from God is needed to enlighten a human being about what sin is and how deep it goes. The natural human being, the pagan, reasons like this: "All right, I admit that I have not understood all things in heaven and on earth. If a revelation is needed, then let it enlighten us about heavenly things. But that a revelation should be needed to explain what sin is—that is surely the most unreasonable thing of all.

Jeg udgiver mig ikke for at være noget fuldkomment Menneske, langt fra, men det veed jeg dog, og jeg er jo villig til at indrømme det, hvor langt jeg er fra Fuldkommenhed: skulde jeg saa ikke vide, hvad Synd er?« Men Christendommen svarer: nei, det er hvad Du allermindst veed, hvor langt Du er fra Fuldkommenhed, og hvad Synd er. – See, i den Forstand er rigtignok, christelig, Synd Uvidenhed, den er Uvidenhed om hvad Synd er.

I don't pretend to be a perfect human being, far from it. But this much I do know, and I am quite willing to admit it: how far I am from perfection. Should I not, then, know what sin is?" But Christianity answers: No, that is what you know least of all—how far you are from perfection, and what sin is.—See, in that sense sin is indeed, in Christian terms, ignorance: it is ignorance of what sin is.

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Definitionen paa Synd, som blev givet i forrige Capitel, maa derfor endnu saaledes fuldstændiggjøres: Synd er, efter ved en Aabenbaring fra Gud at være oplyst om hvad Synd er, for Gud fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv, eller fortvivlet at ville være sig selv.

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The definition of sin given in the previous chapter must therefore be completed as follows: sin is—after one has been enlightened by a revelation from God about what sin is—before God in despair not wanting to be oneself, or in despair wanting to be oneself.

CHAPTER 3. SIN IS NOT A NEGATION BUT A POSITION

Against speculative theology, sin is a positive reality that must be believed, not comprehended.

DANISH

SKS 11.20 At dette er saaledes, er Noget, den orthodoxe Dogmatik og Orthodoxien overhovedet bestandigt har kjæmpet for, og som pantheistisk afviist enhver Definition af Synden, der gjorde denne til noget blot Negativt, Svaghed, Sandselighed, Endelighed, Uvidenhed o. desl. Orthodoxien har meget rigtigt seet, at her skal Slaget staae, eller for at erindre om det Foregaaende, her er det der skal fæstes Ende, her gjælder det om at holde igjen; Orthodoxien har rigtigt seet, at hele Christendommen, naar Synden bestemmes negativ, er holdningsløs. Derfor indskjærper Orthodoxien, at der maa en Aabenbaring fra Gud til for at lære det faldne Menneske, hvad Synd er, hvilken Meddelelse saa, ganske conseqvent, maa troes, da den er et Dogma.

Og det forstaaer sig, Paradoxet, Troen, Dogmet, disse tre Bestemmelser danne en Alliance og Overeensstemmelse, der er det sikkreste Hold og Bolværk mod al hedensk Viisdom.

Saaledes Orthodoxien. Ved en besynderlig Misforstaaelse har saa en saakaldet spekulativ Dogmatik, der rigtignok paa en betænkelig Maade indlader sig med Philosophien, meent at kunne *begribe* denne Bestemmelse, at Synden er en Position. Men er dette sandt, saa er Synden en Negation. Hemmeligheden i al Begriben er, at selve dette at begribe er høiere end al Position, som den sætter. Begrebet sætter en Position, men det at den begribes, er just, at den negeres. Selv dog til en vis Grad opmærksom herpaa, har saa den spekulative Dogmatik ikke vidst anden Hjælp end, hvad der rigtignok kun lidet anstaaer en philosophisk Videnskab, at henkaste et Detaschement af Forsikkringer paa det Punkt, hvor Bevægelsen gjøres.

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That this is so is something orthodox dogmatics, and orthodoxy in general, have constantly fought for; and they have rejected as pantheistic every definition of sin that made it something merely negative—weakness, sensuousness, finitude, ignorance, and the like. Orthodoxy has seen quite rightly that here is where the battle must be fought; or, to recall what was said earlier, here is where the rope must be made fast, here is where one must hold firm. Orthodoxy has rightly seen that if sin is defined negatively, the whole of Christianity loses its footing. That is why orthodoxy insists that a revelation from God is needed to teach fallen humanity what sin is—a communication which, quite consistently, must then be believed, since it is a dogma.

And naturally the paradox, faith, dogma—these three qualifications form an alliance and an accord that is the surest stronghold and bulwark against all pagan wisdom.

So much for orthodoxy. Through a strange misunderstanding, a so-called speculative dogmatics—which, to be sure, involves itself with philosophy in a dubious way—has then thought it could *comprehend* this qualification, that sin is a position. But if that is true, then sin is a negation. The secret of all comprehending is that the act of comprehending is itself higher than any position it posits. The concept posits a position, but the fact that the position is comprehended is precisely its being negated. Speculative dogmatics, itself to some extent aware of this, has known no other remedy than—something that hardly befits a philosophical science—to throw out a detachment of assurances at the point where the movement is made.[16]

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Man forsikkrer den ene Gang høitideligere end den anden, mere og mere sværgende og bandende, at Synden er en Position, at det er Pantheisme og Rationalisme, og Gud veed Alt det det er, men altsammen Noget, som den spekulative Dogmatik abrenuntierer og afskyer, at sige at Synden blot er en Negation – og saa gaaer man over til at begribe det, at Synden er en Position. Det vil sige, den er dog kun til en vis Grad Position, ikke mere end at man dog nok kan begribe det.

SKS 11.21 Og den samme Spekulationens Tvetungethed viser sig da ogsaa paa et andet Punkt, dog betræffende det Samme. Bestemmelsen Synd, eller hvorledes Synden bestemmes, er afgjørende for Bestemmelsen: Anger. Da det nu er saa spekulativt dette med Negationens Negation, saa er der ikke Andet for, saa maa Angeren være Negationens Negation – og saa bliver jo Synden Negationen. – Det var forøvrigt vistnok at ønske, at engang en ædruelig Tænker vilde oplyse, hvorvidt dette reent Logiske, der erindrer om Logikens første Forhold til det Gramaticalske (to Negtelser bekræfte) og om det Mathematiske, hvorvidt dette Logiske har sin Gyldighed i Virkelighedens Verden, i Qvaliteternes Verden; om overhovedet ikke Qvaliteternes Dialektik er en anden; om »Overgangen« ikke her spiller en anden Rolle. Sub specie æterni, æterno modo o.

s. v. er jo det Spatierende slet ikke til, derfor *er* Alt, og der er slet ingen Overgang. At *sætte* i dette abstrakte Medium er derfor eo ipso det Samme som at *ophæve.* Men at betragte Virkeligheden paa samme Maade er dog noget nær Afsindighed. Man kan ogsaa ganske in abstracto sige: paa Imperfectum følger Perfectum. Men dersom i Virkelighedens Verden en Mand deraf vilde slutte, at det fulgte af sig selv og fulgte strax, at et Værk, han ikke fuldendte (imperfectum) blev fuldendt: saa var han dog vel gal. Men saaledes ogsaa med Syndens saakaldte Position, naar det Medium, hvori den poneres, er den rene Tænkning; det Medium er meget for flygtigt til at det kan blive Alvor med Positionen.

Dog alt Sligt beskjæftiger mig ikke her. Jeg holder bestandigt blot fast ved det Christelige, at Synden er en

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One assures us, each time more solemnly than the last, swearing and cursing more and more, that sin is a position; that to say sin is merely a negation is pantheism and rationalism and God knows what else, but all of it something that speculative dogmatics renounces and abhors—and then one proceeds to comprehend that sin is a position. That is to say, it is a position only to a certain degree, no more than can still be comprehended.

And the same duplicity of speculation shows itself at another point as well, though one concerning the same thing. The qualification of sin, how sin is defined, is decisive for the qualification of repentance. Now, since this business of the negation of the negation is so very speculative, there is nothing for it: repentance must be the negation of the negation—and then sin, of course, becomes the negation.—It is certainly to be wished, incidentally, that some sober thinker would one day explain to what extent this purely logical move—which recalls logic's original relation to grammar (two negatives make an affirmative) and to mathematics—to what extent this logical move is valid in the world of actuality, the world of qualities; whether the dialectic of qualities is not altogether a different one; whether "transition" does not play a different role here. Sub specie æterni, æterno modo [under the aspect of eternity, in the eternal mode], and so

on, nothing is spaced out at all; therefore everything *is*, and there is no transition whatever. To *posit* in this abstract medium is therefore eo ipso [by that very fact] the same as to *cancel*. But to regard actuality in the same way is close to madness. One can also say, quite in abstracto [in the abstract]: the perfect follows the imperfect. But if in the world of actuality a man were to conclude from this that a work he did not finish (imperfectum [unfinished]) got finished of itself, and at once—well, he would surely be mad. And so it is, too, with sin's so-called position when the medium in which it is posited is pure thought; that medium is far too volatile for the position to become a serious matter.

But none of this concerns me here. I simply hold fast, always, to the Christian teaching that sin is a position—not, however, as though it could be com-

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Position – dog ikke som kunde det begribes, men som et Paradox, der maa troes. Dette er i mine Tanker det Rigtige. Naar man blot kan faae alle Forsøgene med at begribe gjorte aabenbare som selvmodsigende, saa faaer Sagen sin rette Stilling, det bliver saa klart, at det maa overlades til Troen, om En vil troe eller ikke. – Jeg kan godt begribe (og dette er da ingenlunde for guddommeligt til at begribes), at En som nu endelig maa begribe, og kun kan synes om hvad der udgiver sig for at begribe, finder Dette meget fattigt.

Men dersom hele Christendommen hænger i dette, at den skal troes, og ikke begribes, at den *enten* skal troes *eller* man skal forarges paa den: er det saa saa fortjenstligt med at ville begribe? Er det fortjenstligt, eller er det ikke snarere enten Uforskammenhed eller Tankeløshed at ville begribe [211] Det, der ikke vil begribes? Naar en Konge faaer den Idee at ville være ganske incognito, aldeles behandles som en simpel Mand, er det saa ogsaa, fordi det synes Menneskene i Almindelighed mere Udmærkelse at vise ham kongelig Hylding, er det saa ogsaa det Rigtige at gjøre det? Eller er det ikke netop at hævde sig selv og sin Tankegang lige over for Kongens Villie, at gjøre som man selv vil, istedetfor at bøie sig?

SKS 11.21 Eller mon det vilde behage Kongen, jo mere opfindsomt et saadant Menneske kunde være i at vise ham undersaatlig Ærbødighed, naar Kongen ikke vil behandles saaledes, det er, jo mere opfindsomt et saadant Menneske kunde være i at gjøre Kongens Villie imod? – Lad saa andre beundre og prise Den, der giver sig ud for at kunne begribe det Christelige: jeg anseer det for en ligefrem ethisk Opgave, der kræver maaskee ikke saa lidt Selvfornegtelse, i saa speculative Tider, naar alle »de Andre« have travlt med at begribe, da at tilstaae, at man hverken kan eller skal begribe det. Dog just dette er vistnok hvad Tiden, hvad Christenheden behøver: lidt socratisk Uvidenhed i Forhold til det Christelige; men vel at mærke lidt »socratisk« Uvidenhed.

Lad os aldrig glemme – dog hvor mange ere vel De, som nogensinde ret have vidst det, eller tænkt det – lad os aldrig glemme, at Socrates's Uvidenhed var en Art Gudsfrygt og Gudsdyrkelse, at hans Uvidenhed var paa Græsk det Jødiske: at Gudsfrygt er Viisdoms Begyndelse. Lad os aldrig glemme, at just af Ærbødighed for

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prehended, but as a paradox that must be believed. This, in my view, is what is right. If only all the attempts to comprehend can be shown to be self-contradictory, the matter is put in its proper light; it then becomes clear that it must be left to faith whether one will believe or not.—I can well comprehend (and this is by no means too divine to be comprehended) that someone who simply must comprehend, and can only like what claims to comprehend, finds this very meager.

But if the whole of Christianity hinges on this—that it is to be believed, not comprehended; that it is *either* to be believed *or* to be taken offense at—is it really so meritorious to want to comprehend? Is it meritorious, or is it not rather either impudence or thoughtlessness to want to comprehend [211] what does not want to be comprehended? When a king gets the idea of going entirely incognito, of being treated in every respect as an ordinary man, is it then right—just because people in general think it a greater mark of distinction to pay him royal homage—is it right to do so? Or is it not precisely asserting oneself and one's own way of thinking against the king's will, doing as one pleases instead of submitting?

Or would it please the king, the more inventive such a person could be in showing him a subject's deference when the king does not want to be treated that way—that is, the more inventive such a person could be in going against the king's will? —Let others admire and praise the one who claims to be able to comprehend Christianity. I regard it as a straightforward ethical task, one that perhaps demands no small amount of self-denial, in such speculative times, when all "the others" are busy comprehending, to confess that one neither can nor should comprehend it. Yet this is surely just what the age, what Christendom, needs: a little Socratic ignorance with regard to Christianity—but, mark well, a little "Socratic" ignorance.

Let us never forget—but how many are there, really, who have ever properly known it or thought it?—let us never forget that Socrates' ignorance was a kind of fear of God and worship of God; that his ignorance was, in Greek, the Jewish saying: the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

16 "Position" means something posited, a positive reality (Latin *ponere*, to posit), as opposed to a negation or lack. "Speculative dogmatics" is theology in the Hegelian manner, such as that of Philipp Marheineke and H. L. Martensen.

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Guddommen var han uvidende, at han, forsaavidt en Hedning kunde det, som *Dommer* holdt Vagt ved Grændseskjellet mellem Gud – og Menneske, vogtende paa, at Qvalitets-Forskjellighedens Dyb befæstedes dem imellem, mellem Gud og Menneske, at Gud – og Menneske ikke saadan philosophice, poetice o. s. v. løb i Eet. See, derfor var Socrates den Uvidende, og derfor kjendte Guddommen ham at være den meest Vidende.

– Men Christendommen lærer, at alt det Christelige kun er til for Troen; derfor vil det netop være en socratisk, gudfrygtig Uvidenhed, der ved Uvidenhed værger Troen mod Spekulationen, vogtende paa, at Qvalitets-Forskjellighedens Dyb mellem Gud – og Menneske maa være befæstet som den er det i Paradoxet og Troen, at Gud og Menneske ikke endnu forfærdeligere end nogensinde i Hedenskabet, saadan philosophice, poetice o. s. v. løbe sammen i Eet – i Systemet.

Kun fra een Side kan der da her være Tale om at belyse, at Synden er [212] en Position. I det foregaaende Afsnit er i Fremstillingen af Fortvivlelse bestandigt efterviist en Stigen. Udtrykket for denne Stigen var deels Potentsation af Bevidstheden om Selvet, deels Potentsation fra Liden til bevidst Handling. Begge Udtryk ere igjen i Forening Udtrykket for, at Fortvivlelsen ikke kommer udvortes fra, men indvortes fra. Og i samme Grad er den jo ogsaa mere og mere ponerende. Men ifølge den opstillede Definition paa Synd, hører til Synd det ved Forestillingen om Gud uendelig potentserede Selv, og saaledes igjen den størst mulige Bevidsthed om Synden som en Gjerning.

SKS 11.212 Dette er Udtrykket for, at Synden er en Position, det at den er *for Gud* er just det Positive i den.

Forøvrigt har den Bestemmelse, at Synden er en Position, ogsaa i en ganske anden Forstand Forargelsens Mulighed, det Paradoxe i sig. Det Paradoxe er nemlig Conseqventsen i Forhold til Læren om Forsoningen. Først gaaer Christendommen hen og sætter Synden saaledes fast som Position, at den menneskelige Forstand aldrig kan begribe det; og saa er det den samme christelige Lære,

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Let us never forget that it was precisely out of reverence for the deity that he was ignorant; that, insofar as a pagan could, he kept watch as a *judge* at the boundary between God—and human being, guarding that the abyss of qualitative difference between them, between God and human being, be firmly fixed, so that God—and human being did not, philosophice, poetice, etc. [philosophically, poetically], run together into one. See, that is why Socrates was the ignorant one, and that is why the deity recognized him as the most knowing.[17]

—But Christianity teaches that everything Christian exists only for faith; therefore it will be precisely a Socratic, God-fearing ignorance that, by means of ignorance, guards faith against speculation, keeping watch that the abyss of qualitative difference between God—and human being be fixed as it is in the paradox and in faith, so that God and human being do not, even more terribly than ever in paganism, philosophice, poetice, etc., run together into one—in the System.

Only from one side, then, can there be any question here of shedding light on sin's being [212] a position. In the preceding part, the account of despair consistently pointed out an ascent. The expression for this ascent was partly the intensification of the consciousness of the self, partly the intensification from suffering to conscious action. Taken together, both expressions in turn express that despair comes not from outside but from within. And to the same degree it is also more and more positing. But according to the definition of sin that has been set out, sin involves the self infinitely intensified by the conception of God, and so, in turn, the greatest possible consciousness of sin as a deed.

—This is the expression for sin's being a position: that it is *before God* is precisely what is positive in it.

Moreover, the qualification that sin is a position also contains, in quite another sense, the possibility of offense, the paradoxical. For the paradox lies in its consequence for the doctrine of the Atonement. First Christianity goes and fixes sin so firmly as a position that the human understanding can never comprehend it; and then it is the same

17 Proverbs 9:10; the "abyss … fixed" echoes Luke 16:26. The deity is Apollo, whose oracle at Delphi declared Socrates the wisest of men.

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der igjen paatager sig at skaffe denne Position saaledes bort, som den menneskelige Forstand aldrig kan begribe det. Spekulationen, der snakker sig fra Paradoxerne, slaaer lidt af paa begge Steder, saa gaaer det lettere: den gjør ikke Synden slet saa positiv – og desuagtet kan den dog ikke faae det i sit Hoved, at Synden ganske skulde være glemt.

Men Christendommen, der er første Opfinder af Paradoxerne, er ogsaa her saa paradox som mulig; den ligesom arbeider sig selv imod, idet den sætter Synden saa fast som Position, at det nu da synes at blive en fuldkommen Umulighed med at faae den bort igjen – og saa er det netop Christendommen, der, ved Forsoningen, igjen vil skaffe Synden bort saa ganske, at den er som druknet i Havet.

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Christian doctrine that undertakes to do away with this position in a way the human understanding can never comprehend. Speculation, which talks its way out of the paradoxes, knocks a little off at both ends, and then things go more easily: it does not make sin quite so positive—and yet, for all that, it cannot get it into its head that sin should be entirely forgotten.

But Christianity, the first inventor of the paradoxes, is as paradoxical as possible here too. It works, as it were, against itself, fixing sin so firmly as a position that it now seems a complete impossibility to get rid of it again—and then it is precisely Christianity that, through the Atonement, will do away with sin so completely that it is as if drowned in the sea.[18]

APPENDIX TO A. IS SIN THEN VERY RARE?

Most lives in Christendom are too spiritless even to be called sin in the strict sense.

DANISH

Der blev i det første Afsnit mindet om, at jo intensivere Fortvivlelsen bliver, desto sjeldnere er den i Verden. Men nu er jo Synden den endnu engang qvalitativt potentserede Fortvivlelse, saa maa denne vel være [213] ganske sjelden? Forunderlige Vanskelighed! Christendommen underlægger Alt under Synd; vi have stræbt at fremstille det Christelige saa strengt som muligt: og saa fremkommer dette besynderlige Resultat, dette besynderlige Resultat, at Synd jo saa slet ikke findes i Hedenskabet, men kun i Jødedom og Christendom, og der igjen vel meget sjeldent.

SKS 11.21 Dog er det, men kun i een Forstand, ganske rigtigt saaledes. »Efter ved en Aabenbaring fra Gud at være oplyst om hvad Synd er, for Gud fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv, eller fortvivlet at ville være sig selv«, er at synde – og ganske vist, det er sjeldent, at et Menneske er saa udviklet, sig selv saa gjennemsigtigt, at dette kan passe paa ham. Men hvad følger saa deraf? Ja, det maa man vel agte paa, thi her er en egen dialektisk Vending. Det fulgte jo ikke af, at et Menneske ikke i intensivere Forstand er fortvivlet, deraf fulgte jo ikke, at han ikke var fortvivlet.

Tværtimod; der blev just viist, at de fleste, langt, langt de fleste Mennesker ere fortvivlede, men i en lavere Grad af

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In the first part it was pointed out that the more intensive despair becomes, the rarer it is in the world. But now, since sin is despair qualitatively intensified yet once more, then sin must surely be [213] quite rare? A strange difficulty! Christianity subordinates everything to sin; we have tried to present the Christian view as rigorously as possible: and then this strange result emerges, this strange result, that sin is not found in paganism at all, but only in Judaism and Christianity, and there, again, very rarely.

Yet it is quite right that this is so—but only in one sense. "After being enlightened by a revelation from God about what sin is, before God in despair not wanting to be oneself, or in despair wanting to be oneself" is to sin—and certainly it is rare for a human being to be so developed, so transparent to himself, that this can apply to him. But what follows from that? Well, that needs careful attention, for here there is a peculiar dialectical turn. It did not follow from a person's not being in despair in the more intensive sense—it did not follow from this that he was not in despair.

On the contrary; it was shown precisely that most people, by far the most people, are in despair, but

18 An allusion to Micah 7:19: "You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

DANISH

Fortvivlelse. Det er jo heller ikke nogen Fortjeneste at være fortvivlet i en høiere Grad. Æsthetisk er det et Fortrin, thi æsthetisk sees der blot paa Kraft; men, ethisk, er den intensivere Fortvivlelse længere fra Frelsen end den lavere.

Og saaledes er det ogsaa med Synden. De fleste Menneskers Liv er, indifferent-dialektisk bestemmet, saa langt fra det Gode (Troen), at det næsten er for aandløst til at kaldes Synd, ja næsten for aandløst til at kaldes Fortvivlelse.

At være i strengeste Forstand en Synder er nu vistnok saare langt fra at være noget Fortjenstligt. Men paa den anden Side, hvor i al Verden skal der kunne findes en væsentlig Syndsbevidsthed (og see, den vil Christendommen nok have) i et Liv, der er sunket saaledes i Trivialitet, pjattet Efterabelse af »de Andre«, at man næsten ikke kan kalde det, at det er for aandløst til at kaldes Synd, kun værd som Skriften siger »at udspyttes.«

Dog hermed er Sagen ikke færdig, thi Syndens Dialektik fanger saa blot paa en anden Maade. Hvorledes gaaer det nemlig til, at et Menneskes Liv bliver saa aandløst, at det er, som kunde Christendommen slet ikke anbringes i Forhold dertil, ligesom naar en Donkraft (og som en Donkraft saaledes er Christendommens Opløftelse) ikke kan anbringes, [214] fordi der ingen Grund er, men kun Mose og Hengesæk? Er det Noget, som hænder et Menneske? Nei, det er Menneskets egen Skyld. Aandløshed fødes intet Menneske med; og hvor Mange der end i Døden bringe dette med sig som det eneste Udbytte af Livet – det er ikke Livets Skyld.

SKS 11.218 Men siges maa det, og saa uforbeholdent som muligt, at den saakaldte Christenhed (i hvilken saadan Alle millionviis ere saadan uden videre Christne, saa der er lige saa mange, netop lige saa mange Christne som der er Mennesker) ikke blot er en elendig Udgave af det Christelige, fuld af meningsforstyrrende Trykfeil og tankeløse Udeladelser og Tilsætninger, men at den er en Misbrug af det, den at have taget Christendommen forfængelig. Der fødes i et lille Land vel neppe tre Digtere i hver Generation, men Præster er der nok af, mange flere end der kan befordres. Man taler i Forhold til en Digter om at have Kald; til at blive Præst er det i Mængden af

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in a lower degree of despair. Nor is there any merit in being in despair in a higher degree. Aesthetically, that is an advantage, for aesthetically only strength is considered; but ethically, the more intensive despair is further from salvation than the lower.

And so it is with sin, too. The lives of most people, defined in dialectical indifference, are so far from the good (faith) that they are almost too spiritless to be called sin—indeed, almost too spiritless to be called despair.

To be a sinner in the strictest sense is, of course, very far from being something meritorious. But on the other hand, where in all the world is an essential consciousness of sin to be found (and see, that is what Christianity wants) in a life so sunk in triviality, in silly aping of "the others," that one can scarcely even say of it that it is too spiritless to be called sin—a life worth only, as Scripture says, "to be spat out"?[19]

Yet that does not settle the matter, for the dialectic of sin simply catches one in another way. How does it happen, namely, that a person's life becomes so spiritless that it is as if Christianity could not be brought to bear on it at all—as when a jack (and Christianity's lifting power is like a jack) cannot be set in place [214] because there is no firm ground, only bog and quagmire? Is it something that happens to a person? No, it is the person's own fault. No one is born spiritless; and however many take this with them into death as the only yield of their lives—it is not life's fault.

But it must be said, and as unreservedly as possible, that so-called Christendom (in which everyone, by the millions, is just like that a Christian as a matter of course, so that there are as many, exactly as many, Christians as there are people) is not only a wretched edition of Christianity, full of misprints that distort the meaning and of thoughtless omissions and additions, but an abuse of it: it has taken Christianity in vain. In a small country scarcely three poets are born in each generation, but there are plenty of pastors, many more than can be given appointments. With regard to a poet one speaks of having a calling; to become a pastor,

19 Revelation 3:16.

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Menneskers (altsaa af Christnes) Forestilling nok at have Examen.

Og dog, dog er en sand Præst noget endnu Sjeldnere end en sand Digter, og dog er det Ord »Kald« oprindeligen tilhørende det Gudelige. Men i Forhold til det at være Digter har man dog i Christenheden endnu bevaret en Forestilling om, at det er Noget, og at der er Noget i, at det er et Kald. Det at være Præst derimod er i Mængden af Menneskers (altsaa af Christnes) Øine forladt af enhver opløftende Forestilling, uden det mindste Mysterieuse in puris naturalibus en Levevei. »Kald« betyder et Embede; der tales om at faae et Kald; men om at have et Kald – ja det tales der ogsaa om, om at En har et Kald at give bort.

Ak, og dette Ords Skjebne i Christenheden er som et Motto paa hele det Christeliges. Ulykken er ikke, at det Christelige ikke siges (saaledes er Ulykken jo heller ikke, at der ikke er Præster nok); men det siges saaledes, at der af Mængden af Mennesker tilsidst slet Intet tænkes derved (ligesom der ved det at være Præst af denne Mængde slet intet Andet tænkes end ved det aldeles Søgne at være Kjøbmand, Prokurator, Bogbinder, Veterinair o. s. v.), saa det Høieste og Helligste slet intet Indtryk gjør, men lyder og høres som Noget, der nu saadan engang, Gud veed hvorfor, er blevet Skik og Brug, som saa meget Andet.

Hvad Under saa, at man – i Mangel af at finde sin egen Adfærd uforsvarlig – finder det fornødent at forsvare Christendommen. –

SKS 11.21 En Præst burde jo dog vel være en Troende. Og en Troende! En Troende er dog vel en Forelsket; ja, den af alle Forelskede meest Forelskede, han er dog egentlig, i Henseende til Begeistring, kun som en Yngling i Sammenligning med en Troende. Tænk nu en Forelsket. Ikke sandt, han vilde da være istand til Dag ud og Dag ind, saa lang Dagen var, og Natten med, at tale om sin Forelskelse.

Men troer Du det kunde falde ham ind, troer Du det vilde være ham muligt, troer Du ikke, det vilde være ham som

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in the notion of most people (and so of most Christians), it is enough to have passed an examination.[20]

And yet, yet a true pastor is something even rarer than a true poet, and yet the word “calling” originally belongs to the religious sphere. But with regard to being a poet, Christendom has at least preserved a notion that it is something, and that there is something to its being a calling. Being a pastor, on the other hand, has in the eyes of most people (and so of most Christians) been stripped of every elevating notion; without the least mystery, in puris naturalibus [in its bare natural state], it is a way of making a living. “Call” means an official post; people talk of getting a call; but of having a call—yes, that is talked about too: of someone having a call to give away.[21]

Alas, and the fate of this word in Christendom is like a motto for the fate of Christianity as a whole. The misfortune is not that Christianity is not spoken (just as the misfortune is not that there are not enough pastors); but it is spoken in such a way that in the end the majority of people think nothing at all by it (just as by being a pastor this majority thinks of nothing other than the altogether workaday business of being a merchant, a lawyer, a bookbinder, a veterinarian, etc.), so that the highest and holiest makes no impression whatever, but sounds and is heard as something that, God knows why, has just somehow become custom and usage, like so much else.

What wonder, then, that people—for lack of finding their own conduct indefensible—find it necessary to defend Christianity.—

A pastor ought surely to be a believer. And a believer! A believer is surely a lover; indeed, the most enamored of all lovers is really, in point of enthusiasm, only a youth compared with a believer. Now imagine a lover. Isn’t it true that he would be able, day in and day out, as long as the day lasted, and the night as well, to talk about his being in love?

But do you think it could occur to him, do you think it would be possible for him—do you not

20 In Denmark candidates for the ministry qualified by passing the university examination in theology.
21 Danish *Kald* means both a vocation and a clerical living; a patron who controlled a parish appointment was said to have a *Kald* to give away.

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en Afskyelighed at tale saaledes, at han af tre Grunde stræbte at bevise, at der dog var Noget i at være forelsket – omtrent som naar Præsten af tre Grunde beviser, at det at bede er gavnligt, saa altsaa det at bede er sunket saa dybt i Prisen, at der maa tre Grunde til for at hjælpe det en lille Smule til Anseelse. Eller som naar Præsten, og dette er da det Samme, kun endnu latterligere, af tre Grunde beviser, at det at bede er en Salighed, som overgaaer al Forstand.

O, uskateerlige Anticlimax, at Noget overgaaer al Forstand, bevises af tre – Grunde, der, hvis de ellers due Noget, dog vel ikke overgaae al Forstand, og lige tværtimod maae gjøre Forstanden det indlysende, at denne Salighed ingenlunde overgaaer al Forstand; thi »Grunde« ligge jo dog vel indenfor Forstandens Omfang. Nei, for hvad der overgaaer al Forstand – og for Den, der troer paa det, betyde tre Grunde ikke mere end tre Flasker, eller tre Hjorte!

– Og nu videre, troer Du det vilde falde en Forelsket ind at føre et Forsvar for sin Forelskelse, det er, at indrømme, at den ikke var ham det Absolute, ubetinget det Absolute, men at han tænkte den saadan sammen med Indvendingerne mod den, og deraf fremgik Forsvaret, det er, troer Du, han kunde eller vilde indrømme, at han ikke var forelsket, angive sig selv, at han ikke var forelsket?

Og dersom man vilde foreslaae en Forelsket at tale saaledes, troer Du ikke, han vilde ansee En for gal; og dersom han, foruden at være forelsket, tillige var lidt af en Iagttager, troer Du ikke, han vilde fatte en Mistanke om, at Den, der gjorde ham dette Forslag, aldrig havde vidst, hvad Forelskelse er, eller vilde have ham til at forraade og fornegte sin Forelskelse – ved at forsvare den. – Er dette dog ikke indlysende, at Den, der virkelig er forelsket, ham kan det aldrig falde ind at ville bevise af tre Grunde, eller forsvare; thi han er Det, som er mere end alle Grunde og ethvert Forsvar: han er forelsket.

Og Den, som gjør det, han [216] er ikke forelsket; han udgiver sig blot for at være det, og uheldigviis – eller heldigviis – saa dumt, at han blot angiver sig selv, ikke at være det.

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think it would be abhorrent to him—to talk in such a way that he tried to prove by three reasons that there was, after all, something to being in love?—rather as when the pastor proves by three reasons that praying is beneficial, so that praying has sunk so low in price that three reasons are needed to help it to a little bit of respectability. Or as when the pastor—and this is the same thing, only even more ridiculous—proves by three reasons that praying is a blessedness that surpasses all understanding.[22]

Oh, priceless anticlimax—that something surpasses all understanding is proved by three—reasons, which, if they are good for anything at all, surely do not surpass all understanding and, quite the contrary, must make it evident to the understanding that this blessedness by no means surpasses all understanding; for "reasons" lie, after all, within the scope of the understanding. No, for what surpasses all understanding—and for the one who believes in it—three reasons mean no more than three bottles, or three stags!

—And further, do you think it would occur to a lover to conduct a defense of his being in love—that is, to admit that for him it was not the absolute, unconditionally the absolute, but that he thought of it somehow together with the objections against it, and out of that came the defense; that is, do you think he could or would admit that he was not in love, give himself away as not being in love?

And if someone were to suggest to a lover that he talk like that, don't you think he would consider that person mad? And if, besides being in love, he were also something of an observer, don't you think he would begin to suspect that the one who made him this suggestion had never known what being in love is, or wanted to get him to betray and deny his love—by defending it?—Is it not obvious that it can never occur to someone who is really in love to want to prove it by three reasons, or to defend it? For he is what is more than all reasons and every defense: he is in love.

And the one who does it [216] is not in love; he merely pretends to be, and unfortunately—or fortunately—so stupidly that he merely gives himself away as not being in love.

22 "Surpasses all understanding": Philippians 4:7. Sermons of the day were commonly divided into three points or "reasons."

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SKS 11.21 Men just saaledes tales der om Christendommen – af troende Præster, enten »forsvarer« man Christendommen, eller man sætter den over i »Grundene«, forsaavidt man da ikke tillige fusker i speculativt at »begribe« den; det kaldes at prædike, og man anseer det i Christenheden allerede for store Ting, at der prædikes saaledes, og at saa Nogen hører det. Og just derfor er Christenheden (dette er Beviset derfor) saa langt fra at være hvad den kalder sig, at de fleste Menneskers Liv, christelig forstaaet, endog er for aandløst til i streng christelig Forstand at kaldes Synd.

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But this is exactly how Christianity is talked about —by believing pastors: either one "defends" Christianity or one translates it into "reasons," if one is not also dabbling in "comprehending" it speculatively. This is called preaching, and in Christendom it is already considered a great thing that preaching goes on like this and that some people listen to it. And precisely for this reason Christendom (this is the proof of it) is so far from being what it calls itself that most people's lives, understood in Christian terms, are even too spiritless to be called sin in the strict Christian sense.

The Continuation of Sin

Andet Afsnit, B
Despairing over one's sin; despairing of the forgiveness of sins (offense); abandoning Christianity as untruth.

DANISH

SKS 11.211 Enhver Tilstand i Synd er ny Synd; eller som det nøiagtigere maatte udtrykkes og vil blive udtrykt i det Følgende, Tilstanden i Synd er den nye Synd, er Synden. Dette synes maaskee Synderen en Overdrivelse; han erkjender i det Høieste enhver aktuel ny Synd for en ny Synd. Men Evigheden, som fører hans Conto, maa opføre Tilstanden i Synd som ny Synd. Den har kun to Rubrikker, og »Alt hvad der ikke er af Tro er Synd«; enhver uangret Synd er en ny Synd, og ethvert Øieblik den er uangret, er ny Synd. Men hvor sjeldent et Menneske, som har Continueerlighed i Forhold til sin Bevidsthed om sig selv!

Som oftest ere Menneskene sig blot momentviis bevidste, bevidste i de større Afgjørelser, men det Daglige anslaaes slet ikke; de ere saadan Aand saadan een Gang om Ugen en Timestid – det forstaaer sig, det er rigtignok en temmelig bestialsk Maade, at være Aand paa. Dog Evigheden er den væsentlige Continueerlighed, fordrer denne af Mennesket, eller at han skal være sig bevidst som Aand og have Troen. Synderen derimod er saaledes i Syndens Magt, at han ingen Forestilling har om dens totale Bestemmelse, at han er paa Fortabelsens Afvei. Han anslaaer blot hver enkelt ny Synd, ved hvilken han ligesom faaer ny Fart frem ad Fortabelsens Vei, ret som gik han ikke i det foregaaende Øieblik med alle de foregaaende Synders Hastighed ad den Vei.

Saa naturlig er Synden blevet ham, eller Synden er blevet ham den anden Natur, at han finder det Daglige ganske i sin Orden, og kun selv standser et Øieblik, hver Gang han ved ny Synd saa at sige faaer ny Fart. Han er i Fortabelsen [218] blind for, at hans Liv, istedetfor at have det Eviges væsentlige Continueerlighed, ved i Troen at være for Gud, har Syndens Continueerlighed.

SKS 11.212 Dog, »Syndens Continueerlighed«, er Synden ikke just det Ikke-Continueerlige? See, her kommer det igjen, dette om, at Synden blot er en Negation, der aldrig kan vindes

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Every state of sin is new sin; or, as it should more precisely be expressed, and will be expressed in what follows, the state of sin is the new sin, is sin. To the sinner this may seem an exaggeration; at most he acknowledges each actual new sin as a new sin. But eternity, which keeps his account, must enter the state of sin as new sin. It has only two columns, and "whatever is not of faith is sin"; every unrepented sin is a new sin, and every moment it remains unrepented is new sin. But how rare is the person who has continuity with respect to his consciousness of himself!

Most often people are conscious only momentarily—conscious in the big decisions, but the everyday is not reckoned at all. They are spirit, after a fashion, once a week for an hour or so—which is, of course, a rather bestial way of being spirit. But eternity is essential continuity and demands this of a human being, namely, that he be conscious of himself as spirit and have faith. The sinner, on the other hand, is so much in the power of sin that he has no notion of its total character—that he is on the road astray to perdition. He reckons only each particular new sin, by which he seems to gain fresh speed along the road to perdition, just as if in the moment before he were not traveling that road with the speed of all the previous sins.

So natural has sin become to him, or so much has sin become his second nature, that he finds the everyday entirely in order, and himself pauses only for a moment each time he, so to speak, gains fresh speed through a new sin. In his perdition he is [218] blind to the fact that his life, instead of having the essential continuity of the eternal by being before God in faith, has the continuity of sin.

But "the continuity of sin"—isn't sin precisely the discontinuous? See, here it comes again, this notion that sin is merely a negation, to which one

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Hævd paa, som der ikke kan vindes Hævd paa stjaalet Gods, en Negation, et afmægtigt Forsøg paa at constituere sig, men som dog, lidende al Afmagtens Qval i fortvivlet Trods, ikke formaaer det. Ja, saaledes er det spekulativt; men christeligt er Synden (dette maa troes, da det jo er det Paradoxe, som intet Menneske kan begribe) en Position, der af sig udvikler en mere og mere ponerende Continuerlighed.

Og Loven for denne Continueerligheds Voxen er ogsaa en anden end den for en Gjelds, eller en Negations. Thi en Gjeld voxer ikke, fordi den ikke bliver betalt, den voxer for hver Gang den forøges. Men Synden voxer med hvert Øieblik, man ikke kommer ud af den. Det er saa langt som muligt fra, at Synderen har Ret i, kun at ansee hver ny Synd for en Forøgelse af Synden, at, christelig forstaaet, egentlig Tilstanden i Synden er større Synd, er den nye Synd. Selv et Ordsprog siger, at synde er menneskeligt, men at blive i Synden er diævelsk; men christelig maa dette Ordsprog rigtignok forstaaes noget anderledes.

Den blot desultoriske Betragtning, der kun seer paa den nye Synd og overspringer det Mellemliggende, det Mellemliggende mellem de enkelte Synder, er en ligesaa overfladisk Betragtning, som hvis En vilde antage, at et Jernbanetog kun bevægede sig hver Gang Locomotivet snøftede. Nei, denne Snøften, og det Fremstød, som derpaa følger, er egentligen ikke Det, der skal sees paa, men den jævne Fart, med hvilken Locomotivet gaaer, og som frembringer hiin Snøften. Og saaledes er det med Synden. Tilstanden i Synden er i dybeste Forstand Synden, de enkelte Synder ikke Syndens Fortsættelse, men Udtrykket for Syndens Fortsættelse; i den enkelte nye Synd bliver Syndens Fart blot sandselig mere til at bemærke.

Tilstanden i Synden er den værre Synd end de enkelte Synder, er Synden. Og saaledes forstaaet gjælder det, at Tilstanden i Synden er Syndens Fortsættelse, er ny Synd. I Almindelighed forstaaer man det anderledes, man forstaaer det om, at den ene Synd føder ny Synd af sig. Men det har en langt dybere Grund, den, at Tilstanden i Synden er ny [219] Synd. Det er psychologisk mesterligt, hvad Shakspeare lader Macbeth sige (3die Akt, 2den Scene): Sündentsproßne Werke erlangen nur durch Sünde Kraft und Stärke. Det vil sige, Synden er indenfor

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can never acquire lawful title, just as one can never acquire lawful title to stolen goods; a negation, a powerless attempt to constitute itself, which nevertheless, suffering all the torment of powerlessness in despairing defiance, cannot do it. Yes, that is the speculative view. But in Christian terms sin (and this must be believed, since it is the paradoxical, which no human being can comprehend) is a position that out of itself develops a more and more positing continuity.

And the law for the growth of this continuity is also different from the law for the growth of a debt, or of a negation. For a debt does not grow because it is not paid; it grows each time it is added to. But sin grows with every moment one does not get out of it. So far is the sinner from being right in regarding only each new sin as an increase of sin that, in Christian terms, the state of sin is really the greater sin, is the new sin. Even a proverb says that to sin is human, but to remain in sin is diabolical; in Christian terms, however, this proverb must indeed be understood somewhat differently.[1]

The merely desultory view, which looks only at the new sin and skips over what lies between, what lies between the particular sins, is just as superficial as it would be to suppose that a train moves only each time the locomotive puffs. No, this puffing, and the thrust that follows it, is really not what should be looked at, but rather the steady speed at which the locomotive goes and which produces that puffing. And so it is with sin. The state of sin is, in the deepest sense, the sin; the particular sins are not the continuation of sin but the expression for the continuation of sin; in the particular new sin the speed of sin simply becomes more perceptible to the senses.

The state of sin is a worse sin than the particular sins; it is the sin. And understood in this way it holds that the state of sin is the continuation of sin, is new sin. Ordinarily this is understood differently: it is taken to mean that one sin gives birth to a new sin. But this has a far deeper ground, namely, that the state of sin is new [219] sin. Psychologically, what Shakespeare has Macbeth say (Act 3, Scene 2) is masterly: Sündentsproßne Werke erlangen nur durch Sünde Kraft und Stärke

1 The Latin proverb *errare humanum est, perseverare diabolicum* (to err is human, to persist is diabolical).

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sig selv en Conseqvents, og i denne det Ondes Conseqvents i sig har den ogsaa en vis Kraft. Men til en saadan Betragtning kommer man aldrig, naar man blot seer paa de enkelte Synder.	[Deeds sprung from sin gain power and strength only through sin]. That is to say, sin within itself is a consistency, and in this consistency of evil within itself it also has a certain power. But one never arrives at such a view by looking only at the particular sins.[2]
SKS 11.21 De fleste Mennesker leve vistnok med altfor liden Bevidsthed om dem selv, til at have en Forestilling om hvad Conseqvents er; det vil sige, de existere ikke qua Aand. Deres Liv bestaaer, enten i en vis barnlig, elskelig Naivitet eller i Pjattethed, af saadan Noget Handling, Noget Tildragelse, Dit og Dat; nu gjøre de noget Godt, og saa igjen noget Galt, og saa begynde de atter forfra; nu ere de fortvivlede en Eftermiddag, maaskee tre Uger, men saa ere de Friskfyr igjen, og saa igjen en Dags Tid fortvivlede. De lege saa at sige med i Livet, men de opleve aldrig det at sætte Alt ind paa Eet, komme aldrig til Forestillingen om en uendelig Conseqvents i sig.	Most people, to be sure, live with far too little consciousness of themselves to have any notion of what consistency is; that is to say, they do not exist qua [as] spirit. Their lives consist, whether in a certain childlike, lovable naivety or in silliness, of a bit of action, a bit of incident, this and that: now they do something good, then something bad again, and then they start all over; now they are in despair for an afternoon, perhaps three weeks, but then they are cheerful fellows again, and then in despair again for a day or so. They play along in life, so to speak, but they never experience staking everything on one thing, never arrive at the conception of an infinite consistency within themselves.
Derfor er der mellem dem bestandigt kun Tale om det Enkelte, enkelte gode Gjerninger, enkelte Synder.	That is why among them there is always talk only of the particular: particular good deeds, particular sins.
Enhver Existents, der er under Bestemmelsen Aand, selv om den og kun er paa eget An- og Tilsvar, har væsentlig Conseqvents i sig og Conseqvents i et Høiere, idetmindste i en Idee. Men en saadan frygter igjen uendeligt enhver Inconseqvents, fordi han har en uendelig Forestilling om hvad Følgen kan blive, at han kunde rives ud af det Totale, hvori han har sit Liv. Den mindste Inconseqvents er et uhyre Tab, thi han taber jo Conseqventsen; i samme Øieblik er maaskee Trylleriet løst, den hemmelighedsfulde Magt, der bandt alle Kræfterne i Harmoni, afmattet, Springfjederen afspændt, det Hele maaskee et Chaos, hvor Kræfterne kjæmpe mod hinanden, til Selvets Lidelse, men hvori der ingen, ingen Overeensstemmelse er med sig selv, ingen Fart, ingen impetus.	Every existence that is under the qualification of spirit, even if only on its own responsibility, has essential consistency within itself, and consistency in something higher, at least in an idea. But such a person in turn infinitely fears every inconsistency, because he has an infinite conception of what the consequence might be: that he could be torn out of the totality in which he has his life. The slightest inconsistency is an enormous loss, for he loses the consistency. In that same moment, perhaps, the spell is broken, the mysterious power that bound all the forces in harmony is weakened, the mainspring slackened, the whole perhaps a chaos in which the forces fight against one another, to the suffering of the self, but in which there is no, no agreement with itself, no momentum, no impetus.
Det uhyre Maskineri, som i Conseqventsen var saa føieligt i sin Jern-Styrke, saa smidigt i al sin Kraft, er i Uorden; og jo ypperligere, jo grandiosere Maskineriet var, desto frygteligere er Virvarret. – Den Troende, der altsaa hviler i, har sit Liv i det Godes Conseqvents, har en uendelig	The immense machinery, which in consistency was so pliant in its iron strength, so supple in all its power, is out of order; and the more excellent, the grander the machinery was, the more terrible the confusion.—The believer, who thus rests in,

2 Shakespeare's line is "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill."

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Frygt for end den mindste Synd; thi han har uendeligt at tabe. De umiddelbare, de barnlige eller barnagtige Mennesker have intet Totalt at tabe, de tabe og vinde bestandigt blot i det Enkelte, eller det Enkelte.

SKS 11.22 Men som med den Troende, saaledes ogsaa med Modbilledet, den Dæmoniske, i Forhold til Syndens Conseqvents i sig. Som Drankeren stadigt vedligeholder Rusen fra Dag til Dag, af Frygt for den Standsning, den Mathed, der vilde indtræde, og dennes mulige Følger, hvis han een Dag blev ganske ædru: saaledes den Dæmoniske. Ja, som den Gode, hvis En traadte fristende til ham, fremstillende Synden i en eller anden lokkende Skikkelse, vilde bede ham »frist mig ikke«: saaledes har man vel Exempler paa aldeles det Samme hos en Dæmonisk.

Lige overfor En, der er ham stærkere i det Gode, kan den Dæmoniske, naar hiin vil fremstille ham det Gode i dets salige Ophøiethed, bede for sig, han kan med Taarer bede for sig, at han ikke vil tale til ham, ikke vil, som han udtrykker det, gjøre ham svag. Just fordi den Dæmoniske er conseqvent i sig og i det Ondes Conseqvents, just derfor har han ogsaa en Totalitet at tabe. Et eneste Øieblik udenfor sin Conseqvents, een eneste diætetisk Uforsigtighed, eet eneste Sideblik, eet Øieblik det Hele eller blot en Deel deraf seet og forstaaet paa en anden Maade: og han blev maaskee aldrig mere sig selv, siger han.

Det vil sige, det Gode har han fortvivlet opgivet, det kan dog alligevel ikke hjælpe ham; men vel kunde det forstyrre ham, gjøre ham det umuligt nogensinde igjen at faae Conseqventsens fulde Fart, gjøre ham svag. Kun i Syndens Fortsættelse er han sig selv, kun i den lever han, har han Indtrykket af sig selv. Men hvad vil dette sige? Det vil sige, Tilstanden i Synden er Det, der, dybt nede hvor han er sunken, holder ham sammen, ugudeligt styrkende ham ved Conseqventsen; det er ikke den enkelte nye Synd, der (ja, det er rædsomt afsindigt!) hjælper ham, men den enkelte nye Synd er blot Udtrykket for Tilstanden i Synden, hvilken egentlig er Synden.

Ved »Syndens Fortsættelse«, hvorom vi nu skulle handle, tænkes altsaa ikke saa meget paa de enkelte nye Synder,

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has his life in, the consistency of the good, has an infinite fear of even the slightest sin; for he has infinitely much to lose. Immediate people, the childlike or childish, have no totality to lose; they always lose and win only in particulars, or only particulars.

But as with the believer, so too with his counterimage, the demonic person, with respect to the consistency of sin within itself. Just as the drunkard constantly keeps up his intoxication from day to day, for fear of the halt, the listlessness that would set in, and its possible consequences, if one day he were to become entirely sober: so it is with the demonic person. Indeed, just as the good person, if someone approached him with temptation, presenting sin in some alluring form, would beg him, "Do not tempt me," so there are surely examples of exactly the same thing in a demonic person.

Faced with someone who is stronger than he in the good, the demonic person—when that other wants to present the good to him in its blessed sublimity—can plead for himself, can plead with tears, that the other not speak to him, not, as he puts it, make him weak. Precisely because the demonic person is consistent within himself and in the consistency of evil, precisely for that reason he too has a totality to lose. A single moment outside his consistency, a single dietary indiscretion, a single sidelong glance, a single moment of seeing and understanding the whole, or even just a part of it, in a different way—and he might never be himself again, he says.

That is to say, he has given up the good in despair; it cannot help him anyway. But it could well disturb him, make it impossible for him ever again to get the full momentum of consistency, make him weak. Only in the continuation of sin is he himself, only in it does he live, does he have a sense of himself. But what does this mean? It means that the state of sin is what, deep down where he has sunk, holds him together, godlessly strengthening him through consistency. It is not the particular new sin that (yes, it is horribly mad!) helps him; rather, the particular new sin is merely the expression for the state of sin, which is really the sin.

By "the continuation of sin," which we are now to treat, is meant, then, not so much the particular

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som paa Tilstanden i Synden, hvilken igjen bliver Syndens Potentsation i sig selv, en Forbliven i Syndens Tilstand med Bevidsthed derom, saa Loven for Bevægelsen i Potentsationen her som allevegne er ind efter, i intensivere og intensivere Bevidsthed.

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new sins as the state of sin, which in turn becomes the intensification of sin within itself, a remaining in the state of sin with consciousness of it; so that the law for the movement of intensification here, as everywhere, is inward, into more and more intensive consciousness.

A. THE SIN OF DESPAIRING OVER ONE'S SIN

Despair over sin closes the self off from repentance and grace, as with Macbeth.

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SKS 11.22 Synd er Fortvivlelse; Potentsationen er den nye Synd at fortvivle over sin Synd. Det sees ogsaa let, at dette er en Potentsations Bestemmelse; det er ikke en ny Synd, som naar Den, der engang stjal 100 Rdlr., en anden Gang stjæler 1000 Rdlr. Nei, her tales ikke om de enkelte Synder; Tilstanden i Synden er Synden, og denne potentseres i en ny Bevidsthed.

At fortvivle over sin Synd er Udtrykket for, at Synden er blevet eller vil være conseqvent i sig selv. Den vil Intet have med det Gode at skaffe, ikke være svag nok til engang imellem at lytte efter en anden Tale. Nei, den vil kun høre sig selv, kun have med sig selv at skaffe, slutte sig inde med sig selv, ja, lukke sig indenfor eet Indelukke mere, og ved Fortvivlelsen over Synden sikkre sig mod ethvert Overfald eller Efterstræbelse af det Gode. Den er sig bevidst at have hugget Broen af efter sig, og saaledes at være utilgjængelig for det Gode som det Gode for den, saa om den i et svagt Øieblik skulde selv ville det, det dog var umuligt.

Synden selv er Løsrivelse fra det Gode, men Fortvivlelse over Synden er Løsrivelse anden Gang. Dette piner naturligviis det Dæmoniskes yderste Kræfter ud af Synden, giver den ugudelige Haardførhed eller Forstokkethed, at maatte conseqvent ansee Alt, hvad der hedder Anger, og Alt hvad der hedder Naade, ikke blot for Tomt og Intetsigende, men for sin Fjende, for Det, man meest af Alt har at værge sig mod, aldeles som den Gode værger sig mod Fristelsen. Saaledes forstaaet er det en rigtig Replik af Mephistopheles (i Faust), at intet er Elendigere end en Djævel, som fortvivler; thi ved at fortvivle maa her forstaaes, at ville være svag nok til at høre Noget om Anger og Naade.

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Sin is despair; the intensification is the new sin of despairing over one's sin. It is also easy to see that this is a matter of intensification; it is not a new sin in the sense in which someone who once stole 100 rix-dollars steals 1,000 rix-dollars another time. No, here there is no talk of particular sins; the state of sin is the sin, and this is intensified in a new consciousness.

Despairing over one's sin is the expression for sin's having become, or wanting to be, consistent within itself. It will have nothing to do with the good, will not be weak enough to listen now and then to another kind of talk. No, it will listen only to itself, have dealings only with itself, shut itself in with itself, indeed, enclose itself within yet one more enclosure, and, by despair over sin, secure itself against every attack or pursuit by the good. It is conscious of having cut away the bridge behind it, and thus of being as inaccessible to the good as the good is to it, so that even if in a weak moment it should itself want the good, that would be impossible.

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Sin itself is a severing from the good, but despair over sin is a second severing. This naturally wrings the utmost demonic powers out of sin, gives it the godless hardiness or obduracy of having consistently to regard everything called repentance and everything called grace not merely as empty and meaningless but as its enemy, as what it must above all defend itself against—exactly as the good person defends himself against temptation. Understood in this way, it is an apt line of Mephistopheles (in *Faust*) that nothing is more wretched than a devil who despairs; for despairing must here be understood as wanting to be weak enough to hear something about repentance and grace.[3]

For at betegne Potentsationen i Forholdet mellem Synd og Fortvivlelse over Synden kunde man sige, det Første er Bruddet med det Gode, det Andet Bruddet med Angeren.

To designate the intensification in the relation between sin and despair over sin, one could say: the first is the break with the good, the second the break with repentance.

Fortvivlelse over Synden er et Forsøg paa at holde sig ved at synke endnu dybere; som Den, der stiger i en Aerostat, stiger ved at kaste Tyngder af sig, saaledes synker den Fortvivlede ved bestemtere og bestemtere at kaste alt det Gode fra sig (thi det Godes Tyngde er Opløftelse), han synker, selv mener han rigtignok at stige – han bliver jo ogsaa [222] lettere. Synden selv er Fortvivlelsens Kamp; men naar saa Kræfterne ere udtømte, maa der en ny Potentsation til, en ny dæmonisk Sluttethed i sig selv, det er Fortvivlelsen over Synden. Det er Fremskridt, en Stigen i det Dæmoniske, naturligviis Fordybelse i Synden.

Despair over sin is an attempt to keep oneself up by sinking still deeper. Just as someone ascending in a balloon rises by throwing off weights, so the one in despair sinks by throwing off all the good more and more resolutely (for the weight of the good is uplift); he sinks, though he himself, of course, thinks he is rising—and indeed he is becoming [222] lighter. Sin itself is the struggle of despair; but when the forces are then exhausted, a new intensification is needed, a new demonic closing-up in oneself: that is despair over sin. It is progress, an ascent in the demonic—naturally, a going deeper into sin.

SKS 11.22 Det er et Forsøg paa at give Synden Holdning og Interesse som en Magt derved, at det nu skal være evig afgjort, at man Intet vil høre om Anger og Intet om Naade. Imidlertid er dog Fortvivlelsen over Synden sig netop sin egen Tomhed bevidst, at den ikke har det mindste at leve af, ikke engang sit eget Selv i Forestillingen om det. Det er en psychologisk mesterlig Replik af Macbeth (2den Akt, 2den Scene): von jetzt (efterat han har myrdet Kongen – og nu fortvivler over sin Synd) giebt es nichts Ernstes mehr im Leben; Alles ist Tand, gestorben Ruhm und Gnade. Det som er det Mesterlige er Dobbeltslaget i de sidste Ord (*Ruhm* und *Gnade*).

It is an attempt to give sin stability and interest as a power, by having it settled for all eternity that one will hear nothing of repentance and nothing of grace. Yet despair over sin is conscious precisely of its own emptiness—that it has not the least thing to live on, not even its own self in the conception of it. Psychologically, Macbeth's line (Act 2, Scene 2) is masterly: von jetzt (after he has murdered the king—and now despairs over his sin) giebt es nichts Ernstes mehr im Leben; Alles ist Tand, gestorben Ruhm und Gnade [from now on there is nothing serious left in life; all is trifles, dead are renown and grace]. What is masterly is

3 Mephistopheles is the devil of the Faust legend, best known from Goethe's *Faust*.

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Ved Synden, det vil sige, ved at fortvivle over Synden, har han tabt ethvert Forhold til Naaden – og tillige til sig selv. Hans selviske Selv culminerer i Ærgjerrighed. Nu er han jo blevet Konge, og dog, idet han fortvivler over sin Synd og om Angerens Realitet, om Naaden, har han ogsaa tabt sig selv, han kan end ikke for sig selv holde det oppe, og han er netop lige saa langt fra at kunne nyde sit Selv i Ærgjerrighed, som fra at gribe Naaden.

I Livet (forsaavidt da Fortvivlelse over Synden forekommer i Livet; men i ethvert Tilfælde forekommer der Noget, som Menneskene kalde saaledes) sees der som oftest feil af denne Fortvivlelse over Synden, formodentlig fordi man i Verden almindeligviis kun har med Letsindighed, Tankeløshed og reen Pjattethed at gjøre, og derfor ordentlig bliver ganske høitidelig, og ærbødig tager Hatten af for enhver Yttring af noget Dybere. Enten i forvirret Uklarhed over sig selv og sin Betydning, eller med et Anstrøg af Hykleri, eller ved Hjælp af den Underfundighed og Sophistik, som al Fortvivlelse har med sig selv, er Fortvivlelse over Synden ikke utilbøielig til at give sig Skin af at være noget Godt.

Den skal da være et Udtryk for, at det er en dyb Natur, som derfor tager sig sin Synd saa nær. Jeg skal anføre et Exempel. Naar et Menneske, der har været hengivet til en eller anden Synd, men saa i længere Tid gjort [223] Fristelsen Modstand og seiret – naar han faaer et Tilbagefald og atter synker i Fristelsen: saa er den Forstemthed, der indtræder, ingenlunde altid Sorg over Synden. Det kan være meget Andet; det kan for den Sags Skyld ogsaa være en Forbittrelse paa Styrelsen, som var det den, der havde ladet ham falde i Fristelsen, som burde den ikke have været saa haard mod ham, da han nu i længere Tid havde seierrigt modstaaet Fristelsen.

SKS 11.22 Men i ethvert Tilfælde er det aldeles Fruentimmeragtigt, uden videre at tage denne Sorg for god, slet ikke at være opmærksom paa den Tvetungethed, der er i al Lidenskabelighed, hvilket igjen er det Omineuse, som kan gjøre, at den Lidenskabelige stundom næsten til Afsindighed bag efter forstaaer, at han har sagt det Modsatte af hvad han meente at sige. Et saadant Menneske forsikkrer maaskee i stærkere og stærkere

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the double stroke in the last words (*Ruhm* und *Gnade*).[4]

By sin, that is, by despairing over sin, he has lost every relation to grace—and to himself as well. His selfish self culminates in ambition. Now he has become king, and yet, in despairing over his sin and over the reality of repentance, over grace, he has also lost himself; he cannot even keep it up for himself, and he is exactly as far from being able to enjoy his self in ambition as from grasping grace.

In life (insofar as despair over sin occurs in life at all; but in any case something occurs that people call by that name) this despair over sin is very often misjudged—presumably because in the world one generally has to do only with frivolity, thoughtlessness, and sheer silliness, and so one becomes positively solemn and respectfully takes off one's hat at every manifestation of something deeper. Whether in muddled unclarity about itself and its significance, or with a touch of hypocrisy, or by means of the cunning and sophistry that all despair has within itself, despair over sin is not disinclined to give itself the appearance of being something good.

It is then supposed to be the expression of a deep nature, which therefore takes its sin so much to heart. Let me give an example. When a person who has been given to some sin or other, but has then for a long time resisted [223] the temptation and conquered—when he has a relapse and again succumbs to the temptation, the dejection that sets in is by no means always sorrow over the sin. It can be many other things; it can, for that matter, also be bitterness against Providence, as if it were Providence that had let him fall into temptation, as if it ought not to have been so hard on him, since he had for a long time now victoriously resisted temptation.

But in any case it is thoroughly sentimental simply to take this sorrow at face value, to fail entirely to notice the duplicity in all passion—which in turn is the ominous thing that can make the passionate person sometimes realize afterwards, almost to the point of madness, that he has said the opposite of what he meant to say. Such a person perhaps as-

4 In modern editions Act 2, Scene 3: "from this instant there's nothing serious in mortality: all is but toys: renown and grace is dead," quoted in German translation.

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Udtryk, hvorledes det piner og plager ham, dette Tilbagefald, hvorledes det bringer ham til Fortvivlelse, »jeg tilgiver mig det aldrig selv«, siger han. Og alt dette skal være Udtrykket for, hvor meget Godt der boer i ham, hvor dyb en Natur han er. Dette er en Mystification.

Jeg lod med Flid i Fremstillingen indløbe et Stikord »jeg tilgiver mig det aldrig selv«, et Ord, som just almindeligt høres i saadan Forbindelse. Og netop paa dette Ord kan man ogsaa strax kjende sig dialektisk til Rette. Han tilgiver sig det aldrig selv – men dersom nu Gud vilde tilgive ham det, saa kunde han jo dog gjerne have den Godhed at tilgive sig selv.

Nei, hans Fortvivlelse over Synden, og meest netop jo mere den raser i Udtrykkets Lidenskab, hvorved han (hvad han mindst tænker paa) angiver sig selv, naar han »aldrig vil tilgive sig selv«, at han saaledes kunde synde (thi denne Tale er noget nær det Modsatte af bodfærdig Sønderknuselse, der beder Gud om at tilgive), er meget langt fra at være en Bestemmelse af det Gode, den er en intensivere Bestemmelse af Synd, hvis Intensitet er Fordybelse i Synd. Sagen er den, han er i den Tid, han seierrigt har gjort Fristelsen Modstand, i egne Øine blevet sig selv bedre end han virkelig er, han er blevet stolt af sig selv. Denne Stoltheds Interesse er det nu, at det Forbigangne maatte være noget aldeles Tilbagelagt.

Men i Tilbagefaldet bliver pludselig det Forbigangne atter ganske præsentisk. Denne Mindelse kan hans Stolthed ikke taale, og deraf denne dybe Bedrøvelse o. s. v. Men Bedrøvelsens Retning er aabenbart bort fra Gud, en skjult Selvkjerlighed og Stolthed, istedetfor ydmygt at begynde med ydmygt at takke Gud, at han dog saa [224] længe havde hjulpet ham til at modstaae Fristelsen, bekjende for Gud og sig selv, at det allerede er meget mere end han havde fortjent, og saa ydmyge sig under Erindringen af, hvorledes han har været.

SKS 11.22 Her, som allevegne, er hvad de gamle Opbyggelsesskrifter forklare, saa dybt, saa erfaret, saa veiledende. De lære, at Gud stundom tillader, at den Troende snubler og falder i en eller anden Fristelse – just for at ydmyge ham og derved at befæste ham mere i det Gode; Modsætningen mellem Tilbagefaldet og det maaskee betydelige Fremskridt i det Gode er saa ydmygende, Identiteten med sig selv saa smertelig. Jo bedre et Menneske er, desto dybere smerter naturligviis den enkelte Synd, og desto

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sures us in stronger and stronger terms how this relapse torments and tortures him, how it drives him to despair: "I will never forgive myself," he says. And all this is supposed to express how much good dwells in him, what a deep nature he is. This is a mystification.

I deliberately let a catchword slip into the account, "I will never forgive myself," a phrase heard precisely in such contexts. And it is by this very phrase that one can at once get one's dialectical bearings. He will never forgive himself—but if God were willing to forgive him, then surely he could have the kindness to forgive himself.

No, his despair over sin—and most of all, precisely, the more it rages in passionate expression, by which (the last thing he suspects) he informs against himself when he "will never forgive himself" for having been able to sin like that (for this talk is nearly the opposite of penitent contrition, which asks God to forgive)—is very far from being a qualification of the good; it is a more intensive qualification of sin, whose intensity is a going deeper into sin. The fact is that during the time he victoriously resisted temptation he became, in his own eyes, better than he really is; he became proud of himself. It is now in the interest of this pride that the past be something entirely left behind.

But in the relapse the past suddenly becomes entirely present again. His pride cannot bear this reminder, and hence this deep grief, etc. But the direction of the grief is obviously away from God—a hidden self-love and pride—instead of humbly beginning by humbly thanking God that he had, after all, for so [224] long helped him resist temptation, confessing before God and himself that this is already far more than he had deserved, and then humbling himself under the memory of what he has been.

Here, as everywhere, what the old upbuilding writings explain is so profound, so experienced, so full of guidance. They teach that God sometimes allows the believer to stumble and fall into some temptation or other—precisely to humble him and thereby establish him more firmly in the good; the contrast between the relapse and the perhaps considerable progress in the good is so humbling, the identity with oneself so painful. The better a per-

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farligere, dersom han ikke gjør Svinget rigtigt, farligt blot den mindste Smule Utaalmodighed.

Han kan maaskee af Sorg synke i det mørkeste Tungsind – og en Nar af Sjelesørger ikke være langt fra at beundre hans dybe Sjel, og hvilken Magt det Gode har i ham – som var Dette af det Gode. Og hans Kone, ja hun føler sig dybt ydmyget i Sammenligning med en saadan alvorlig og hellig Mand, der saaledes kan sørge over Synden. Maaskee er ogsaa hans Tale endnu mere skuffende, han siger maaskee ikke: jeg kan aldrig tilgive mig det selv (som havde han maaskee før tilgivet sig selv Synder; en Gudsbespottelse), nei, han taler om, at Gud aldrig kan tilgive ham det. Ak, og Dette er kun en Mystification.

Hans Sorg, hans Bekymring, hans Fortvivlelse er selvisk (ligesom den Angest for Synden, der undertiden næsten ængster et Menneske i Synd, fordi den er Selvkjerlighed, der vilde være stolt af sig selv, at være uden Synd) – og Trøst det han mindst behøver, hvorfor ogsaa de uhyre Qvantiteter af Trøstegrunde, som Sjelesørgerne ordinere, blot gjøre Sygdommen værre.

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son is, the more deeply, naturally, the particular sin hurts, and the more dangerous it is if he does not make the turn correctly—dangerous even the slightest bit of impatience.

Out of sorrow he may perhaps sink into the darkest melancholy—and a fool of a spiritual adviser may not be far from admiring his deep soul and what power the good has in him—as if this were of the good. And his wife—yes, she feels deeply humbled in comparison with such an earnest and holy man, who can grieve over sin in this way. Perhaps his talk is even more deceptive: perhaps he does not say, "I can never forgive myself" (as if he had perhaps previously forgiven himself sins—a blasphemy); no, he says that God can never forgive him. Alas, and this is only a mystification.

His sorrow, his worry, his despair is selfish (like the anxiety about sin that sometimes almost drives a person into sin through anxiety, because it is self-love that wants to be proud of itself, to be without sin)—and comfort is what he needs least; which is also why the enormous quantities of grounds for comfort that spiritual advisers prescribe only make the sickness worse.

B. THE SIN OF DESPAIRING OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Refusing forgiveness is offense, and Christendom's confusion of God and humanity makes it brazen.

DANISH

SKS 11.22 Potentsationen i Bevidstheden om Selvet er her Viden om Christus, et Selv lige over for Christus. Først kom (i forrige Afsnit) Uvidenhed om at have et evigt Selv; saa Viden om at have et Selv, hvori der dog er noget Evigt. Derpaa vistes (ved Overgangen til 2det Afsnit) denne Forskjel at indbefattes under: Selvet, der har en menneskelig Forestilling om sig selv, eller hvis Maal Mennesket er. Modsætningen hertil var: et Selv lige over for Gud, og Dette lagdes til Grund for Definitionen paa Synd.

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Nu kommer et Selv lige over for Christus, et Selv, som dog fortvivlet ikke vil være sig selv eller fortvivlet vil være sig selv. Thi Fortvivlelse om Syndernes Forladelse maa være

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The intensification in the consciousness of the self is here knowledge of Christ: a self directly before Christ. First came (in the previous part) ignorance of having an eternal self; then knowledge of having a self in which there is, after all, something eternal. Next it was shown (at the transition to Part Two) that this distinction falls under the heading: the self that has a human conception of itself, or whose measure is the human being. The opposite of this was a self directly before God, and this was made the basis for the definition of sin.

Now comes a self directly before Christ, a self that in despair still does not want to be itself, or in despair wants to be itself. For despair of the forgive-

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* Man bemærke Forskjellen at fortvivle *over* sin Synd, og at fortvivle *om* Syndernes Forladelse.

* Note the difference between despairing *over* one's sin and despairing *of* the forgiveness of sins.

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at henføre enten til den ene eller til den anden Formel for Fortvivlelse, Svaghedens eller Trodsens; Svaghedens, som forarget ikke tør troe, Trodsens, som forarget ikke vil troe. Kun er Svaghed og Trods her (da jo Talen ikke er om at være sig selv uden videre, men om at være sig selv i Bestemmelsen af at være Synder, altsaa sig selv i Bestemmelsen af sin Ufuldkommenhed) det Omvendte af ellers. Ellers er Svaghed: fortvivlet ikke at ville være sig selv.

Her er dette Trods; thi her er det jo Trods, ikke at ville være sig selv, det man er, Synder, og paa Grund deraf at ville undvære Syndernes Forladelse. Ellers er Trods: fortvivlet at ville være sig selv. Her er dette Svagheden, fortvivlet at ville være sig selv, Synder, saaledes, at der ingen Tilgivelse er.

Et Selv lige over for Christus er et Selv potentseret ved den uhyre Indrømmelse af Gud, potentseret ved det uhyre Eftertryk, som falder paa det derved, at Gud ogsaa for dette Selvs Skyld lod sig føde, blev Menneske, leed, døde. Som der i det Foregaaende blev sagt: jo mere Guds-Forestilling jo mere Selv, saa gjælder det her: jo mere Forestilling om Christus jo mere Selv. Et Selv er qvalitativt hvad dets Maalestok er. At Christus er Maalestokken, er det fra Guds Side til Vitterlighed be [226] kræftede Udtryk for, hvilken uhyre Realitet et Selv har; thi først i Christo er det sandt, at Gud er Menneskets Maal og Maalestok, eller Maalestok og Maal. – Men jo mere Selv, jo intensivere Synd.

SKS 11.22 Ogsaa fra en anden Side kan Potentsationen i Synden vises. Synd var Fortvivlelse; Potentsationen var Fortvivlelse over Synden. Men nu tilbyder Gud Forligelsen i Syndernes Forladelse. Dog Synderen fortvivler, og Fortvivlelsen faaer et endnu dybere Udtryk; den forholder sig nu paa en Maade til Gud, og dog er det netop fordi den er endnu længere borte, endnu intensivere fordybet i Synden. Idet Synderen fortvivler om Syndernes Forladelse, er det jo næsten som gik han lige ind paa Livet af Gud, det lyder jo dialogisk, dette: »nei, der er ingen Syndernes Forladelse, det er en Umulighed«; det seer ud som et Haandgemænge.

Men dog maa Mennesket fjerne sig et qvalitativt Længere fra Gud for at kunne sige det, og for at det kan høres, og for at stride saaledes cominus, maa han være eminus; saa

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ness of sins must be traced back to one or the other of the formulas for despair: weakness or defiance. Weakness, which, offended, does not dare to believe; defiance, which, offended, will not believe. Only here weakness and defiance are the reverse of what they otherwise are, since the issue is not simply being oneself but being oneself under the qualification of being a sinner, and so being oneself under the qualification of one's imperfection. Otherwise weakness is: in despair not wanting to be oneself.

Here this is defiance. For here it is indeed defiance not to want to be oneself, what one is, a sinner, and for that reason to want to do without the forgiveness of sins. Otherwise defiance is: in despair wanting to be oneself. Here this is weakness: in despair wanting to be oneself, a sinner, in such a way that there is no forgiveness.

A self directly before Christ is a self intensified by God's tremendous concession. It is intensified by the tremendous emphasis that falls upon it because God, for this self's sake too, let himself be born, became a human being, suffered, died. As was said earlier, the more conception of God, the more self; so here it holds: the more conception of Christ, the more self. A self is qualitatively what its measure is. That Christ is the measure is the expression, attested and [226] witnessed by God, of the tremendous reality a self has. For only in Christ is it true that God is the goal and the measure of the human being, or the measure and the goal.—But the more self, the more intense the sin.

The intensification in sin can be shown from another side as well. Sin was despair; the intensification was despair over sin. But now God offers reconciliation in the forgiveness of sins. Yet the sinner despairs, and despair gains an even deeper expression. It now relates itself to God in a way, and yet this is precisely because it is even farther away, sunk even more intensely in sin. When the sinner despairs of the forgiveness of sins, it is almost as if he walked right up to God. It certainly sounds like dialogue: "No, there is no forgiveness of sins, it is an impossibility." It looks like hand-to-hand combat.

And yet a human being must move qualitatively farther away from God in order to say this, and in order for it to be heard. To fight in this way

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underligt er Aands-Tilværelsen i akustisk Forstand construeret, saa underligt Distance-Forholdene lagte. Saa langt som muligt maa et Menneske være fjernet fra Gud for at det Nei kan høres, som dog paa en Maade vil Gud tillivs; den størst mulige Nærgaaenhed mod Gud er længst borte; for at være nærgaaende mod Gud maa man gaae langt bort; er man ham nærmere, kan man ikke være nærgaaende, og er man nærgaaende, er man eo ipso, betyder dette, at man er langt borte. O, menneskelig Afmagt lige over for Gud!

Naar man er nærgaaende mod et høit ophøiet Menneske, kan man maaskee til Straf blive kastet langt bort fra ham; men for at kunne være nærgaaende mod Gud, maa man gaae langt bort fra ham.

I Livet sees der som oftest Feil af denne Synd (at fortvivle om Syndernes Forladelse), især da siden den Tid man har afskaffet det Ethiske, saa der sjeldent eller aldrig høres et sundt ethisk Ord. Æsthetisk-metaphysisk honoreres det som et Tegn paa en dyb Natur at fortvivle om Syndernes Forladelse, omtrent som hvis man vilde ansee det for Tegn paa en dyb Natur hos et Barn, at det er uartigt. Overhovedet er det utroligt, hvilken Confusion der er kommet ind i det Religieuse fra den Tid man har afskaffet i Menneskets Forhold til Gud det »Du skal«, som er det eneste Regulativ.

Dette »Du skal« skal være med i enhver Bestemmelse af det Religieuse; i dets Sted har man eventyrligt brugt Guds-Forestillingen eller Forestillingen om Gud som en Ingredients i den [227] menneskelige Vigtighed, til at blive sig selv vigtige lige over for Gud. Som man i Stats-Livet bliver sig selv vigtig ved at høre til Oppositionen, og vel tilsidst ønsker at der er en Regjering, for dog at have Noget at opponere imod; saaledes vil man tilsidst ikke afskaffe Gud – blot for at blive sig selv endnu vigtigere ved at være Oppositionen. Og alt Det, der i gamle Dage blev betragtet med Horreur som Yttringer af ugudelig Opsætsighed, det bliver nu genialt, Tegn paa en dyb Natur.

SKS 11.22 »Du skal *troe*« heed det i gamle Dage, kort og godt, saa ædrueligt som muligt – nu er det genialt og Tegn paa en dyb Natur, ikke at kunne. »Du skal troe Syndernes Forladelse«, heed det, og som den eneste Kommentar til denne Text heed det: »Du skal skee en Ulykke, om Du ikke

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cominus [at close quarters], he must be *eminus* [at a distance]. So strangely is the life of spirit constructed acoustically; so strangely are its distances laid out. A human being must be as far away from God as possible for that No to be heard which nevertheless in a way wants to get at God. The greatest possible impertinence toward God is the farthest away. To be impertinent toward God one must go far away. If one is nearer to him, one cannot be impertinent, and if one is impertinent, that means *eo ipso* [by that very fact] that one is far away. O human powerlessness before God!

When one is impertinent toward a highly exalted person, one may perhaps be cast far away from him as punishment; but to be able to be impertinent toward God, one must go far away from him.

In life people are most often mistaken about this sin (despairing of the forgiveness of sins), especially since the ethical was abolished, so that a sound ethical word is seldom or never heard. Aesthetically and metaphysically, despairing of the forgiveness of sins is honored as the sign of a deep nature. It is rather as if one were to regard it as the sign of a deep nature in a child that it is naughty. In general, it is unbelievable what confusion has entered the religious since the "You shall" was abolished from the human being's relation to God, when it is the only regulative principle.

This "You shall" must be present in every qualification of the religious. In its place, the conception of God, or the idea of God, has been fantastically used as an ingredient in human [227] self-importance, so as to feel important before God. In political life one makes oneself important by belonging to the opposition, and in the end probably wishes there were a government, just to have something to oppose. In the same way, people in the end do not want to abolish God either—simply in order to make themselves even more important by being the opposition. And everything that in the old days was regarded with horror as the expression of ungodly insubordination has now become a mark of genius, the sign of a deep nature.

"You shall *believe*," it said in the old days, short and plain, as soberly as possible—now it is a mark of genius and the sign of a deep nature not to be able to. "You shall believe the forgiveness of sins," it said, and the only commentary on this text was:

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kan det; thi hvad man skal, det kan man« – nu er det genialt og Tegn paa en dyb Natur, ikke at kunne troe det. Fortræffelige Resultat som Christenheden har bragt det til!

Hørtes der ikke et Ord om Christendom, saa vilde Menneskene dog ikke, hvad heller aldrig nogensinde Hedenskabet har været, være saa indbildske; men ved Hjælp af at de christelige Forestillinger saadan uchristeligt ligge i Luften, benyttes disse til den meest potentserede Næsviished, forsaavidt de da ikke misbruges paa en anden, men lige saa fræk Maade.

Thi er det ikke epigramatisk nok, at det at bande dog nok ikke var Skik i Hedenskabet, men derimod ret egentligen har hjemme i Christenheden; at Hedenskabet med en vis Horreur, med Sky for det Mysterieuse, oftest med stor Høitidelighed nævnede Guds Navn, medens i Christenheden vel Guds Navn er det Ord, der forekommer meest i daglig Tale, og ubetinget det Ord, der tænkes mindst ved, og bruges meest skjødesløst, fordi den stakkels aabenbare Gud (der var uforsigtig og uklog nok til istedetfor at holde sig skjult, som ellers altid Fornemhed gjør, at blive aabenbar) er blevet en af hele Befolkningen kun altfor kjendt Personage, hvem man da gjør en overmaade stor Tjeneste ved engang imellem at gaae i Kirke, hvor man derfor ogsaa bliver roest af Præsten, der paa Guds Vegne takker En for Æren af Besøget, beærer En med Titlen From og derimod stikler lidt paa dem, som aldrig vise Gud den Ære at gaae i Kirke.

Den Synd at fortvivle om Syndernes Forladelse er *Forargelse.* Deri havde Jøderne fuldkommen Ret, at de forargedes paa Christus, fordi han vilde tilgive Synder. Der hører en besynderlig høi Grad af Aandløshed (det vil sige den, som ordentligviis findes i Christenheden) til, [228] for, hvis man ikke er Troende (og i saa Fald troer man jo, at Christus var Gud) ikke at forarges over, at et Menneske vil tilgive Synder. Og dernæst hører der en ligesaa besynderlig Aandløshed til, for ikke at forarges over, at Synd kan tilgives. Det er for menneskelig Forstand det umuligste af Alt – uden at jeg derfor anpriser det som Genialitet, ikke at kunne troe det; thi det *skal* troes.

SKS 11.228 I Hedenskabet kunde naturligviis denne Synd ikke findes. Kunde Hedningen (hvad han end ikke kunde, da han

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"Misfortune shall befall you if you cannot; for what one shall, one can." Now it is a mark of genius and the sign of a deep nature not to be able to believe it. What an excellent result Christendom has achieved!

If not a word were heard about Christianity, people would still not be so conceited—and paganism never was either. But because Christian ideas float about in the air in such an un-Christian way, they are used for the most intensified impudence, insofar as they are not misused in another, but equally brazen, way.

For is it not epigrammatic enough that swearing was probably not a custom in paganism but is really at home in Christendom? Paganism named the name of God with a certain horror, with awe before the mysterious, most often with great solemnity. In Christendom, by contrast, God's name is probably the word that occurs most often in everyday speech, and unquestionably the word least thought about and most carelessly used. For the poor revealed God (who was careless and unwise enough to become revealed, instead of keeping hidden, as persons of rank always do) has become a personage all too well known to the entire population. One does him an exceedingly great service by going to church now and then, and for this one is praised by the pastor, who thanks one on God's behalf for the honor of the visit, honors one with the title of "devout," and makes a few little digs at those who never do God the honor of going to church.

The sin of despairing of the forgiveness of sins is *offense.* Here the Jews were entirely right to be offended at Christ because he wanted to forgive sins. It takes a singularly high degree of spiritlessness (that is, the kind ordinarily found in Christendom), [228] if one is not a believer (and if one is, one of course believes that Christ was God), not to be offended that a human being wants to forgive sins. And next, it takes an equally singular spiritlessness not to be offended that sin can be forgiven. For human understanding this is the most impossible thing of all—though I do not on that account commend it as genius not to be able to believe it; for it *shall* be believed.

In paganism this sin could naturally not be found. Even if the pagan could have had the true concep-

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manglede Guds-Forestillingen) have den sande Forestilling om Synd: længere kunde han ikke komme end til at fortvivle over sin Synd. Ja, hvad mere er (og heri er al den Indrømmelse, man kan gjøre menneskelig Forstand og Tænkning), man maatte rose den Hedning, der virkelig drev det til, ikke at fortvivle over Verden, ikke over sig selv i almindeligere Forstand, men over sin Synd*. Der hører, menneskelig talt, baade Dybsind og ethiske Bestemmelser dertil. Længere kan intet Menneske som saadant komme, og sjeldent nok at En kom saa vidt. Men christeligt er Alt forandret; thi Du skal troe Syndernes Forladelse.

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Og hvor befinder Christenheden sig i Henseende til Syndernes Forladelse? Ja, Christenhedens Tilstand er egentlig Fortvivlelse om Syndernes Forladelse; dette maa dog forstaaes saaledes, den er saa langt tilbage, at Tilstanden ikke engang er aabenbar at være denne. Man er end ikke kommet til Bevidstheden om Synden, man kjender kun den Art Synder som Hedenskabet ogsaa kjendte, og lever lykkelig og vel i he [229] densk Tryghed. Men ved det man lever i Christenheden, gaaer man videre end Hedenskabet, man gaaer hen og indbilder sig, at denne Tryghed er – ja, det kan ikke være Andet i Christenheden – Bevidstheden om Syndernes Forladelse, hvori Præsterne bestyrke Menigheden.

SKS 11.22 Christenhedens Grund-Ulykke er egentlig Christendommen, at Læren om Gud-Mennesket (christelig forstaaet vel at mærke betrygget i Paradoxet og Forargelsens Mulighed) ved idelig og idelig at prædikes er taget forfængeligt, at Qvalitets-Forskjellen mellem Gud og Menneske pantheistisk (først fornemt speculative, siden pøbelagtigt paa Gader og Stræder) er

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tion of sin (which he could not, since he lacked the conception of God), he could have got no further than despairing over his sin. Indeed, what is more (and here lies every concession that can be made to human understanding and thought), one would have to praise the pagan who actually got so far as to despair not over the world, not over himself in a more general sense, but over his sin*. Humanly speaking, that takes both profundity and ethical qualifications. No human being as such can get further than this, and seldom enough does anyone get that far. But in Christian terms everything is changed; for you shall believe the forgiveness of sins.

And where does Christendom stand with regard to the forgiveness of sins? Well, the condition of Christendom is really despair of the forgiveness of sins. But this must be understood as follows: Christendom is so far behind that its condition is not even revealed as being this. People have not even arrived at the consciousness of sin. They know only the kind of sins that paganism also knew, and they live happily and contentedly in pagan [229] security. But because they live in Christendom, they go further than paganism: they go and imagine that this security is—well, in Christendom it cannot be anything else—the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins. And in this the pastors confirm the congregation.

Christendom's fundamental misfortune is really Christianity. The doctrine of the God-man (safeguarded, mind you, when Christianly understood, by the paradox and the possibility of offense) has been preached over and over again until it has been taken in vain. The qualitative difference between God and human being has been abol-

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* Man vil bemærke, at Fortvivlelse over Synden her saa er opfattet dialektisk i Retning hen mod Troen. At dette Dialektiske er (om end dette Skrift kun behandler Fortvivlelse som Sygdommen), maa aldrig glemmes, det ligger jo i, at Fortvivlelse ogsaa er det første Moment i Troen. Naar Retningen derimod er bort fra Troen, bort fra Guds-Forholdet, saa er Fortvivlelse over Synden den nye Synd. I Aands-Livet er Alt dialektisk. Forargelse er jo saaledes, som ophævet Mulighed, et Moment i Troen; men Forargelse, med Retningen bort fra Troen, er Synd. Man kan lægge et Menneske det til Last, at han ikke engang kan forarges paa Christendommen. Naar man taler saaledes, taler man jo om det at forarges som om noget Godt.

* It will be noticed that despair over sin is here understood dialectically, as tending toward faith. That this dialectical element exists must never be forgotten (even though this book treats despair only as the sickness); it lies in the fact that despair is also the first moment of faith. When, on the other hand, the direction is away from faith, away from the relation to God, then despair over sin is the new sin. In the life of the spirit everything is dialectical. Thus offense, as possibility annulled, is a moment in faith; but offense with its direction away from faith is sin. One can reproach a person for not even being able to be offended by Christianity. When one speaks this way, one is of course speaking of being offended as if it were something good.

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Og derimod maa man jo sige, at det at forarges er Synd.

On the other hand, one must of course say that being offended is sin.

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hævet. Aldrig har nogensinde nogen Lære paa Jorden virkeligt bragt Gud og Menneske saa nær sammen, som Christendommen; det kunde heller ingen, kun Gud selv kan gjøre det, enhver menneskelig Opfindelse bliver dog en Drøm, en usikker Indbildning.

Men aldrig har heller nogensinde nogen Lære saa omhyggeligt værget sig mod den grueligste af alle Gudsbespottelser, den, efterat Gud har gjort dette Skridt, at det saa skulde tages forfængeligt, som løb det dog ud paa Eet: Gud og Menneske – aldrig har nogensinde nogen Lære værget sig saaledes derimod som Christendommen, der værger sig ved Hjælp af Forargelsen. Vee de slappe Talere, vee de løsagtige Tænkere, og vee, vee det hele Tilhæng, som har lært af dem og priset dem!

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ished pantheistically—first in a lofty speculative way, then in a vulgar way in the streets and lanes. Never has any teaching on earth really brought God and human being so close together as Christianity. Nor could any; only God himself can do it. Every human invention remains, after all, a dream, an uncertain fancy.

But never has any teaching so carefully defended itself against the most dreadful of all blasphemies: that after God has taken this step, it should then be taken in vain, as if it all came to the same thing, God and human being. Never has any teaching defended itself against this as Christianity has, which defends itself by means of offense. Woe to the slack speakers, woe to the loose thinkers, and woe, woe to the whole following that has learned from them and praised them!

THE CROWD AND THE SINGLE INDIVIDUAL

Christianity's doctrine of sin separates people into single individuals, each judged alone before God.

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Skal der holdes Orden i Tilværelsen – og det vil dog Gud, thi han er ikke Forvirringens Gud – saa maa der først og fremmest passes paa, at ethvert Menneske er et enkelt Menneske, bliver sig bevidst at være et enkelt Menneske. Faae Menneskene først Lov til at løbe sammen i hvad Aristoteles kalder Dyre-Bestemmelsen: Mængden; bliver derpaa dette Abstraktum (istedetfor at det er mindre end Intet, mindre end det ringeste enkelte Menneske) anseet for at være Noget: saa varer det ikke længe inden dette Abstraktum bliver Gud. Og saa, saa slaaer det jo philosophice til med Læren om Gud-Mennesket.

Som man saa i Staterne har lært, at Mængden imponerer Kongen, og Bladene Conferentsraader, saaledes opdager man saa tilsidst, at summa summarum af alle Mennesker imponerer Gud. Dette kaldes saa Læren om Gud-Mennesket, eller at Gud og Menneske er idem per idem. Det forstaaer sig, adskillige af de Philosopher, som vare med at udbrede denne Lære, om Generationens Overvægt over Individet, de vende sig bort med Væmmelse, naar deres Lære er sunken saa dybt, at Pøbelen er Gud-Mennesket. Men disse [230] Philosopher glemme, at det dog er deres Lære, de oversee, at den ikke var sandere, da de

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If order is to be kept in existence—and God does want that, for he is not a God of confusion—then first and foremost care must be taken that every human being is a single individual human being and becomes conscious of being a single individual human being. Suppose people are first allowed to run together into what Aristotle calls the animal category: the crowd. Suppose this abstraction (instead of being less than nothing, less than the most insignificant single human being) is then regarded as being something. Then it will not be long before this abstraction becomes God. And then, then it squares *philosophice* [philosophically] with the doctrine of the God-man.[8]

In the states people have learned that the crowd overawes the king and the newspapers overawe the councillors of state. In the same way they finally discover that *summa summarum* [the sum total] of all human beings overawes God. This is then called the doctrine of the God-man, or that God and human being are *idem per idem* [one and the same]. Of course, several of the philosophers who helped to spread this doctrine of the generation's superiority over the individual turn away in disgust when their doctrine has sunk so low that

8 "Not a God of confusion": 1 Corinthians 14:33. Aristotle (Politics III.11) remarks that some multitudes differ little from beasts.

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Fornemme antoge den, da Eliten af de Fornemme eller en udvalgt Kreds af Philosopher var Incarnationen.

SKS 11.23 Det vil sige, Læren om Gud-Mennesket har gjort Christenheden fræk. Det seer næsten ud, som havde Gud været for svag. Det er som var det gaaet ham liig den Godmodige, der gjør for store Indrømmelser, og saa lønnes med Utaknemmelighed. Det er Gud, der opfandt Læren om Gud-Mennesket, og nu har Christenheden faaet det frækt vendt om, og paadutter Gud Slægtskabet, saa den Indrømmelse, Gud har gjort, omtrent betyder hvad det i disse Tider betyder, at en Konge giver en friere Forfatning – og det veed man nok, hvad det betyder, »det var han nok nødt til«.

Det er, som var Gud kommet i Forlegenhed; det er, som havde den Kloge Ret, hvis han sagde til Gud: Du er selv Skyld i det, hvorfor har du indladt Dig saa meget med Mennesket. Det var jo dog aldrig faldet noget Menneske ind, aldrig opkommet i noget Menneskes Hjerte, at der skulde være den Lighed mellem Gud og Menneske. Det var Dig selv, der lod det forkynde, nu høster Du Frugten.

Dog har Christendommen sikkret sig fra Begyndelsen af. Den begynder med Læren om Synden. Syndens Kategori er Enkelthedens Kategori. Synden lader sig slet ikke tænke spekulativt. Det enkelte Menneske ligger nemlig under Begrebet; man kan ikke tænke et enkelt Menneske, men kun Begrebet Menneske. – Derfor er det at Spekulationen strax kommer ind paa den Lære om Generationens *Overmagt* over Individet; thi at Spekulationen skulde anerkjende Begrebets *Afmagt* i Forhold til Virkeligheden, er ikke at forlange. – Men som man ikke kan tænke et enkelt Menneske, saa heller ikke en enkelt Synder; man kan tænke Synden (saa bliver den Negationen), men ikke en enkelt Synder. Dog just derfor kan det heller ikke blive Alvor med Synden, naar den blot skal tænkes.

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the rabble is the God-man. But these [230] philosophers forget that it is, after all, their doctrine. They overlook that it was no truer when the distinguished adopted it, when the elite of the distinguished or a select circle of philosophers was the incarnation.[9]

That is to say, the doctrine of the God-man has made Christendom brazen. It almost looks as if God had been too weak. It is as though he had fared like the good-natured man who makes too great concessions and is then repaid with ingratitude. It is God who invented the doctrine of the God-man, and now Christendom has brazenly turned it around and foists the kinship upon God. So the concession God has made means roughly what it means in these times when a king grants a freer constitution—and we all know what that means: "he had no choice."[10]

It is as though God had got himself into an awkward position. It is as though the clever person would be right if he said to God: It's your own fault; why did you get so involved with human beings? It would never have occurred to any human being, never have entered any human heart, that there should be this likeness between God and human being. It was you yourself who had it proclaimed; now you are reaping the fruit.

Yet Christianity secured itself from the very beginning. It begins with the doctrine of sin. The category of sin is the category of the single individual. Sin cannot be thought speculatively at all. For the single individual human being falls beneath the concept; one cannot think a single individual human being, only the concept "human being."—That is why speculation at once arrives at the doctrine of the generation's *predominance* over the individual; for it is too much to expect that speculation should acknowledge the concept's *impotence* in relation to actuality.—But just as one cannot think a single individual human being, neither can one think a single individual sinner. One can think sin (then it becomes negation), but not a single individual sinner. Yet precisely for that reason sin can never become a matter of earnestness when it is only to be thought.

9 Councillor of state (*Conferentsraad*): a high honorary title of rank in Denmark.
10 Written in 1848, when Frederik VII gave up absolute rule; Denmark received a free constitution in June 1849.

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Thi Alvoren er just, at Du og jeg er Synder; Alvoren er ikke Synden overhovedet, men Alvorens Eftertryk ligger paa Synderen, der er den Enkelte. I Forhold til »det enkelte Menneske« maa Spekulationen, hvis den er conseqvent, egentligen lade meget haant om det at være et enkelt Menneske, eller at være Det, som ikke kan tænkes; den maa, hvis den vilde gjøre Noget i denne Retning, sige til den Enkelte: er det Noget at spilde Tiden paa, see for Alt at glemme det, det at være et enkelt Menneske er Intet at være, tænk – saa er Du hele Menneske [231] heden, cogito ergo sum. Maaskee turde dog ogsaa dette være Løgn, det enkelte Menneske og det at være et enkelt Menneske det Høieste.

SKS 11.23 Dog lad det nu saa være. Men ganske conseqvent maatte Spekulationen ogsaa sige: det at være en enkelt Synder, det er ikke Noget at være, det ligger under Begrebet, spild ikke Tiden derpaa o. s. v. Og hvad saa videre, skal man saa maaskee istedetfor at være en enkelt Synder (ligesom man opfordredes til, istedetfor at være et enkelt Menneske, at tænke Begrebet Menneske) tænke Synden? Og hvad saa videre, bliver man saa maaskee ved at tænke Synden selv »Synden« – cogito ergo sum? Et fortræffeligt Forslag! Imidlertid behøver man endda ikke at frygte saaledes at blive Synden, den – rene Synd; thi Synden lader sig netop ikke tænke. Dette maatte dog vel Spekulationen selv indrømme, da Synden jo er Affald fra Begrebet.

Men for ikke længere at disputere e concessis, hovedsagelig er Vanskeligheden en anden. Spekulationen tager sig ikke iagt for, at i Forhold til Synden er det Ethiske med, der altid pointerer omvendt af Spekulationen og gjør lige de modsatte Trin; thi det Ethiske abstraherer ikke fra Virkelighed, men fordyber i Virkelighed, opererer væsentlig ved Hjælp af den spekulativt overseete og foragtede Kategori: Enkeltheden. Synd er en Bestemmelse af den Enkelte; det er Letfærdighed og ny Synd, at lade som var det Ingenting at være en enkelt Synder – naar man selv er denne enkelte Synder.

Her slaaer Christendom til, slaaer et Kors for Spekulationen; det er Spekulationen lige saa umuligt at komme ud af denne Vanskelighed, som for et Seil-Skib at

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For earnestness is precisely that you and I are sinners. Earnestness is not sin in general; the emphasis of earnestness falls on the sinner, who is the single individual. With regard to "the single individual human being," speculation, if it is consistent, must really look down with great contempt on being a single individual human being, or on being what cannot be thought. If it wanted to do something along these lines, it would have to say to the single individual: Is this something to waste time on? Above all, try to forget it; to be a single individual human being is to be nothing; think—then you are the whole of humanity [231] , *cogito ergo sum* [I think, therefore I am]. Perhaps, though, this too might be a lie, and the single individual human being, and being a single individual human being, might be the highest.

But let that be as it may. Quite consistently, however, speculation would also have to say: being a single individual sinner is not anything to be; it falls beneath the concept; don't waste time on it, etc. And what next? Instead of being a single individual sinner (just as one was urged, instead of being a single individual human being, to think the concept "human being"), is one perhaps to think sin? And what next? By thinking sin, does one perhaps become "sin" oneself—*cogito ergo sum*? An excellent proposal! Still, one need not fear becoming sin in this way—pure sin; for sin precisely cannot be thought. Even speculation would presumably have to concede this, since sin is indeed a falling away from the concept.

But, to argue no longer *e concessis* [from what has been conceded], the main difficulty lies elsewhere. Speculation does not take into account that with regard to sin the ethical is involved, which always points in the opposite direction from speculation and takes exactly the opposite steps. For the ethical does not abstract from actuality but immerses itself in actuality, and it operates essentially with the help of the category that speculation overlooks and despises: the single individual. Sin is a qualification of the single individual. It is frivolity and new sin to pretend that being a single individual sinner is nothing—when one is oneself this single individual sinner.

Here Christianity steps in and makes the sign of the cross against speculation. It is just as impossible for speculation to get out of this difficulty

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seile frem med stik Modvind. Syndens Alvor er dens Virkelighed i den Enkelte, om det er Dig eller mig; spekulativt skal man see bort fra den Enkelte: altsaa kan man kun letsindigt tale spekulativt om Synden. Syndens Dialektik gaaer Spekulationens lige stik imod.

Her begynder Christendommen, med Læren om Synden, og derved med den Enkelte*. Thi rigtignok er det Christendommen, der har lært [232] det om Gud-Mennesket, om Ligheden mellem Gud og Menneske, men den er en stor Hader af kaad eller næsviis Nærgaaenhed. Ved Hjælp af Læren om Synden, og den enkelte Synder, har Gud og Christus engang for alle, ganske anderledes end nogen Konge, sikkret sig mod Folket og Folk og Mængden, Publikum o. s. v. o. s. v., item mod enhver Fordring paa en friere Forfatning. Alle hine Abstrakta ere for Gud slet ikke til; der lever for Gud i Christo lutter enkelte Mennesker (Syndere) – dog kan Gud godt overfare det Hele, han kan ovenikjøbet tage sig af Spurvene.

SKS 11.23 Gud er overhovedet en Ven af Orden; og til den Ende er han selv tilstede paa ethvert Punkt, i ethvert Øieblik (hvad i Lærebogen opføres som en af de Titulaturer, Gud nævnes ved, og som Menneskene tænke lidt ved engang imellem, men vel aldrig gjøre Forsøg paa at tænke i ethvert Øieblik), han er allestedsnærværende. Hans Begreb er ikke som Menneskets, under hvilket det Enkelte ligger som Det, der ikke kan gaae op i Begrebet, hans Begreb omfatter Alt, og i anden Forstand har [233] han intet Begreb. Gud hjælper sig ikke med en Abbreviatur, han begriber (comprehendit) selve Virkeligheden, alt det Enkelte, for ham ligger den Enkelte ikke under Begrebet.

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as it is for a sailing ship to sail forward straight into a head wind. The earnestness of sin is its actuality in the single individual, whether you or I. Speculatively, one is supposed to disregard the single individual; therefore one can speak speculatively of sin only frivolously. The dialectic of sin runs directly counter to that of speculation.

Here Christianity begins, with the doctrine of sin, and thereby with the single individual*. For it is indeed Christianity that has taught [232] about the God-man, about the likeness between God and human being, but it is a great hater of wanton or impudent impertinence. By means of the doctrine of sin and of the single individual sinner, God and Christ have, once and for all, and quite differently from any king, secured themselves against the nation, the people, the crowd, the public, etc., etc., and likewise against every demand for a freer constitution. All those abstractions simply do not exist for God. For God in Christ there live only single individual human beings (sinners)—yet God can easily survey the whole; he can even take care of the sparrows besides.

God is altogether a friend of order; and to that end he is himself present at every point, in every moment. He is omnipresent (which the textbook lists as one of the titles by which God is named, and which people think about a little now and then, but presumably never try to think in every moment). His concept is not like a human being's, beneath which the single individual falls as what cannot be absorbed into the concept. His concept encompasses everything, and in another sense [233] he has no concept. God does not make do with an abbreviation; he comprehends (*comprehendit*) actuality itself, every single thing; for him the single individual does not fall beneath the concept.[11]

11 The textbook: Balle's catechism textbook, used for confirmation instruction in Denmark.

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* Læren om Slægtens Synd er ofte blevet misbrugt, fordi man ikke har været opmærksom paa, at Synden, hvor fælles den er for Alle, ikke samler Menneskene i et Fællesbegreb, i Selskab eller Compagni (»saa lidet som ude paa Kirkegaarden de Dødes Mængde danner noget Selskab«), men adsplitter Menneskene i Enkelte, og holder hver Enkelt fast som Synder, hvilken Adsplittelse i en anden Forstand baade er i Overeensstemmelse med og teleologisk i Retning af Tilværelsens Fuldkommenhed. Dette har man ikke været opmærksom paa, og har saa ladet den faldne Slægt een Gang for alle være blevet god igjen ved Christus. Og saaledes har man dog igjen bragt Gud et Abstraktum paa Halsen, der, som Abstraktum, vil være i nærmere Slægtskab med ham.

* The doctrine of the sin of the race has often been misused, because people have not noticed that sin, however common it is to all, does not gather human beings together into a common concept, into a society or a company ("any more than the crowd of the dead out in the churchyard forms a society"). Instead it splits human beings apart into single individuals and holds each single individual fast as a sinner—a splitting apart that in another sense both accords with and is teleologically directed toward the perfection of existence. People have not noticed this, and so they have let the fallen race be made good again once and for all through Christ. And so once again they have saddled God with an abstraction which, as an abstraction, would claim closer kinship with him.

DANISH

SKS 11.23 Læren om Synden, om at Du og jeg er Synder, hvilken Lære ubetinget splitter »Mængden« ad, befæster nu Qvalitets-Forskjellen mellem Gud og Menneske saa dybt som den aldrig nogensinde er blevet befæstet – atter dette kan kun Gud; Synden er jo: *for Gud* o. s. v. I Intet er et Menneske saa forskjellig fra Gud, som deri, at han, og det er ethvert Menneske, er en Synder, og er det »for Gud«, hvorved jo Modsætningerne i dobbelt Forstand holdes sammen, de holdes sammen (continentur), de faae ikke Lov at gaae ud fra hinanden, men ved saaledes at holdes sammen viser Forskjelligheden sig desto stærkere, som naar man taler om at holde to Farver sammen, opposita juxta se posita magis illucescunt.

Synd er det Eneste af hvad der ellers prædiceres om et Menneske, som paa ingen Maade, hverken via negationis eller via eminentiæ, kan udsiges om Gud. At udsige om Gud (i samme Forstand som at han ikke er endelig, altsaa via negationis, at han er uendelig) at han ikke er en Synder, er Gudsbespottelse.

Som Synder er Mennesket adskilt fra Gud ved Qvalitetens meest svælgende Dyb. Og selvfølgeligt er Gud atter adskilt fra Mennesket ved det samme Qvalitetens svælgende Dyb, naar han forlader Synder. Dersom det dog nemlig ellers lod sig gjøre, ved en omvendt Art Accomodation, at overføre det Guddommelige paa det Menneskelige: i Eet kommer han evigt aldrig til at ligne Gud, i at tilgive Synder.

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The doctrine of sin—that you and I are sinners—a doctrine that unconditionally splits "the crowd" apart, now fixes the qualitative difference between God and human being more deeply than it has ever been fixed before. Again, only God can do this; for sin is indeed: *before God*, etc. In nothing is a human being so different from God as in this: that he—and this means every human being—is a sinner, and is so "before God." By this the opposites are held together in a double sense. They are held together (*continentur* [they are contained]); they are not allowed to go apart from each other. But by being held together in this way, the difference shows itself all the more strongly, as when one speaks of holding two colors together: *opposita juxta se posita magis illucescunt* [opposites placed side by side stand out more clearly].

Of everything that is otherwise predicated of a human being, sin is the one thing that can in no way be said of God, neither *via negationis* [by way of negation] nor *via eminentiae* [by way of eminence]. To say of God that he is not a sinner (in the same sense as saying that he is not finite, and thus, *via negationis*, that he is infinite) is blasphemy.[15]

As a sinner, the human being is separated from God by the most yawning chasm of quality. And of course God in turn is separated from the human being by the same yawning chasm of quality when he forgives sins. For even if, by a reverse kind of accommodation, the divine could otherwise be transferred to the human, in one thing the human

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Men dette er et Skalkeskjul, som blot gjør Menneskene frække. Naar nemlig »den Enkelte« skal føle sig i Slægtskab med Gud (og dette er Christendommens Lære), saa faaer han ogsaa hele Trykket deraf i Frygt og Bæven, han maa, hvis det ikke var en gammel Opdagelse, opdage Forargelsens Mulighed. Men skal det være gjennem et Abstraktum den Enkelte kommer til denne Herlighed, saa bliver Sagen meget for let og er i Grunden taget forfængeligt. Den Enkelte faaer saa ikke det uhyre Tryk af Gud, hvilket i Ydmygelse trykker lige saa dybt som det opløfter, den Enkelte bilder sig ind at have Alt uden videre ved at participere i hiint Abstraktum.

But this is a pretext that only makes people brazen. For when "the single individual" is to feel himself in kinship with God (and this is the teaching of Christianity), he also receives its whole pressure in fear and trembling; if it were not an old discovery, he would have to discover the possibility of offense. But if the single individual is to arrive at this glory by way of an abstraction, then the matter becomes far too easy and is at bottom taken in vain. The single individual then does not receive the tremendous pressure of God, which presses down in humiliation just as deeply as it lifts up. The single individual imagines that he has everything as a matter of course by participating in that abstraction.

14

Det er ikke med det at være Menneske som med det at være Dyr, hvor Exemplaret altid er mindre end Arten. Mennesket udmærker sig ikke blot ved de Fortrin, som almindelig nævnes, fra andre Dyre-Arter, men qvalitativt derved, at Individet, den Enkelte er mere end Arten. Og denne Bestemmelse er igjen dialektisk, betyder, at den Enkelte er Synder, men saa igjen, at det er Fuldkommenheden at være den Enkelte.

Being a human being is not like being an animal, where the specimen is always less than the species. The human being is distinguished from other animal species not only by the advantages usually mentioned but qualitatively, by the fact that the individual, the single individual, is more than the species. And this qualification is in turn dialectical: it means that the single individual is a sinner, but then again that to be the single individual is perfection.

15 The two traditional ways of speaking of God in scholastic theology: denying him creaturely limits, or ascribing creaturely perfections to him in the highest degree.

DANISH

Her ligger saa Forargelsens yderste Concentration, hvad den Lære har fundet fornødent, som netop har lært Ligheden mellem Gud og Menneske.

Men Forargelse er den meest mulige afgjørende Bestemmelse af Subjektiviteten, det enkelte Menneske. Vistnok er det at tænke Forargelse uden at tænke en Forarget ikke ligesaa umuligt som et Fløitespil, naar der ingen Fløitespiller er; men selv Tænkningen maa dog vistnok indrømme, at Forargelse, endnu mere end Forelskelse, er et uvirkeligt Begreb, som først bliver virkeligt, hver Gang der er En, en Enkelt, som er forarget.

Forargelse forholder sig altsaa til den Enkelte. Og dermed begynder Christendommen, med at gjøre hvert Menneske til en Enkelt, en enkelt [234] Synder; og nu concentrerer den Alt hvad Himmel og Jord kan opdrive af Forargelses Mulighed (kun derover raader Gud): og dette er Christendom. Den siger saa til hver Enkelt: Du skal troe, ɔ: Du skal enten forarges, eller Du skal troe. Videre ikke eet Ord; der er ikke videre at tilføie. »Nu har jeg talet«, siger Gud i Himlene »i Evigheden tales vi ved igjen. Du kan i den mellemliggende Tid gjøre hvad Du vil, men Dommen forestaaer.«

SKS 11.23 En Dom! Ja, det har vi Mennesker jo lært, det lærer jo Erfaring, at naar der er Mytteri paa et Skib eller i en Armee, saa ere de Skyldige saa mange, at man maa lade Straffen fare; og naar det er Publikum, det høistærede dannede Publikum, eller Folket, saa er det ikke blot ingen Forbrydelse, saa er det ifølge Avisen, paa hvilken man kan stole som paa Evangeliet og Aabenbaringen, Guds Villie. Hvoraf kommer dette?

Det kommer deraf, at Begrebet Dom svarer til den Enkelte, man dømmer ikke en masse; man kan slaae Folk ihjel en masse, sprøite paa dem en masse, smigre dem en masse, kort paa mange Maader behandle Folk som Fæ, men dømme Folk som Fæ kan man ikke, thi man kan ikke dømme Fæ; om der end dømmes nok saa mange, naar det

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being will never in all eternity come to resemble God: in forgiving sins.

Here, then, lies the utmost concentration of offense—which the very teaching that taught the likeness between God and human being has found necessary.

But offense is the most decisive possible qualification of subjectivity, of the single individual human being. To think offense without thinking of someone offended is perhaps not quite as impossible as flute-playing when there is no flute-player. But even thought must surely concede that offense, even more than falling in love, is an unreal concept that becomes real only each time there is someone, a single individual, who is offended.[16]

Offense, then, relates to the single individual. And with this Christianity begins: by making every human being a single individual, a single individual [234] sinner. And now it concentrates everything that heaven and earth can muster in the way of the possibility of offense (only God has that at his disposal): and this is Christianity. It then says to each single individual: You shall believe—that is, you shall either be offended or you shall believe. Not one word more; there is nothing more to add. "Now I have spoken," says God in heaven, "we shall talk again in eternity. In the meantime you can do what you like, but the judgment is coming."

A judgment! Yes, we human beings have learned—experience teaches it—that when there is mutiny on a ship or in an army, the guilty are so many that punishment has to be dropped. And when it is the public, the highly esteemed cultured public, or the people, then it is not only no crime; then, according to the newspaper, which can be relied on like the gospel and revelation, it is the will of God. How does this come about?

It comes from the fact that the concept of judgment corresponds to the single individual; one does not judge en masse. One can kill people en masse, turn the hoses on them en masse, flatter them en masse—in short, treat people like cattle in many ways—but one cannot judge people like cattle, for one cannot judge cattle. However many

16 An echo of Socrates in Plato's *Apology* (27b): can anyone believe in flute-playing without believing in flute-players?

DANISH

at dømme skal have Alvor og Sandhed, dømmes hver Enkelt*.

Naar nu saa Mange ere de Skyldige, saa lader dette menneskeligt sig ikke gjøre; derfor opgiver man det Hele, man indseer, at der ikke kan være Tale om nogen Dom, de ere for Mange til at blive dømte, man kan ikke faae dem eller ikke overkomme at faae dem Enkelte, derfor maa man opgive at *dømme.*

17

Og da man nu i vor oplyste Tid, hvor man finder alle anthropomorphistiske og anthropopathiske Forestillinger om Gud upassende, dog ikke finder det upassende at tænke Gud, som Dommer, i Lighed med en almindelig Birkedommer eller General-Auditeur, der ikke kan overfare en saa vidtløftig Sag – saa slutter man: det vil i Evigheden gaae accurat ligesaa. Lader os derfor blot holde sammen, sikkre os, at Præsterne præke paa den Maade.

Og skulde der være en Enkelt, der vovede at tale anderledes, en Enkelt, der var taabelig nok til at gjøre sig selv sit Liv bekymret og ansvarligt i Frygt og Bæven, og saa ogsaa at ville plage [235] Andre: da lader os sikkre os ved at ansee ham for gal, eller, hvis fornødent gjøres, ved at slaae ham ihjel. Naar vi blot ere Mange om det, saa er det ingen Uret. Det er Nonsens og antiqveret, at Mange kan gjøre Uret; hvad de Mange gjøre er Guds Villie.

SKS 11.23 For denne Viisdom, det veed vi af Erfaring – thi vi ere ikke uerfarne Ynglinge, vi henkaste ikke løse Ord, vi tale som Mænd af Erfaring – har hidtil alle Mennesker bøiet sig, Konger og Keisere og Excellencer; ved Hjælp af denne Viisdom ere hidtil alle vore Kreaturer hjulpne op: saa skal sgu Gud ogsaa lære at bøie sig. Det gjælder blot om, at vi blive Mange, rigtigt Mange, der holde sammen, naar vi gjøre det, saa ere vi sikkrede mod Evighedens Dom. – Ja, vistnok ere de sikkrede, dersom det først var i Evigheden de skulle blive Enkelte. Men de vare og ere for Gud bestandigt Enkelte; ikke Den, der sidder i et Glasskab, er saa generet som hvert Menneske er for Gud Gjennemsigtighed.

ENGLISH

are judged, if the judging is to have earnestness and truth, each single individual is judged*.

Now when so many are guilty, this cannot humanly be done. So the whole thing is given up; it is recognized that there can be no question of any judgment. They are too many to be judged; one cannot get at them, or cannot manage to get at them, as single individuals; therefore one must give up *judging*.

Our enlightened age finds all anthropomorphic and anthropopathic conceptions of God unfitting. Yet it does not find it unfitting to think of God as judge on the model of an ordinary district judge or judge advocate general who cannot get through so extensive a case. And so it concludes: it will be exactly the same in eternity. So let us just stick together and make sure the pastors preach that way.[18]

And should there be a single individual who dared to speak otherwise—a single individual foolish enough to make his own life anxious and accountable in fear and trembling, and then also to want to torment [235] others—then let us secure ourselves by regarding him as mad or, if need be, by killing him. As long as there are many of us doing it, it is no wrong. It is nonsense and antiquated to think that the many can do wrong; what the many do is the will of God.

Before this wisdom all human beings have bowed until now, kings and emperors and excellencies—this we know from experience, for we are not inexperienced youths, we do not toss out idle words, we speak as men of experience. With the help of this wisdom all our protégés have been helped up until now. So, by God, God too will have to learn to bow. It is only a matter of our becoming many, really many, who stick together; if we do that, we are secured against the judgment of eternity.—Yes, they certainly would be secured, if it were only in eternity that they were to become single individuals. But before God they were and are always single individuals. Someone sitting in a glass case

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* See derfor er Gud »Dommeren«, fordi for ham ingen Mængde er, men kun Enkelte.

* See, that is why God is "the Judge": because for him there is no crowd, only single individuals.

18 District judge (*Birkedommer*): judge of a local jurisdiction; judge advocate general (*General-Auditeur*): the chief military judge.

DANISH

Dette er Samvittigheds-Forholdet. Ved Hjælp af Samvittigheden er det saaledes indrettet, at Rapporten strax følger med enhver Skyld, og at den Skyldige er Den, der selv maa skrive den. Men det skrives med sympathetisk Blæk, og bliver derfor først ret tydeligt, naar det i Evigheden holdes op for Lyset, medens Evigheden reviderer Samvittighederne. I Grunden ankommer Enhver i Evigheden saaledes, at han selv medbringer og overleverer den nøiagtigste Anmeldelse om hver den mindste Ubetydelighed, han forbrød eller efterlod. At holde Dom i Evigheden kunde derfor et Barn bestride; der er egentligen Intet at gjøre for Trediemand, Alt, indtil det ubetydeligste Ord der er talet, er i Orden.

Det gaaer den Skyldige, der er paa Reisen gjennem Livet til Evigheden, som det gik hiin Morder, der paa Jernbanen med dennes Hurtighed flygtede bort fra Gjerningsstedet – og sin Forbrydelse: ak, just under den Vogn, hvori han sad, løb den elektromagnetiske Telegraph med hans Signalement og Ordre til at anholde ham paa første Station. Da han ankom paa Stationen og stod ud af Vognen, var han Arrestant – han havde paa en Maade selv bragt Angivelsen med.

Altsaa Fortvivlelse om Syndernes Forladelse er Forargelse. Og Forargelse er Syndens Potentsation. Dette tænker man i Almindelighed slet ikke paa; man regner i Almindelighed vel neppe Forargelse til Synd, om hvilken man da ikke taler, men om Synder, blandt hvilke Forargelse ikke finder Plads. Endnu mindre opfatter man Forargelse som Syndens [236] Potentsation. Dette kommer af, at man ikke, christeligt, danner Modsætningen mellem: Synd – Tro, men mellem Synd – Dyd.

ENGLISH

is not as exposed as every human being is in his transparency before God.

This is the relation of conscience. By means of conscience things are so arranged that the report immediately follows every guilt, and the guilty one is the one who must write it himself. But it is written in invisible ink, and so becomes really clear only when it is held up to the light in eternity, while eternity audits the consciences. At bottom, everyone arrives in eternity bringing with him and handing over the most exact record of every least trifle he has committed or omitted. A child could therefore manage the holding of judgment in eternity. There is really nothing for a third party to do; everything, down to the most insignificant word ever spoken, is in order.

The guilty person on his journey through life to eternity fares like that murderer who fled by rail, at the train's speed, from the scene of the deed—and from his crime. Alas, right beneath the carriage in which he sat ran the electromagnetic telegraph with his description and orders to arrest him at the first station. When he arrived at the station and stepped out of the carriage, he was under arrest—in a way he had brought the denunciation with him himself.

So despair of the forgiveness of sins is offense. And offense is the intensification of sin. People generally do not think of this at all. They hardly count offense as sin—which they do not talk about anyway; they talk about sins, among which offense finds no place. Still less do they understand offense as the [236] intensification of sin. This comes from not forming the opposition, in the Christian way, between sin and faith, but between sin and virtue.

C. THE SIN OF DECLARING CHRISTIANITY UNTRUE

The self goes on the offensive against Christianity; this is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

DANISH

SKS 11.23 Dette er Synd mod den Hellig-Aand. Selvet er her meest fortvivlet potentseret; det kaster ikke blot hele Christendommen af sig, men gjør den til Løgn og Usandhed – hvilken uhyre fortvivlet Forestilling om sig selv maa det Selv have!

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This is sin against the Holy Spirit. Here the self is intensified to the utmost in despair. It not only casts off the whole of Christianity but makes it a lie and untruth—what a tremendously despairing conception of itself this self must have![19]

DANISH

Syndens Potentsation viser sig tydeligt, naar man opfatter den som en Krig mellem Menneske og Gud, hvor der forandres Taktik; Potentsationen er Stigen fra det Defensive til det Offensive. Synd er Fortvivlelse; her kjæmpes eviterende. Saa kom Fortvivlelse over sin Synd; her kjæmpes endnu en Gang eviterende eller befæstende sig indenfor sin tilbagetrukne Stilling, men bestandigt pedem referens. Nu forandres Taktiken; skjøndt Synden fordyber sig mere og mere i sig selv, og saaledes fjerner sig, kommer den dog i en anden Forstand nærmere, bliver mere og mere afgjort sig selv. Fortvivlelse om Syndernes Forladelse er en bestemt Position lige over for et Tilbud af Guds Barmhjertighed; Synden er ikke ganske den Flygtende, ikke blot defensiv.

Men den Synd at opgive Christendommen som Usandhed og Løgn er offensiv Krig. Alt det Foregaaende gjør dog paa en Maade sin Modpart den Indrømmelse, at den er den Stærkere. Men nu er Synden angribende.

Synd mod den Hellig-Aand er den positive Form af Forargethed.

Christendommens Lære er Læren om Gud-Mennesket, om Slægtskabet mellem Gud og Menneske, men vel at mærke saaledes, at Forargelsens Mulighed er, om jeg saa tør sige, den Garanti, hvorved Gud sikkrer sig, at Mennesket ikke kan komme ham for nær. Forargelsens Mulighed er det dialektiske Moment i alt det Christelige. Tages den bort, saa er det Christelige ikke blot Hedenskab, men noget saa Phantastisk, at Hedenskabet maatte erklære det for Vrøvl. At være Gud saa nær, som Christendommen lærer, at Mennesket kan komme ham, og tør komme ham, og skal komme ham i Christo, er aldrig faldet noget Menneske ind.

Skal [237] det nu forstaaes ligefrem, saadan ganske uden videre, uden den allermindste Reservation, aldeles ugeneret, friskfyragtigt: saa er Christendommen, hvis man vil kalde Hedenskabets Digt om Guderne menneskelig Afsindighed, en afsindig Guds Opfindelse; en saadan Lære kunde kun en Gud, der er gaaet fra Forstanden, falde paa – saaledes maa et Menneske dømme, der endnu har bevaret sin Forstand. Den incarnerede Gud vilde, hvis Mennesket saadan uden

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The intensification of sin shows itself clearly when sin is understood as a war between human being and God in which the tactics change. The intensification is an ascent from the defensive to the offensive. Sin is despair; here the fighting is evasive. Then came despair over one's sin; here the fighting is once more evasive, or it entrenches itself within its position of retreat, but always *pedem referens* [falling back step by step]. Now the tactics change. Although sin sinks deeper and deeper into itself and so moves farther away, in another sense it comes closer and becomes more and more decisively itself. Despair of the forgiveness of sins is a definite position over against an offer of God's mercy; sin is not entirely in flight, not merely defensive.

But the sin of abandoning Christianity as untruth and a lie is offensive war. All that went before still concedes to its adversary, in a way, that it is the stronger. But now sin is on the attack.

Sin against the Holy Spirit is the positive form of being offended.

The teaching of Christianity is the doctrine of the God-man, of the kinship between God and human being—but, mind you, in such a way that the possibility of offense is, if I may put it so, the guarantee by which God secures himself so that the human being cannot come too close to him. The possibility of offense is the dialectical element in everything Christian. If it is taken away, then the Christian is not merely paganism but something so fantastic that paganism would have to declare it nonsense. To be as near to God as Christianity teaches that a human being can come, and dares to come, and shall come to him in Christ—that has never occurred to any human being.

If [237] this is now to be understood directly, just like that, without the slightest reservation, completely unabashed, in a devil-may-care way, then—if one wants to call paganism's poetry about the gods human madness—Christianity is the invention of a mad God. Such a teaching could only occur to a God who has lost his mind: so must a human being judge who has still kept his understanding. If

19 *Modo ponendo*: by way of affirmation, i.e., actively asserting something rather than merely denying. Sin against the Holy Spirit: Matthew 12:31–32.

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videre skulde være Kammerat med ham, blive et Sidestykke til Prinds Henrik hos Shakspeare.

SKS 11.23 Gud og Menneske ere to Qvaliteter, mellem hvilke der er en uendelig Qvalitets-Forskjel. Enhver Lære, der overseer denne Forskjel, er menneskelig talt afsindig, guddommelig forstaaet, Guds-Bespottelse. I Hedenskabet gjorde Mennesket Gud til Menneske (Menneske-Guden); i Christendommen gjør Gud sig til Menneske (Gud-Mennesket) – men i denne sin forbarmende Naades uendelige Kjerlighed gjør han dog een Betingelse, han kan det ikke anderledes. Just dette er Sorgen i Christo, »han kan det ikke anderledes«; han kan fornedre sig selv, paatage sig en Tjeners Skikkelse, lide, døe for Menneskene, indbyde Alle at komme til sig, offre hver sit Livs Dag, og hver Dagens Time, og offre Livet – men Forargelsens Mulighed kan han ikke borttage.

O, eneste Kjerlighedens Gjerning, o, uudgrundelige Kjerlighedens Sorg, at selv Gud ikke kan – som han da i en anden Forstand heller ikke vil, ikke kan ville – men selv om han vilde, ikke kan gjøre det umuligt, at denne Kjerlighedens Gjerning kan blive et Menneske til lige det Modsatte, til den yderste Elendighed! Thi den størst mulige menneskelige Elendighed, større endnu end Synden, er at forarges paa Christus og forblive i Forargelsen. Og dette kan Christus ikke, dette kan »Kjerligheden« ikke gjøre umuligt. See, derfor siger han: »salig Den, som ikke forarges paa mig.« Mere kan han ikke gjøre.

Altsaa han kan, det er muligt, han kan ved sin Kjerlighed komme til at gjøre et Menneske saa elendigt, som et Menneske aldrig nogensinde kunde blive det. O, uudgrundelige Modsigelse i Kjerlighed! Men dog kan han – af Kjerlighed ikke bringe det over sit Hjerte at lade være at fuldkomme Kjerlighedens Gjerning; ak, hvis den saa dog gjorde et Menneske saa elendig, som han ellers aldrig vilde være blevet det!

Lad os tale ret menneskeligt derom. O, usselt et Menneske, som aldrig har følt Trang til af Kjerlighed at offre Alt af Kjerlighed, som altsaa ikke har kunnet det! Men naar han saa opdagede, at just denne hans 238 Opoffrelse i Kjerlighed, at det var muligt, at den kunde

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the human being were simply to be his chum like that, the incarnate God would become a counterpart to Prince Henry in Shakespeare.[20]

God and human being are two qualities between which there is an infinite qualitative difference. Every teaching that overlooks this difference is, humanly speaking, mad; divinely understood, it is blasphemy. In paganism the human being made God a human being (the man-god); in Christianity God makes himself a human being (the God-man). But in the infinite love of his compassionate grace he nevertheless makes one condition; he cannot do otherwise. Precisely this is the sorrow in Christ, that "he cannot do otherwise." He can humble himself, take the form of a servant, suffer, die for human beings, invite all to come to him, sacrifice every day of his life and every hour of the day, and sacrifice his life—but the possibility of offense he cannot take away.[21]

O unique work of love! O unfathomable sorrow of love! Even God cannot—just as in another sense he does not want to, cannot want to—but even if he wanted to, he cannot make it impossible that this work of love might become for a human being the very opposite, the utmost misery! For the greatest possible human misery, greater even than sin, is to be offended at Christ and to remain in the offense. And this Christ cannot, this "love" cannot, make impossible. See, that is why he says: "Blessed is the one who is not offended at me." More he cannot do.[22]

So he can—it is possible—he can by his love come to make a human being more miserable than a human being could ever otherwise become. O unfathomable contradiction in love! And yet he cannot—out of love—bring himself to leave the work of love unfinished; alas, even though it should make a human being more miserable than he would otherwise ever have become!

Let us speak of it in quite human terms. O wretched the human being who has never felt the urge, out of love, to sacrifice everything out of love, and who therefore has not been able to! But suppose he then discovered that precisely this 238

20 Prince Hal in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, who carouses with Falstaff and his cronies and, once crowned, casts them off.
21 The invitation to all: Matthew 11:28.
22 Matthew 11:6.

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blive det andet Menneske, den Elskedes, største Ulykke: hvad saa? Saa enten tabte Kjerligheden i ham sin Spændkraft, fra at være et Magtens Liv sank den sammen til en veemodig Følelses indesluttede Grunden, han gik fra Kjerligheden, han vovede ikke at gjøre denne Kjerlighedens Gjerning, selv segnende, ikke under Gjerningen, men under Vægten af hiin Mulighed.

SKS 11.237 Thi ligesom en Vægt bliver uendelig meget tungere, naar den anbringes paa Enden af en Stang, og den Løftende skal holde i den modsatte Ende, saaledes bliver enhver Gjerning uendelig tungere, naar den bliver dialektisk, og tungest, naar den bliver sympathetisk-dialektisk, saa hvad Kjerligheden tilskynder at gjøre for den Elskede, det synes igjen i en anden Forstand Omsorgen for den Elskede at fraraade. – Eller Kjerligheden seirede, og han vovede det af Kjerlighed. O, men i Kjerlighedens Glæde (som Kjerlighed altid er glad, især naar den offrer Alt) var dog en dyb Sorg – thi det var jo muligt!

See, derfor fuldkommede han denne sin Kjerlighedens Gjerning, han bragte Offeret (som han for sit Vedkommende jublede ved) ikke uden Taarer: der sværer over dette, hvad skal jeg kalde det, dette Inderlighedens Historie-Maleri hiin mørke Mulighed. Og dog, hvis denne ikke havde svævet over det, havde hans Gjerning ikke været den sande Kjerligheds. – O, min Ven, hvad har Du vel forsøgt i Livet! Anstreng Din Hjerne, riv enhver Bedækning til Side og blot Følelsens viscera i Dit Bryst, sløif enhver Befæstning, som adskiller Dig fra Den, om hvem Du læser, og læs saa Shakspeare – og Du skal gyse for Collisioner. Men de egentlige religieuse Collisioner synes selv Shakspeare at have gyset tilbage for. Maaskee lader disse sig ogsaa kun udtrykke i Gudernes Sprog.

Og dette Sprog kan intet Menneske tale; thi som allerede en Græker saa skjønt har sagt: af Mennesker lærer Mennesket at tale, af Guderne at tie.

At der er den uendelige Qvalitets-Forskjel mellem Gud og Menneske, det er Forargelsens Mulighed, som ikke kan borttages. Af Kjerlighed bliver Gud Menneske; han siger: see her, hvad det er at være Menneske, men, tilføier han, o tag Dig iagt, thi jeg er tillige Gud – salig Den, som ikke forarges paa mig. Han paatager sig som Menneske en

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sacrifice of his in love might possibly become the other person's, the beloved's, greatest misfortune: what then? Then either love lost its resilience in him; from being a life of power it collapsed into the inclosed brooding of a melancholy feeling. He withdrew from love; he did not dare to do this work of love, sinking himself, not under the deed, but under the weight of that possibility.

For just as a weight becomes infinitely heavier when it is placed at the end of a pole and the one lifting it has to hold the opposite end, so every deed becomes infinitely heavier when it becomes dialectical, and heaviest when it becomes sympathetically dialectical: what love urges one to do for the beloved, concern for the beloved in another sense seems to advise against.—Or love won, and he dared it out of love. O, but in the joy of love (as love is always joyful, especially when it sacrifices everything) there was still a deep sorrow—for it was, after all, possible!

See, that is why he completed this work of love, why he made the sacrifice (in which, for his own part, he rejoiced) not without tears. Over this—what shall I call it—this history painting of inwardness hovers that dark possibility. And yet, had it not hovered over it, his deed would not have been a deed of true love.—O my friend, what have you really tried in life! Strain your brain, tear aside every covering and lay bare the *viscera* [inmost depths] of feeling in your breast, tear down every fortification that separates you from the one you are reading about, and then read Shakespeare—and you will shudder at collisions. But the truly religious collisions even Shakespeare seems to have shrunk back from. Perhaps these can only be expressed in the language of the gods.

And this language no human being can speak; for, as a Greek said long ago so beautifully: from human beings one learns to speak, from the gods to be silent.[23]

That there is this infinite qualitative difference between God and human being is the possibility of offense, which cannot be taken away. Out of love God becomes a human being. He says: See here what it is to be a human being—but, he adds, oh, take care, for I am also God—blessed is the one

23 Plutarch, "On Talkativeness" 8.

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ringe Tjeners Skikkelse, han udtrykker det at være et ringe Menneske, paa det at intet Menneske skal mene sig udelukket, eller mene, at det er menneskelig Anseelse og Anseelse blandt Mennesker, der bringer En nærmere til [239] Gud. Nei, han er det ringe Menneske.

who is not offended at me. As a human being he takes on the form of a lowly servant; he expresses what it is to be a lowly human being, so that no human being should think himself excluded, or think that it is human prestige and prestige among human beings that brings one closer to [239] God. No, he is the lowly human being.

SKS 11.23 Seer her hid, siger han, og forvis Dig om, hvad det er at være Menneske, o, men tag Dig iagt; thi jeg er tillige Gud – salig Den, som ikke forarges paa mig. Eller omvendt: Faderen og jeg er Eet, dog er jeg dette enkelte, ringe Menneske, fattig, forladt, given i Menneskenes Vold – salig Den, som ikke forarges paa mig. Jeg, dette ringe Menneske, er Den som gjør, at Døve høre, Blinde see, Halte gaae, Spedalske renses, Døde staae op – salig Den, som ikke forarges paa mig.

Look here, he says, and make sure of what it is to be a human being—oh, but take care, for I am also God—blessed is the one who is not offended at me. Or the other way round: The Father and I are one; yet I am this single, lowly human being, poor, forsaken, delivered into the hands of men—blessed is the one who is not offended at me. I, this lowly human being, am the one who makes the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers clean, the dead rise—blessed is the one who is not offended at me.[24]

Under Ansvar paa høieste Sted fordrister jeg mig derfor til at sige, at dette Ord: salig Den, som ikke forarges paa mig, hører med til Forkyndelsen om Christo, om ikke paa samme Maade som Indstiftelses-Ordene i Nadveren, saa dog som de Ord: Enhver prøve sig selv. De ere Christi egne Ord, og de maae, især da i Christenheden, atter og atter indskjærpes, gjentages, siges til Enhver især. Overalt* hvor disse Ord ikke lyde med, eller i ethvert Tilfælde, hvor Fremstillingen af det Christelige ikke er paa ethvert Punkt gjennemtrængt af denne Tanke: der er Christendommen Blasphemi.

Answerable to the highest authority, I therefore venture to say that these words, "blessed is the one who is not offended at me," belong to the proclamation of Christ—if not in the same way as the words of institution at the Lord's Supper, then at least as the words: Let each one examine himself. They are Christ's own words, and they must, especially in Christendom, be impressed again and again, repeated, said to each person in particular. Wherever* these words are not heard as well, or in any case wherever the presentation of the Christian is not at every point permeated by this thought, there Christianity is blasphemy.[25]

Thi uden Livvagt og uden Tjenere, der kunde berede ham Veien og gjøre Menneskene opmærksomme paa, hvo det var der kom: gik Christus her paa Jorden i en Tjeners ringe Skikkelse. Men Forargelsens Mulighed (o, som den var i Hans Kjerlighed Ham Sorgen!) værgede og værger om Ham, befæster et svælgende Dyb mellem Ham og Den, som var Ham nærmest og stod Ham nærmest.

For without a bodyguard and without servants who might prepare the way for him and make people aware of who it was that came, Christ walked here on earth in the lowly form of a servant. But the possibility of offense (oh, how in his love this was his sorrow!) guarded and guards him, and fixes a yawning chasm between him and the one who was nearest to him and stood nearest to him.

26

Den nemlig, som ikke forarges, han *tilbeder* troende. Men at tilbede, hvilket er Troens Udtryk, er at udtrykke, at Qvalitetens uendelig svæl [240] gende Dyb dem imellem er

For the one who is not offended *worships* in faith. But to worship, which is the expression of faith, is to express that the infinitely yawning [240] chasm of quality between them is fixed. For in faith, again,

24 John 10:30; Matthew 11:5.
25 "Let each one examine himself": 1 Corinthians 11:28, said of preparing for the Lord's Supper.

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befæstet. Thi i Troen er igjen Forargelsens Mulighed det dialektiske Moment*.

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the possibility of offense is the dialectical element*.

27 29

SKS 11.24 Men den Art Forargelse, om hvilken her er Tale, er modo ponendo, den udsiger om Christendommen, at den er Usandhed og Løgn, og derved igjen det Samme om Christus.

For at belyse denne Art Forargelse bliver det bedst at gjennemgaae de forskjellige Former af Forargelsen, hvilken principielt forholder sig til Paradoxet (Christus) og saaledes kommer igjen ved enhver Bestemmelse af det Christelige, fordi enhver saadan forholder sig til Christus, har Christus in mente.

But the kind of offense we are speaking of here is *modo ponendo* [positive, by way of assertion]: it says of Christianity that it is untruth and a lie, and thereby says the same of Christ.

To shed light on this kind of offense, it will be best to go through the various forms of offense. Offense relates in principle to the paradox (Christ), and so it recurs with every qualification of the Christian, because every such qualification relates to Christ, has Christ *in mente* [in mind].

THREE FORMS OF OFFENSE

Offense may leave Christ undecided, stare helplessly at the paradox, or declare Christianity a lie.

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Den laveste Form af Forargelse, den, menneskelig talt, uskyldigste, er at lade det Hele med Christus staae hen uafgjort, at dømme saaledes: jeg tillader mig Intet at dømme derom; jeg troer ikke, men jeg dømmer Intet. At dette er en Form af Forargelse, undgaaer de Fleste. Sagen er, man har reent glemt dette Christelige: »*Du skal.*« Deraf

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The lowest form of offense, humanly speaking the most innocent, is to leave the whole question of Christ undecided, and to judge like this: I do not presume to judge anything about it; I do not believe, but I pass no judgment. That this is a form of offense escapes most people. The fact is that this

26

* Og det er nu Tilfælde næsten overalt i Christenheden, der, som det synes, *enten* ganske ignorerer, at Christus selv er Den, der saa gjentagent, saa inderligt advarede mod Forargelsen, endnu mod Slutningen af sit Liv endog sine troe Apostle, der havde fulgt ham fra Begyndelsen og for hans Skyld forladt Alt; *eller* vel endog taus anseer det for en Slags overspændt Ængstelighed af Christus, da Tusinder og Tusinders Erfaring godtgjør, at man kan have Troen paa Christus uden at have mærket det Mindste til Forargelsens Mulighed. Men dette turde være en Feiltagelse, der vel skal blive aabenbar, naar Forargelsens Mulighed kommer til at dømme Christenheden.

* And this is now the case almost everywhere in Christendom. It seems *either* to ignore completely that Christ himself is the one who so repeatedly, so fervently warned against offense—even toward the end of his life, even his faithful apostles, who had followed him from the beginning and left everything for his sake; *or* perhaps even silently to regard it as a kind of overwrought anxiousness on Christ's part, since the experience of thousands upon thousands proves that one can have faith in Christ without having noticed the least thing of the possibility of offense. But this might well be a mistake, one that will surely become evident when the possibility of offense comes to judge Christendom.

27

* Her en lille Opgave for Iagttagere. Dersom man antager, at alle de mange Præster her og i Udlandet, som holde og skrive Prædikener, ere troende Christne, hvorledes lader det sig saa forklare, at man aldrig hører eller læser den Bøn, som især i vore Tider laae saa nær: Gud i Himlene, jeg takker Dig, at Du ikke har fordret af et Menneske, at han skal begribe Christendommen; thi hvis det fordredes, da var jeg den Elendigste af Alle. Jo mere jeg søger at begribe den, jo mere ubegribelig forekommer den mig, jo mere opdager jeg blot Forargelsens Mulighed. Derfor takker jeg Dig, at Du ene fordrer Troen, og jeg beder Dig, at Du fremdeles vil forøge mig den.

* Here is a little task for observers. If one assumes that all the many pastors, here and abroad, who preach and write sermons are believing Christians, how is it to be explained that one never hears or reads the prayer that would be so natural, especially in our times: God in heaven, I thank you that you have not required of a human being that he should comprehend Christianity; for if that were required, I would be the most miserable of all. The more I seek to comprehend it, the more incomprehensible it seems to me, the more I discover only the possibility of offense. Therefore I thank you that you require only faith, and I pray you to go on increasing it in me.

29

Denne Bøn vilde orthodox være aldeles correct, og antaget, at den var sand i den Bedende, vilde den tillige være correct Ironi over hele Spekulationen. Men mon Troen findes paa Jorden!

Orthodoxly, this prayer would be entirely correct, and, assuming it were true in the one who prays it, it would at the same time be correct irony on the whole of speculation. But will faith be found on earth![28]

28 Luke 18:8.

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kommer det, at man ikke seer, at dette er Forargelse, dette at stille Christus i Indifferents. Det at Christendommen er Dig forkyndt, betyder, Du skal have en Mening om Christus; Han er, eller det at Han er til, og at Han har været til, er hele Tilværelsens Afgjørelse. Er Christus Dig forkyndt, saa er det Forargelse at sige: jeg vil ingen Mening have derom.

Dog maa dette forstaaes med en vis Indskrænkning i disse Tider, da Christendommen forkyndes saa maadeligt, som den gjør. Der leve vist [241] nok mange Tusinder, som have hørt Christendommen forkynde, og som aldrig have hørt Noget om dette »skal.« Men Den, der har hørt det, naar han saa siger: jeg vil ingen Mening have derom, saa er han forarget. Han benegter nemlig Christi Guddom, at den har Ret til at fordre dette af et Menneske, at han skal have en Mening. Det hjælper ikke, at et saadant Menneske siger: »jeg udsiger jo Intet, hverken Ja eller Nei om Christus«; thi saa spørger man ham blot: har Du da heller ingen Mening om, hvorvidt Du skal have nogen Mening om Ham eller ikke?

SKS 11.24 Svarer han dertil: jo, saa fanger han sig selv; og svarer han: nei, saa dømmer Christendommen ham alligevel, at han skal have en Mening derom, og altsaa igjen om Christus, at intet Menneske skal formaste sig til at lade Christi Liv staae hen som en Curiositet. Naar Gud lader sig føde og bliver Menneske, saa er dette ikke et ørkesløst Indfald, Noget han hitter paa, for dog at foretage sig Noget, maaskee for at gjøre Ende paa den Kjedsommelighed, der, som man frækt har sagt, skal være forbundet med at være Gud – det er ikke for at opleve Eventyr. Nei, naar Gud gjør det, saa er dette Faktum Tilværelsens Alvor.

Og dette er igjen Alvoren i denne Alvor: at Enhver *skal* have en Mening derom. Naar en Konge besøger en Provindsby, anseer han det for en Fornærmelse, om en Embedsmand, hvis han da ikke har lovligt Forfald, undlader at gjøre ham sin Opvartning; men hvad mon han vilde dømme, om en vilde ignorere det hele Faktum, at Kongen var i Byen, vilde spille Privatmanden, der i saa Henseende »blæser af Hans Majestæt og af Kongeloven«? Og saaledes ogsaa, naar det behager Gud at vorde Menneske – at det saa behager et Menneske (og hvad Embedsmanden er for Kongen, det er ethvert Menneske for Gud) derom at sige: ja, det er Noget, hvorom jeg ikke ønsker at have nogen Mening.

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Christian element has been completely forgotten: *"You shall."* That is why people do not see that this is offense: treating Christ as a matter of indifference. That Christianity has been proclaimed to you means that you shall have an opinion about Christ. He is—or, that he exists and that he has existed is—the decision of all existence. If Christ has been proclaimed to you, then it is offense to say: I will have no opinion about it.

Yet this must be understood with a certain restriction in these times, when Christianity is proclaimed as poorly as it is. There surely [241] live many thousands who have heard Christianity proclaimed and have never heard anything about this "shall." But the one who has heard it and then says, I will have no opinion about it—he is offended. For he denies Christ's divinity, denies that it has the right to require of a human being that he shall have an opinion. It does no good for such a person to say, "But I'm not saying anything, neither yes nor no, about Christ." For then one simply asks him: Have you no opinion either as to whether you shall have an opinion about him or not?

If he answers, "Yes, I do," he traps himself; and if he answers, "No," Christianity judges him nonetheless: he shall have an opinion about it, and so again about Christ; no human being shall presume to leave the life of Christ aside as a curiosity. When God lets himself be born and becomes a human being, this is not an idle whim, something he hits upon just to have something to do, perhaps to put an end to the boredom that, as has been brazenly said, must go with being God. It is not in order to have adventures. No, when God does this, this fact is the earnestness of existence.

And this in turn is the earnestness in this earnestness: that everyone *shall* have an opinion about it. When a king visits a provincial town, he regards it as an insult if an official, without a lawful excuse, fails to pay his respects. But what would he think if someone were to ignore the whole fact that the king was in town, and were to play the private citizen who in this respect "couldn't care less about His Majesty and the Royal Law"? And so too when it pleases God to become a human being—that it should then please a human being (and what the official is to the king, every human being is to

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God) to say of it: Well, that is something about which I do not wish to have an opinion.[30]

Saaledes taler man fornemt om, hvad man i Grunden overseer: altsaa overseer man fornemt Gud.

In this way one speaks loftily about what one at bottom overlooks; and so one loftily overlooks God.

Den næste Form af Forargelse er den negative, men lidende. Den føler vel, at ignorere Christus formaaer den ikke, at lade Det med Christus staae hen og saa forresten have travlt i Livet, er den ikke istand til. Men troe kan den heller ikke; den vedbliver saa at stirre paa det ene og samme Punkt, paa Paradoxet. Forsaavidt ærer den dog Christendommen, den udtrykker, at dette Spørgsmaal: hvad tykkes Dig om Christus, virkelig er det meest Afgjørende. En saadan Forarget lever da hen som en Skygge; hans Liv fortæres, fordi han i sit Inderste bestandigt er [242] beskjæftiget med denne Afgjørelse. Og saaledes udtrykker han (som ulykkelig Elskovs Lidelse i Forhold til Elskov), hvilken Realitet Christendommen har.

The next form of offense is the negative but suffering form. It does feel that it is not able to ignore Christ, that it cannot leave the question of Christ aside and otherwise keep busy with life. But neither can it believe; so it goes on staring at one and the same point, at the paradox. To that extent it does honor Christianity: it expresses that this question, "What do you think of Christ?", really is the most decisive. Such an offended person lives on like a shadow; his life is consumed, because in his innermost being he is constantly [242] occupied with this decision. And in this way he expresses (as the suffering of unhappy love does in relation to love) what reality Christianity has.[31]

SKS 11.24 Den sidste Form af Forargelse er den, om hvilken vi her tale, den positive. Den erklærer Christendommen for Usandhed og Løgn, den negter Christus (at han har været til og at han er Den, han sagde sig at være) enten doketisk eller rationalistisk, saaledes at Christus enten ikke bliver et enkelt Menneske, men kun tilsyneladende, eller at han bliver kun et enkelt Menneske, saa han enten doketisk bliver Poesi, Mythologi, der ikke gjør Fordring paa Virkelighed, eller rationalistisk en Virkelighed, der ikke gjør Fordring paa at være guddommelig. I denne Negten af Christus som Paradoxet ligger naturligviis igjen Negten af alt det Christelige: Synden, Syndernes Forladelse o. s. v.

The last form of offense is the one we are speaking of here: the positive. It declares Christianity untruth and a lie. It denies Christ (that he has existed and that he is the one he said he was) either docetically or rationalistically. Either Christ does not become a single individual human being but only appears to be one, or he becomes only a single individual human being. So he either becomes, docetically, poetry, mythology, which makes no claim to actuality, or, rationalistically, an actuality that makes no claim to be divine. In this denial of Christ as the paradox there lies, of course, the denial of everything Christian: sin, the forgiveness of sins, etc.[32]

Denne Form af Forargelse er Synd mod den Hellig-Aand. Som Jøderne sagde om Christus, han uddriver Djævle ved Djævelens Hjælp, saaledes gjør denne Forargelse Christus til en Opfindelse af Djævelen.

This form of offense is sin against the Holy Spirit. As the Jews said of Christ that he drives out devils with the help of the devil, so this offense makes Christ an invention of the devil.

Denne Forargelse er Syndens høieste Potentsation, hvilket man som oftest overseer, da man ikke, christeligt, danner Modsætningen mellem: Synd – Tro.

This offense is the highest intensification of sin—which is usually overlooked, because the opposition is not formed, in the Christian way, between sin and faith.

Derimod er denne Modsætning gjort gjældende i hele dette Skrift, der strax i første Afsnit A, A opstillede

In this whole book, by contrast, this opposition has been made to count. Right at the beginning, in

30 The Royal Law (*Kongeloven*) of 1665 was the constitution of Danish absolute monarchy.
31 "What do you think of Christ?": Matthew 22:42.
32 Docetism: the early heresy that Christ only seemed to be a human being.

DANISH	ENGLISH
Formelen for den Tilstand, hvori der slet ingen Fortvivlelse er: i at forholde sig til sig selv og i at ville være sig selv grunder Selvet gjennemsigtigt i den Magt, som satte det. Hvilken Formel igjen, hvorom oftere er mindet, er Definitionen paa Tro.	Part One, A, A, the book set out the formula for the state in which there is no despair at all: in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it. And this formula in turn, as has often been recalled, is the definition of faith.