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The Concept of Freedom in Kierkegaard's Early Authorship

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The Concept of Freedom in Kierkegaard's Early Authorship

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B.A., Boston College, 2014

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy 2020

Abstract

The Concept of Freedom in Kierkegaard's Early Authorship
By Lucilla Pan

My project is concerned with the concept of moral freedom as it appears in Kierkegaard's early pseudonymous and personal authorship. Kierkegaard's Christianity influenced his teachings, and, accordingly, my thesis is that we will discover the full significance of his concept of freedom in relation to his understanding of grace. Because human beings are finite and limited, their free choice does not come from their own capacities. Rather, according to the Kierkegaard, the ability to make the free leap comes from divine grace, which allows human beings to transform from beings bound by natural inclination to those with reason and free will. Grace explains how this leap out of sinfulness is possible, and it allows human beings to make the leap that is inexplicable to reason. Kierkegaard argues in his personal authorship that we are restricted by our natural inclinations and the limitations of reason, but we can make the choice to do the good because of divine grace.

The pseudonyms of *Fear and Trembling* and *The Concept of Anxiety*, which are influenced by Kantian moral philosophy, observe that human beings make the leap from sinfulness to salvation through a free choice of the good. However, the pseudonymous authors do not explain how this happens or how it is possible given human sinfulness. The pseudonyms are limited by their methodological approaches to the concept of freedom and cannot fully explain how freedom is possible. In order to fully understand Kierkegaard's concept of moral freedom, it is necessary then to turn to the upbuilding discourses. In *The Point of View,* Kierkegaard himself states that his early pseudonymous works must be read in tandem with the upbuilding discourses. He wrote and published these works with the intention that his audience will read both, and neither authorship has his full meaning of freedom by itself. Therefore, personal authorship (the *Upbuilding Discourses* in particular) shows that freedom is possible for human beings through divine grace. Human reason is limited and cannot fully account for the responsibility of sin. While grace does not necessitate that human beings will choose the good, but it is a necessary condition for its possibility. Without grace, the free choices that the pseudonyms discuss are not possible, and Christian salvation cannot be fulfilled.

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Key Abbreviations

The Concept of Anxiety – COA

Concluding Unscientific Postscript – CUP

Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses – EUD

Fear and Trembling – FT

The Point of View – POV

Introduction

This project is an exploration on the question of moral freedom as seen in the 19th century Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard. The question of whether human beings have freedom of choice is particularly important for ethics that comes up for many philosophers. Without moral freedom, humans cannot choose between good and evil. In some cases, good and evil cannot really exist if human beings cannot will the good. For other philosophers, if humans are not morally free, then they cannot be held responsible for any of their actions. Human ability for moral freedom has far reaching ramifications beyond the abstract scope of history of ethics – it involves politics, the legal system, and many religious faiths. If humans are not free to make choices, are they ultimately responsible for their decisions? Can they be put on legal trial for their crimes? How do we address questions of guilt and punishment? How might we be in relation to one another without freedom?

I choose to focus on Kierkegaard's concept of moral freedom for several reasons. First and foremost, although there are many articles and monographs on freedom in Kierkegaard, I note that there is a gap in the scholarship when it pertains to how he addresses the question of freedom within not only the pseudonyms but also his own published works. Much of the present scholarship is focused on how he discusses freedom in his pseudonymous authorship in particular works such as *The Concept of Anxiety* and *The Sickness unto Death*. However, in my perspective, these analyses miss the point in how Kierkegaard addresses how moral freedom is possible. Scholars typically discuss freedom in Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works or in his personal authorship, not both. Major works on Kierkegaard's concept of freedom include Michelle Kosch's *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard* and the anthology *Kierkegaard and Freedom*. In particular, Kosch outright states, "I have focused on

Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works since it is in these that Kierkegaard engages most philosophically with issues surrounding moral agency and the foundations of ethics. The various discourses and *Works of Love* speak the language of Christian edifying literature, a language quite foreign to philosophers and their concerns."[1] While I understand her concerns, I argue that she is raising an artificial distinction between Kierkegaard's "philosophical" and "Christian" works. Kierkegaard himself states in his autobiography (*The Point of View*) that his entire authorship is a Christian project. In order to truly understand Kierkegaard, we must read both the pseudonyms and the discourses.

The aim of my project is to shed light on the connection between freedom and grace as seen through examining both the early pseudonymous works and the upbuilding discourses. I argue that analyzing only one is not enough, that both sets of works must be examined in order to fully understand freedom in Kierkegaard. For Kierkegaard, moral freedom is only possible because divine grace allows human beings the ability to make free choices. His concept of freedom is incomplete in the pseudonymous works because the pseudonyms cannot talk about grace directly. Instead I turn to the personal works to provide a fuller picture. Kierkegaard's Christianity influenced his teachings, and, accordingly, my thesis is that we will discover the full significance of his concept of freedom in relation to his understanding of grace. Human reason is limited and cannot fully account for the responsibility of sin. Without grace, the free choices that the pseudonyms discuss are not possible, and Christian salvation cannot be fulfilled.

Two, in light of my first reason, this project also addresses a debate within Kierkegaard scholarship on the relationship between the pseudonymous works and the personal authorship. Kierkegaard himself claimed multiple times that there is one single narrative arc that he is

[1] Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*, 10-11.

writing, and he is using different characters to do so, but only in reading them together will the reader see the full picture. This is most fully fleshed out in POV, but he makes this claim publicly as early as 1846, "in the pseudonymous books there is not a single word by me. I have no opinion about them except as a third party, no knowledge of their meaning except as a reader, not the remotest private relation to them, since it is impossible to have that to a doubly reflected communication."[2] In the same passage, he will also assert that these pseudonymous works are supposed to point the reader towards seeking religious truth.[3] I take Kierkegaard seriously in his assertion that there is a unity between the two and his concept of freedom is one way in which this unity is revealed. Reading both authorships together opens up ways of understanding Kierkegaard's philosophy and arguments for themes such as the aesthetic, repetition, and irony.

Three, Kierkegaard is centrally placed within the history of philosophy as both addressing Kant and the traditions of Enlightenment thinking. My project bridges philosophical and theological discussions on Kierkegaard. Although Kierkegaard is influenced by Kant and the German Idealists, I argue that Kierkegaard's concept of freedom can only be fully understood if examined under both philosophical and theological lens. He addresses the concerns of the Enlightenment and Kant's Critiques on the distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal. He explains that grace cannot be identified or known through rationality alone but must also include experience of a human-divine relationship. In addition, my project resolves a concern in Kierkegaard studies on how to read the pseudonymous and personal authorship and

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[2] Kierkegaard, "A First and Last Explanation," in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 626.

[3] "What I in one way or another know about the pseudonymous authors of course does not entitle me to any opinion, but not to any doubt, either, of their assent, since their importance (whatever that may become actually) unconditionally does not consist in making any new proposal, some unheard-of discovery, or in founding a new party and wanting to go further, but precisely in the opposite, in wanting to have no importance, in wanting, at a remove that is the distance of double-reflection, once again to read through solo, if possible in a more inward way the original text of individual human existence-relationships, the old familiar text handed down from the fathers," (Kierkegaard, "A First and Last Explanation," 629-610).

whether there is any cohesion throughout Kierkegaard's works. I argue that Kierkegaard builds a distinct narrative and unity which may be seen in his understanding of moral freedom

Four, Kierkegaard is incredibly influential on 20th century thinkers such as Karl Barth, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Jacques Derrida. Notably, Sartre's own writings on freedom have much in common with Kierkegaard's own works. As part of my work, I situate Kierkegaard's concept of freedom within the backdrop of Kantian morality. In connecting moral freedom to divine grace, I also situate Kierkegaard as a religious thinker who interweaves philosophy with Christian theology. This project is intended to illuminate a greater understanding of Kierkegaard's concept of freedom and situate him within the history of philosophy to other figures and their discussions of moral freedom. Kierkegaard directly alludes to Kant's moral philosophy, and 20th century philosophers such as Heidegger and Sartre also cite Kierkegaard as an influence. Within theology, Kierkegaard references Augustine both explicitly and implicitly, and he has been influential on 20th century theologians such as Karl Barth and Paul Tillich.

My first chapter is focused on *Fear and Trembling* (1843), and I argued that the text discusses moral freedom through the story of Abraham but omits the role of God in allowing for moral freedom to be possible. The religious freedom of Abraham is to the freedom to choose to follow the divine command. However, I argue that Silentio cannot fully access Abraham's faith because he exists outside of the religious sphere and does not have the same faith himself. Instead, his interpretation of the Abraham story uses the leap of faith only as a placeholder for the unintelligible (to reason) relationship between Abraham and God and Abraham and Isaac. While Silentio's interpretation of freedom is a failure, this is an intentional move by Kierkegaard that is supposed to point the reader to other text.

My second chapter is focused on Kierkegaard's pseudonymous work *The Concept of Anxiety* (1844), which discusses anxiety's connection to sin. The pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis explains that anxiety reveals our possibility to make free choices, and in our assertion of ourselves, we fall into sin. However, another type of anxiety may lead us to seek salvation and move outside of sin. My concern with his account is that he discusses faith but not grace, and he does not explain how the second anxiety might lead to salvation if the human being is entangled within sin. This omission and lack of explanation is not an oversight on Haufniensis' part, rather he acknowledges that he cannot fully discuss sin (and therefore grace) in his text because he focused on the psychological. Because grace exists outside of the human realm, it cannot be discussed fully in a scientific text. However, Haufniensis does allude to grace several times within *CoA* in particular in his concluding words, in which he references the Atonement. It is the omitted grace that makes human freedom possible and permits humans to leave the state of sin. This article reveals the indirect communication (a key concept in Kierkegaard studies) within *CoA* as well as shows a connection between moral freedom and religious grace.

In this chapter, I focus on Kierkegaard's posthumously published autobiography, *The Point of View* (1859), in which he reflects on the entirety of his authorship. He argues that the authorship is unified around the question of what it means to be a Christian, and the pseudonyms are used to deceive the reader into putting aside their preconceived notions and pursuing this question in earnestness. He had hoped that the reader would then turn to the upbuilding discourses in order to seek answers for the question. Kierkegaard's assertions in *POV* are debated by many scholars, but I argue that we have to take Kierkegaard in trust (as proposed by Mark Tietjen) because of authorial intent and the role of Governance within the authorship itself.

Therefore, having looked at moral freedom in the two pseudonyms works, I now propose that we look at the upbuilding discourses on the question of freedom.

My final chapter argues that the early upbuilding discourses address the concept of grace in relation to the concept of freedom, which is missing from the pseudonymous works. I focus on the 1843 Four Upbuilding Discourses and 1844 Three Upbuilding Discourses because he wrote and published them in tandem with *FT* and *COA*. Within these discourses, Kierkegaard expounds on the role of God as giver, the giver of all good things and crucially the giver of grace. He repeatedly discusses a quotation from the Bible that "every good and perfect gift is from God" and explains the transformative nature of the gift. Grace not only brings salvation but also transformation as the individual becomes free to choose the good. The individual becomes aware of good and evil and is able to choose the good after receiving the gift of grace.

My purpose of this project to explain that Kierkegaard uses both his pseudonymous and personal publications to show that moral freedom is only possible through divine grace. Grace comes from outside the human being and transforms the individual so they are no longer trapped in sin and can instead see the good and will the good. The human being cannot do this on their own because of their facticity. Kierkegaard published under pseudonyms as well as under his own name, and much of scholarship only takes into account one side or the other. I argue that it is necessary to read them in tandem because that is what Kierkegaard himself intended his works to be read and because that is the only way to have a full picture of his concept of moral freedom. Reading both together will provide a picture of divine grace intervenes for human freedom.

Chapter 1: Abraham's Movement of Freedom

In *Fear and Trembling*, Johannes Silentio separates the religious from the ethical, and he discusses the choice of Abraham – the movement of faith. Although this choice can be taken at first glance as a kind of freedom as Abraham moves freely to leave the ethical, Silentio's observation is ultimately flawed as he undermines his own arguments about freedom.

Kierkegaard references Kant's moral philosophy in his first two pseudonymous writings: *Either/Or* and *Fear and Trembling*. *FT* was published October of 1843, only a few months after *E/O* was published. Kierkegaard also published several discourses under his own name, but these works were largely ignored by the public, while *E/O* and *FT* were received to great acclaim in Denmark. Both set up the aesthetic individual who is called to step into the ethical and make moral commitments. The second part of *EO* is a letter written by Judge Wilhelm to his friend urging the latter to get married. Marriage represents an ethical commitment, which the friend admits that he lacks. *FT* is a retelling of the biblical Abraham and Isaac story, which Silentio uses to illustrate the three spheres: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. He shows that after the individual has moved from the aesthetic to the ethical, there is another move into the religious. Abraham does a seemingly immoral action but is considered justified – through his example, Silentio shows that there are limitations to the ethical.

I. Silentio's Kantian Ethics

Through FT, Silentio is attempting to highlight the difficulty of faith and the radical nature of Christianity. He criticizes the systematization of Christianity through the story of Abraham and Isaac. He says, "in our age, everyone is unwilling to stop with faith but goes further…it was different in those ancient days. Faith was then a task for a whole lifetime,

because it was assumed that proficiency in believing is not acquired either in days or in weeks."[4] Silentio believes that his contemporary Danish society takes faith to be easily achievable and Christianity has become a list of actions which can be accomplished. Faith is easy because one only needs to make the external commitments – to go to church every week, to tithe, and to engage in social interactions with other people in the church. Silentio holds up Abraham in contrast to his contemporary society as Abraham is called to sacrifice his most dear relation and also to doubt – he must face the reality that God has commanded him to commit murder and that God may be breaking the promise that he made to Abraham – that Isaac will be a father of a great nation. Despite the severity of the command, Abraham prevails and attempts to sacrifice Isaac only to be stopped by God at the last minute, and Abraham is rewarded for his faith.

This challenge to commit filicide moves Abraham from the ethical to the religious spheres. Silentio proposes that there are three spheres of human life. The first move of the individual is to move from the aesthetic realm to the ethical one. In the aesthetic realm, the individual is meaningless and only lives according to their natural desires and whims. They are often bored and cannot make any meaningful commitment. In the move to the ethical realm, the individual makes a free moral choice. This choice is not simply a choice to do the good but also to accept the universal moral law which dictates what is good and evil.

Silentio sets up the ethical as an allusion to what he considers how Kant's moral system is might be carried through as an experiment.[5] The connection to Kant is very plausible given the textual evidence as well as historic evidence from Kierkegaard's library. Kant scholar

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[4] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 7.

[5] I hesitate to consider this simply an allusion to Kant given the commentary that exists connecting the pseudonymous authorship to Hegel, Fichte, and other contemporary philosophers. I focus here on the Kantian allusion because of Kant's stance of moral freedom, which I found an interesting contrast to the second movement of faith that Silentio discusses in *FT*.

Ronald Green affirms that Kierkegaard is very likely to have read Kant's three Critiques as well as *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* based on Kierkegaard's references in his journals and replications of his personal library.[6] Michelle Kosch agrees with this understanding of *FT*, that it is an attack on Kantian ethical autonomy, "I will argue that the target [in FT, CoA, and CUP] is the ethics of autonomy, and that the criticism of the ethical standpoint presented in these works is continuous with that of the aesthetic standpoint: it involves a misrepresentation of the nature of agency in the denial of freedom – not of choice in general but of choice of good and evil in particular."[7] Silentio's description of the ethical realm is focused in on the Kantian ethical system which is based on human autonomy to will the moral law. Kosch notes that Silentio describes this system in order to critique it: in her mind, Silentio is critical of the Kantian moral system because its view of freedom is one of the autonomy of the will. Silentio finds this view to be lacking because of autonomy views choice especially choices that do not fit within the rational schema.

I turn to the text to support my claim as well: Silentio begins Problema I and II with the same sentence "the ethical is the universal."[8] In Problema I, he goes onto to say that therefore the ethical must apply to everyone at all times. I believe that this is an allusion to Kant's categorical imperative, "so act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle in a giving of universal law."[9] According to Kant, the moral law is universal and identifiable because it must be applied to all people at all times for all instances. This fits with Silentio's claims about the ethical sphere because the ethical is applied to all people at all times, and any variation is considered breaking the moral law.

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[6] Green, *Kierkegaard and Kant: the Hidden Debt*, 14 and 17.
[7] Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard,* 155-156.
[8] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 54 and 86.
[9] Kant, *The Critique of Pure Practical Reason*, 28.

Problema II reinforces this connection, as Silentio describes the ethical as being a universal duty grounded in the divine: "the duty becomes duty by being traced back to God, but in the duty itself I do not entire into relation to God…but to the neighbor I love."[10] God serves as the ground for the universal moral, but the human being has no particular duty to God, "God comes to be an invisible vanishing point, an impotent thought; his power is only in the ethical, which fills all of existence."[11] In the ethical sphere, the role of God is only to facilitate the moral law. Humans only apply ethics in their relationships with other human beings.

I believe that this further affirms the ethical sphere's connection to the Kantian moral law. Kant explains in the Orientation essay:

> Far more important is the need of reason in its practical use, because it is unconditioned, and we are necessitated to presuppose the existence of God not only if we *want* to judge, but because we *have to judge*. For the pure practical use of reason consists in the precepts of moral laws. They all lead, however, to the idea of the *highest good* possible in the world insofar as it is possible only through *freedom: morality*.[12]

Here, Kant explains that the idea of God is necessary for the human beings to make moral choices and to hold the moral law because the idea of God allows human beings to make moral judgments. However, human beings have no direct access to God, and God does not dictate the moral law directly to humans. Instead, human beings must make judgments on what is moral based on human freedom. God does not dictate or establish the universal moral law by telling humans what is right or wrong (such as in Exodus) but rather human beings must use reason to affirm and will their maxims.

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[10] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 68.
[11] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 68.
[12] Kant, "What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?" 12.

Lastly, Kant himself alludes to the Abraham and Isaac story in order to explain the relation between God and the moral law, an allusion that I believe is one of the reasons why Silentio uses the Abraham and Isaac story.[13] Kant says,

> For as regards *theistic* miracles, reason would at least have a negative criterion for its use, namely that even though something is represented as a command by God, through a direct manifestation of him, yet if it flatly contradicts morality, it cannot, despite all appearances, be of God (for example, were a father ordered to kill his son who is, as far as he knows, perfectly innocent).[14]

In Kantian morality, Abraham should not open God's command because any command that contradicted the moral law would not actually come from God. For Kant, the universal moral law is the highest and there can be nothing higher even a direct command from God. I believe Silentio is alluding to this passage in using the story of Abraham and Isaac because he wants to show that there is something that exists about the ethical, which is the religious.[15] He is criticizing Kant's narrowed perception of God as simply a necessary component to the moral law. This perception of God narrows human understanding of God and disallows any direct communication with God.

In *FT*, Silentio does not place God as the commander of the moral law; God makes morality possible, but universal moral law is judged and created based on human relationships. For instance, Abraham's act is considered evil in the ethical because of his violation of his relationship with Isaac, "in ethical terms, Abraham's relation to Isaac is quite simple: the father shall love the son more than himself."[16] Silentio frames the ethical question at hand based on the duties that a father has towards a child, and he does not cite any commandment from God against

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[13] As opposed to focusing on the story of Mary which he mentions in Problema II.
[14] Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, 81-82.
[15] There is also an interesting connection with the language of movement and leap within Kierkegaard's authorship and Lessing's letter "On the proof of the power and spirit," which uses the leap as a satirical metaphor.
[16] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 57.

child sacrifice.[17] The ethical sphere is concerned with how human beings should act in relation to other humans. There is no direct interaction between God and humans, and God does not demand anything particular from humans. Neither Silentio nor Kant claims that humans must act from a duty to God but only from a duty to the moral law itself.

While Silentio's discussion on the ethical sphere alludes to the Kantian universal morality, he deviates from Kant's moral system in his discussion of the religious. Silentio believes that one of the problems of the ethical is that there is no particularity left in the ethical sphere – there is no ability to form a particular relationship with the divine. The story of Abraham and Isaac represents that there are situations that go beyond the moral in which not choosing the universal law may still be the correct decision.

Through the stories of the tragic hero and the knight of faith, Silentio posits two problems to Kantian moral system. The first is about conflict between moral duties – seen in the tragic hero example of Agamemnon. Agamemnon is torn between his duty as a father and his duty as a king. Both are considered moral duties – one has a duty to one's family but one also has a duty to one's people. Although he chooses to kill his daughter in order to bring about the winds, an action that violates his duty to his family, he is not considered to do wrong as he only does so for the greater ethical mandate, his duty to his people, "the tragic hero is still within the ethical. He allows an expression of the ethical to have its τέλος in a higher expression of the ethical."[18] The ethical sphere calls for moral individuals to act according to their moral duty. However, the problem emerges when duties conflict. In Silentio's mind, this is reconcilable as one duty will supersede the other. Since one breaks from one's duty out of obligation to another moral law, this is not considered a sin.

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[17] Such as Leviticus 20:1-2
[18] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 59.

On the other hand, the knight of faith eschews the ethical for something greater. The ethical duty to one's family is subsumed under one's direct relationship with God. The ethical does not disappear, but it becomes secondary to this divine command. The tension remains because Abraham knows that he has a duty to his son and posterity, but he also has a personal relationship with God. The difference between Abraham and Agamemnon is that Abraham does not act in accordance to a universal duty to the divine. God's command to Abraham is one particular instance, unrepeatable, and inadvisable to others – indeed, Silentio says that if another is inspired by Abraham and attempts to kill his son, he is in the wrong.[19] If Abraham's actions could be duplicated, it would fall back into the realm of the ethical.

Abraham is rewarded for his obedience to God's command. In the ethical sphere, God is only the cornerstone that allows morality to be possible. In the religious, the individual moves into direct relation with the divine, "having perceived this [the terrifying aspect of the religious] and made sure that he [the knight of faith] does not have the courage to understand it, he may then have an intimation of the wondrous glory the knight attains in becoming God's confidant…whereas even the tragic hero addresses him only in the third person."[20] Abraham is separated from everyone else because he has made the leap into the religious realm. While the ethical still exists for him, it is subordinated under the religious. Abraham knows what he is doing is considered ethically wrong, but he has a higher criterion for what duty is, and he must obey God's command.

In these two figures, Silentio shows two types of freedom. The first is the moral freedom that is seen in Kantian morality. This is the freedom that Kant discusses in *The Critique of Pure Practical Reason* which human beings use to choose to do their moral duty. This is an ethical

[19] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 29.
[20] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 77.

freedom to do the good. The second type is a freedom that exists in Silentio's religious sphere. This second freedom is the freedom from limitations of universal moral law. Abraham makes a free choice to not act ethically and, instead, to follow God's command. This choice is the leap of faith because Abraham has faith that God will restore Isaac, "Abraham had faith. He did not have faith that he would be blessed in a future life but that he would be blessed here in the world."[21] Just as humans become aware of ethical freedom because of their awareness to choose the good, the reader becomes aware of religious freedom in seeing the example of Abraham, who makes a free act against the ethical but is not considered to have sinned.

Silentio explains, "he makes one more movement even more wonderful than all the others, for he says: nevertheless, I have faith that I will get her – that is, by virtue of the absurd, by virtue of the fact that for God all things are possible."[22] I take this to mean that the movement is a free act because it must be willed by the individual to go against the ethical. It is also free because it is not a turn to the aesthetic, which lacks commitment and acts out of boredom whereas the free leap is an active response and choice with lasting consequences. It is also not a turn back to natural inclination because the act is counterintuitive. Abraham cannot pass on his lineage without a son, and he and his wife are beyond childbirth ages. The movement shows to the reader that there is freedom that supersedes the ethical. Abraham also does not benefit at all from the act – God does not tell him to kill Isaac in order for some other benefit, which is a departure from God's earlier interaction with Abraham, which was often reciprocal commands.[23]

II. Contradictions in Silentio's Account

[21] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 36.
[22] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 46.
[23] See Genesis 12, 13, and 17.

Silentio sets up an account of freedom that moves beyond Kantian autonomy, but I find his explanation to raise questions and problems. These questions refute Silentio's account of the two movements that the knight of faith makes, and I claim that these problems culminate in Silentio's attempts to systematize faith when he admits that it cannot be understood. I raise three particular problems with his account of freedom: 1) Silentio does not resolve how freedom is possible; 2) Silentio does not explain why Abraham is able to understand God's command and how the reader is able to access Abraham's experience; and 3) Silentio falls into the trap of systematization even as he is critiquing it. All three problems point to Silentio's contradictions that he cannot resolve in the text.

While Silentio explains that the movement of faith is a free leap, the problem still remains as to how this freedom is possible. Silentio provides a description of Abraham's choice, but he neglects to mention how Abraham can make a spontaneous move out of the ethical and into the religious (as opposed returning to the aesthetic). He does not address whether this is an attribution of human nature or whether it is only possible with external intervention. Silentio claims that Abraham acts out of faith, which absolves him of sin. However, it is unclear what faith is and how it is possible. Silentio explains that Abraham believes in the absurd – that a miracle will occur (something that goes against rational possibility), and this is faith, but he does not say why faith is possible. It cannot be simply a belief because Abraham's faith is affirmed in this lifetime. Yet, Silentio does not explain why Abraham's faith leads to the miracle. Although he states that God is the catalyst for Abraham's movement since God's command is what makes the religious possible, God is absent from the majority of the story and only comes in at the end to save Isaac. The choice is Abraham's alone, and God is not present in the moment of decision.

Another concern that I raise with Silentio's account is that he is seeing the events in hindsight after God saves Isaac. He admits that Abraham did not have the luxury that readers do in knowing the outcome of his actions, and Abraham can only trust that God will not break his covenant and return Isaac. The reader of the story knows that Isaac will be spared, but Abraham has no such reality - Silentio explains, "let us go further. We let Isaac actually be sacrificed. Abraham had fait…that he would be blessed here in the world. God could give him a new Isaac, could restore to life the one he sacrificed."[24] Abraham assumes that he *will* complete the sacrifice – he will commit murder – and he has faith that God will nevertheless honor his earlier promise. However, Abraham's faith is different from knowledge – he does not know exactly what will happen.

The problem with Silentio's account is that it may only be read since the story is complete. Silentio can be certain about the choice that Abraham makes because he is reading the story with the ending already set. It would be a very different experience if the conclusion was not yet revealed, if the reader did not know that Abraham would not have to sacrifice Isaac. I believe, therefore, that Silentio's account cannot fully explain Abraham's experience given that Abraham does not know what will happen after he sacrifices Isaac. Silentio does not truly know what Abraham knows or experiences in this story, so he calls Abraham's decision faith instead. Silentio is wrong to specify so clearly the movement of faith. Freedom seems possible because of the conclusion of the story. It is undeniable that Abraham makes the choice, so Silentio is reading the free choice back into the story to explain it. There is little evidence that Abraham actually experiences obeying God's command as a movement of faith or as a free choice. Furthermore, there is no description or summary of the story in Abraham's own words.

[24] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 36.

III. The Communication of Faith

I am concerned, therefore, with the question of intelligibility of the story. Silentio claims that Abraham cannot speak because language is in the ethical sphere. If Abraham speaks, then he would fall back into the ethical realm. However, without Abraham's account, how then does Silentio know that Abraham is making a decision from faith? Silentio cannot resolve this contradiction: either Abraham does speak and affirm Silentio's account or Abraham remains silent and this is all conjecture on Silentio's part. If it is the latter, then how can we trust this account when Silentio also claims at the very beginning that he lacks faith? If it is the former, then Abraham is not truly the knight of faith.

In the *Kierkegaard and Freedom* anthology, Rogers emphasizes the reasoning necessary for Abraham in order to make this free act. Rogers explains that belief is only possibly if it is not rationally grounded. However, belief is unintelligible because it is not grounded in reason, "without a reason though, this belief, now clearly faith, is unintelligible."[25] Rogers believe that this is why Abraham's action can be considered free because there is no explanation grounded in reason as to why this act would be good or beneficial.

Rogers takes Silentio as holding a faithful attitude because of the text's indirect communication. He believes that Silentio fails to understand faith, but Rogers praises his continuous attempts to do so. However, the attempts are enough to show that faith can be understood rationally:

> However, each attempt [of understanding faith] ends in de Silentio's confessed failure to understand faith while yet showing his persistent desire to understand it. Throughout the pseudonym's attempts he has no rational basis for believing Abraham's faith is understandable and, yet, his efforts to understand it express his faith that it can be understood.[26]

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[25] Rogers, "Indirect Communication: Training in Freedom" in *Kierkegaard and Freedom*, 153.
[26] Rogers, "Indirect Communication: Training in Freedom," 155.

While I agree with Rogers' claim that Silentio is seeking to understand faith but fails to do so. I disagree with his conclusion that faith can be understandable – at least in Silentio's description of Abraham's faith. Silentio explicitly states that Abraham's faith is unintelligible because it is a personal command from God. "I cannot understand Abraham – I can only admire him."[27] To say that it could possibly be understood is contradictory to the text itself. Silentio also does not that state that he himself is a Christian. He desires to be, but he does not have faith. Therefore, it cannot be said that Abraham's faith is understandable because of Silentio's own faith

Rather, I believe the problem with Silentio's endeavor to understand Abraham's faith is that he fundamentally misunderstands the story of Abraham and Abraham's faith. If Abraham's faith is unintelligible, it may only be examined from the outside without the use of reason. Faith then becomes simply a placeholder for the relationships that exists between Abraham and God as well as Abraham and Isaac. What God demanded Abraham to do radically transforms their relationship because it showed Abraham that there are limitations to the use of the universal moral law and it showed Abraham his inability to fully understand the divine. Because Abraham is silent, Silentio does not know any of Abraham's inner process of why he decided to sacrifice Isaac. It is unclear even in the moment of the act whether Abraham has sinned or not. However, it is only in the retelling of the story that the reader is able to comprehend that Abraham did good.

In his essay, "Who can Understand Abraham? The Relation of God and Morality in Kierkegaard and Aquinas," Stitner poses the question about God's relation to the ethical and questions whether God's personal command can go against the morality that he has set.[28] He

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[27] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 112.
[28] Brian Stitner, "Who can Understand Abraham? The Relation of God and Morality in Kierkegaard and Aquinas," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 21 no. 2 (1993): 228.

proposes that there are limitations to circumstance in which such a command could occur. He believes that God could only ask this of a person who is already a devout and religious individual.[29] Furthermore, God cannot demand this of Abraham simply out of worship, but it must be a test of faith and Abraham must never stop loving Isaac. God's intention for the command must to bring Abraham into relationship with himself, "these requirements can be seen as limits that God places on divine commands in light of God's desire to bring creatures into communication with God's self."[30]

Stitner takes seriously the implications of Abraham's actions, and he sets certain criteria in which these actions can be considered acceptable. Abraham's actions are only considered religious and not unethical because the command is from God and God desires to strengthen his relationship with Abraham through this command. I consider Stitner's argument for the limitations to the divine command to be a sort of criterion forming choice.[31] It is only in hindsight can such a criterion be set. Abraham himself likely did not know for sure that it was God that commanded him, and it is only in Silentio's retelling (and the reiteration in Hebrews) that the reader understands that this command serves to foreground the relationship that Abraham has with God. Only the reader can recognize the command and its intention because they are able to see the criterion after the fact.

However, I find that Stitner's argument is problematic as well because he seeks to set a criterion and limitations on the divine. If Abraham's actions are unintelligible, then it seems logical than God's actions would also be intelligible. Furthermore, the question on the

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[29] Stitner, "Who can Understand Abraham? The Relation of God and Morality in Kierkegaard and Aquinas," 229.
[30] Stitner, "Who can Understand Abraham? The Relation of God and Morality in Kierkegaard and Aquinas," 229.
[31] I am referring to H.A. Prichard's decision of principle. The choice that is set up in *FT* is unprincipled but it forms a criterion for all the choices to come (H.A. Prichard, "Does Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?" *Mind* 21, no. 81 (1912): 34).

limitations of the divine raises greater questions on the subject of morality – of whether it is possible to reconcile the idea of the God who would demand child sacrifice from the Christian perception of the divine who says that the Israelites should not sacrifice their children and the condemnations of all leaders who do employ child sacrifice. Even if God is testing Abraham for his edification, this contradicts the perception of God as the creator of the moral law and who demands that humans obey that law. This is the precisely the question that Kant raises in Religion quotation above, and he concludes that Abraham was wrong to listen to the voice because God would never demand an action that went against the moral law. All these concerns can be bypassed in Silentio's account if we take the pseudonym of Silentio to be as purposely failed project.

Furthermore, neither commentators address the question of Abraham's intelligibility to the other characters in the story. While God saves Isaac on account of Abraham's faith,] there is a radical alteration of the relationships in the story. Silentio briefly addresses this in the *Exordium*, but he does not return to it later in the text. If Abraham must be silent, then how does he explain the events to Isaac or to Sarah? As Silentio says, "Abraham did not speak to Sarah, to Eliezer, or to Isaac; he bypassed these three ethical authorities, since for Abraham the ethical had no higher expressions than family life."[32] If Abraham cannot explain his actions, how does the reader or the other characters of the story know why he acted the way he did? How does he explain to Sarah or to Isaac once they descend from Mount Moriah?

In his book, *The Logic of Subjectivity*, Pojman argues that Abraham's actions are not based on a blind faith but are tempered by his knowledge, a knowledge that is rational and, at least partially, understandable to others. Abraham does not choose blindly in following the

[32] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 112.

divine command. Rather, he possesses a standard of rationality that is based on his experience. Pojman writes a fake dialogue between an individual, who tries to stop the sacrifice, and Abraham in which Abraham justifies his actions with the following speech:

> My whole existence has been predicated on the reality of that voice. I became an exception by hearkening unto it the first time, and I have never regretted it. The tone of this last call was similar to the other calls the voice was unmistakable…I prefer to take the risk of obeying what I take to be the voice of God, and disobey certain social norms, than obey the norms and miss the possibility of any absolute relation to the Absolute. [33]

According to Pojman, the reader must consider the greater context of the story in Genesis: the context of Abraham's life and the historic environment. Before this story, Abraham has already developed a personal relationship with God. In chapter twelve of Genesis, God calls Abraham to leave his father's land, and he promises to make Abraham the father of a nation. Abraham even intercedes with God on behalf of his nephew, Lot, in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. In chapter fifteen, God makes a formal covenant, reaffirming his promise to Abraham and further affirming that Abraham will have a son. The first part of God's covenant is fulfilled when Sarah gives birth to Isaac despite her old age.

Given Abraham's past experiences, God's command to Abraham is not a sudden divine voice that is unfamiliar and strange. Rather, Abraham has already had a sustained divine relationship with God previous to this sequence. He is able to understand and explain the divine command because he has this prior experience with the divine.

Although Pojman has a good argument on the connection between faith and reason, I found his description of Abraham's inner reasoning to be problematic because it ignores the distinction between the ethical and the religious as well as discounts Silentio's own words in *Problema III*. As Silentio says, "Abraham *cannot* speak, because he cannot explain that which

[33] Pojman, *The Logic of Subjectivity*, 86.

would explain everything (that is, so it is understandable).[34] Pojman may be correct in understanding Abraham's inner thoughts on the divine command as familiar and not completely abhorrent, but he takes it too far in claiming that Abraham would be able to justify such a command to another individual. This contradicts the description of the knight of faith within *FT*. If Abraham is able to justify his actions in an understandable manner to someone else, then he is back in the ethical realm. If he is able to provide a rational account of his choice, then he is either making a reasonable, ethical choice or he is simply a murderer.

In addition, what Abraham has been commanded is absurd and not understandable in the ethical. Silentio uses the story of Agamemnon sacrificing his daughter to the gods as an example of an ethical agent. Agamemnon must kill Iphigenia in order for the winds to return, but Iphigenia remains dead and does not return. God has promised Abraham that Isaac would be the father of a nation, and it would be paradoxical for Abraham to kill Isaac in order to fulfill this promise. Abraham does not fulfill this command for any greater ethical demand like in exchange for God to protect his family and descendants. There is no consequence or benefit provided for killing Isaac. Abraham only does it because God commands him to do so, no explanation or transaction is provided. Within the ethical realm, there is no possible way for Isaac to die and still be the father of a great nation. Even if Abraham may explain his reasoning to another, a person in the ethical cannot understand him as this individual would have no insight into Abraham's personal relationship with God. While Abraham has had prior experience with God, the act of killing Isaac and somehow having him still be the father of a great nation is a possibility that is incomprehensible in the ethical realm.

[34] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 115.

This calls into question the intelligibility of freedom. If Abraham's decision cannot be intelligible to his contemporaries, it cannot be intelligible either to Silentio who is not a knight of faith. The problem that remains in my reading is that Silentio is attempting to make intelligible to the reader what he claims cannot be intelligible. Abraham cannot reasonably comprehend God's command or confirm with certainty that God will save Isaac. He can only make a choice to obey or disobey. Even if Abraham has faith or knowledge, he cannot convey that to any other human being. Any further claim about faith fall into the trap of intelligibility and therefore returns the reader and Abraham back into the ethical realm. It is unclear then what religious freedom actually is if the movement of faith cannot be explained. Silentio calls Abraham's action a free leap, but this freedom has no substance. It cannot be explained, and it is only a placeholder in our understanding of Abraham's actions.

Here, I see that Silentio falls into the trap of systematization himself in setting up the two movements. He is critiquing the Kantian ethical system by showing that there are situations and actions that cannot be explained by reason and that lie beyond reason. This irrationality is not subservient or a deficiency of reason, but that there are limitations to what reason may explain. Reason may establish moral conduct and how human beings should behave to each other, but it cannot explain what lies beyond the finite world. Any comprehension of God or God's relation to human beings lies outside the scope of reason.

The problem is that in trying to explain Abraham's actions and absurdity, Silentio creates a system of how to be a Christian with faith. Silentio tries to express the relationship between God and Abraham, but he fails to recognize that this articulation can only be an approximation. He says himself that language is in the role of the ethical, and Abraham himself cannot speak and must remain silent, "the relief provided by speaking is that it translates me into

the universal."[35] The problem with Silentio's explanation of language and the ethical is that Silentio is explaining Abraham's decision even though Abraham cannot. Yet Silentio has not undergone any relationship with God or experience of faith. Silentio attempts to explain the faith of Abraham and the paradoxical outcome through the leap of faith. However, he is not a Christian as he cannot make the movement of faith, "but this movement I cannot make. As soon as I want to begin, everything reverses itself, and I take refuge in the pain of resignation."[36] Since he is not a Christian, he does not truly understand the relationship between God and Abraham, "Abraham I cannot understand; in a certain sense I can learn nothing from him except to be amazed. If someone deludes himself into thinking he may be moved to have faith by pondering the outcome of that story, he cheats himself and cheats God out of the first movement of faith."[37] Silentio contradicts himself in this last quotation – he admits that he does not understand Abraham, but he still seeks to explain what Abraham is doing and to reveal the intention behind his actions. He even warns against viewing the text as a guideline to seeking faith, yet he still projects upon Abraham the leap of faith as the choice that Abraham makes.

I take this quotation seriously and consider then that Silentio's attempt to explain the Abraham story is doomed from the start. He claims that Abraham's actions cannot be systematized, but then he sets up a progression for human life in the three spheres of existence. He undermines his criticism of systematization because he inevitably attempts to establish another system in place of the Kantian rational one. I believe that Silentio's concept of freedom is also a failure because it is the crux of his system. Silentio sets up the process to becoming a Christian in freedom – the freedom to leave the ethical sphere. However, the system is a flawed

[35] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 113.
[36] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 50.
[37] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 37.

because Abraham exists precisely outside of the universal. Whatever freedom that Abraham had in making the decision to sacrifice Isaac cannot be replicated by anyone else.

Silentio's account of freedom is ultimately a failure as his argument about the silence of Abraham and his critique of the ethical system undermines itself. However, I do not consider this to be a failure of Kierkegaard. Rather, Kierkegaard has set up this particular pseudonym to show the limits of the Kantian ethical system and to set up a failed explanation of religious freedom. He hints at this in the epigraph of *FT* with his quotation of Hamann: "What Tarquinius Superbus said in the garden by means of the poppies, the son understood but the messenger did not."[38] Hamann is referencing the story of Tarquin whose son asked his advice concerning a foreign city. Tarquin did not trust the messenger, so he took the messenger into a field and chopped off the heads of the poppies. The messenger reported his actions back to his son, who was able to understand this to mean that he must execute the leaders of the city. I believe that Kierkegaard is using this text to show to the reader that the message of *FT* is in indirect communication rather than the message that Silentio has established.

Silentio's name also indicates this indirect communication, and he is silent on certain matters of importance. In particular, Silentio is silent on the concept of grace and of the role of God in the story. This omission is purposeful as grace is a central concept in traditional Christian teachings. It would be concerning if Abraham can be absolved of sin without grace in this account as this would contradict the Christianity that Silentio is trying to demonstrate. Kierkegaard could not discuss grace directly in *FT*, so Silentio's silence indicates its immense importance.

[38] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*.

Chapter 2: Haufniensis' Omission of Grace

The Concept of Anxiety, published in 1844, focuses heavily on the question of freedom.[39] Although Kierkegaard debated publishing *CoA* under his own name, he ultimately chose to publish it under his pseudonym, Vigilius Haufniensis.[40] Within the text, Haufniensis uses the concept of anxiety to explain human freedom and how anxiety leads to both guilt and salvation. Anxiety shows how sin comes into human experience, and through it the human being becomes aware of his freedom and falls into sin. Anxiety, however, also leads to salvation when human beings make a free leap of faith. I argue that through Haufniensis, Kierkegaard is showing the limitations of a psychological[41] account of freedom and sin. While Haufniensis' approach may explain how the human being makes a free choice and falls from innocence into sin, he struggles to explain the second free movement from sin into salvation. Anxiety can explain how freedom manifests itself within the human experience, but it does not fully explain how freedom is possible and how the human being can freely choose the good. By examining the omission of the religious within the book, I will show that Haufniensis obliquely alludes to grace as making salvation possible. I will first provide an exegesis of his account of anxiety and freedom then I will point to concerns that arise in the text and how he addresses them.

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[39] According to Kosch, the reason why Kierkegaard pursues this idea of moral freedom is because he is attempting to solve the ethical problem of moral indifference that he sees present in Denmark (Kosch, "Freedom and Immanence" in *Kierkegaard and Freedom*, 135.). Grøn explains that anxiety is emphasized given the context of Kierkegaard's social and cultural atmosphere: "as we shall see, Kierkegaard takes a more and more explicit stand towards the society of his time as it beings to manifest 'modern' characteristics. He reveals anxiety-filled experiences of emptiness and nothingness, but he also describes more typical lifestyles of his own time. In these, one 'establishes oneself' within the absence of meaning and by this process avoids being in anxiety." (Grøn, *The Concept of Anxiety in Søren Kierkegaard*, 4.)

[40] Bruun argues that Kierkegaard's uncertainty about the authority of the book led him to publish under Haufniensis rather than his own name, "it is important to recognize that Kierkegaard had to invent a happy husband and author Nicolaus Notebene to separate this profound question- his question – from the problem of anxiety. In other words, consider the question, 'why he wants to be an author,' a key to the complexity of the book. This question signals Kierkegaard's ambivalence regarding authority" (Bruun, "The Genesis of the Concept of Anxiety," 8).

[41] I note here that the psychological is not the contemporary clinical psychology or psychoanalysis as Kierkegaard predates both methodology. I take what he means here to be an analysis based on reason take also highlights the emotion or affective as also having important philosophical relevance.

I. Haufniensis' Explanation on the Emergence of Freedom

Haufniensis focuses his study on anxiety because it explains the connection between freedom and sin. Anxiety is a particular experiential response akin to fear except that it has no object whereas fear is externally orientated.[42] First, anxiety makes human beings aware of their freedom. Human beings are anxious because of their freedom – they are open to a multiplicity of possibilities that they have the ability to choose, "the prohibition induces in him [Adam] anxiety, for the prohibition awakens in him freedom's possibility. What passed by innocence as the nothing of anxiety has now entered in Adam and here again it is a nothing – the anxious possibility of *being* able."[43] Adam did not understand what death was, but he felt anxiety from the commandment – he was awakened to the possibility to either eat the fruit from the Tree of Good and Evil or refuse the fruit. Although he did not understand the gravity of the command, he now understood that there were possibilities and consequences that he could differentiate between, and then he felt anxiety.[44] In the same way, all human beings have the ability to choose, but anxiety emerges because choice involves commitment and a closing of possibility.

While anxiety is an external force, the individual still chooses to fall into sin, "he who becomes guilty through anxiety is indeed innocent, for it was not he himself but anxiety, a foreign power, that laid hold of him, a power that he did not love but about which he became anxious. And yet he is guilty, for he sank in anxiety."[45] This description of anxiety is crucial because sin would become necessary without an explanation for human freedom. Sin occurs when the human being chooses to go move against the will of God. Anxiety is caused not only

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[42] "I must point out that [anxiety] is altogether different from fear and similar concepts that refer to something definite, whereas anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility" Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 42.
[43] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 44.
[44] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 45.
[45] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 42.

by breaking the moral law but also by the human exertion of their freedom. The possibility of sin allows for the possibility of freedom – that the human being can move against the will of God.[46] Cappelørn argues that sin cannot be necessary because it would dispose of human freedom, and then human beings would no longer be responsible for their sin and guilt. If human beings are not responsible then the entire narrative of Christian salvation implodes, "if it happened of necessity, freedom would be abrogated and sin would not be the fault of individual human beings. If it happened arbitrarily, one could imagine a human being who did not sin, and from a Christian perspective, this is impossible."[47] Through freedom, the human becomes aware of himself as a being and seeks to establish himself. However, the human exerts this freedom through a rejection of the divine, and they try to establish themselves within their own finitude.[48] Sin is this exertion.[49]

On Haufniensis' account, it does not matter what Adam and Eve are not supposed to do, only that prohibition shows them what choice is. Bradley explains that the Genesis story is not framed as the greed for divine power but of the desire for freedom, "[the [prohibition] awakens an awareness of the possibility of freedom in the announcement of the possibility of transgression. What enchants Adam is not some forbidden pleasure, but the allure of grasping freedom itself."[50] Unlike other interpretations of the Genesis story, Adam and Eve are tempted

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[46] "The exclusive concern with the origin of sin arises not only out of the fact that the book sets itself the task of saying something about the dogmatic issue of 'hereditary' sin, but also out of the fact that the possibility of sin in an important sense defines human freedom. To say that sin is possible is to say that human beings are partially independent of God; the ground of freedom is also the ground of the possibility of sin, namely the element of independence of the finite self" (Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*, 211).
[47] Cappelørn, "The interpretation of hereditary sin in "The Concept of Anxiety" by Kierkegaard's pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis," 145.
[48] Cappelørn, "The interpretation of hereditary sin in "The Concept of Anxiety" by Kierkegaard's pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis," 143-144.
[49] Cappelørn likens this experience as that of a teenager who disobeys her parents to try to establish herself as a person separate from her parents.
[50] Bradley, "*Ligatio ex Nihilo*: Original Sin and the Hope for Redemption," 88.

not by the desire to become god or by the power from the fruit but simply by their own freedom. They are tempted to disobey the commandment simply because they have the ability to choose to do so.

This account of anxiety is important as Haufniensis uses anxiety to resolve the problem between first sin and hereditary sin.[51] This is a reference to a theological concern about whether Adam's sin in Genesis is qualitatively different from the sin of every other human being, "is the concept of hereditary sin identical with the concept of first sin, Adam's sin, the fall of man? At times it has been understood so, and then the task of explaining hereditary sin has become identical with explaining Adam's sin."[52] The concern behind Haufniensis' discussion is that Adam existed in a state of innocence that was only broken when he ate from the Tree of Good and Evil, so every human being that came after Adam inherits sin from him, "through the first sin, sin came into the world. Precisely in the same way it is true of every subsequent man's first sin, that through it sin comes into the world. That it was not in the world before Adam's first sin, in relation to sin itself, something entirely accidental and irrelevant."[53] However, if the nature of Adam's sin differs from the sins of every other human being, then Adam exists as ontologically different from all of his progeny. If this were the case, how then would sin emerge for the human descendants of Adam? Does Adam then become a separate type of person? Furthermore, if sin is only inherited because of Adam's first sin, then human beings have no moral freedom because they do not choose to fall into sin.

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[51] Cappelørn notes the Danish word for hereditary sin is *Arvesynd*, and it is the equivalent of *peccatum originale* in Latin (which Augustine uses) (Cappelørn, "The interpretation of hereditary sin in "The Concept of Anxiety" by Kierkegaard's pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis," 132). Luther radicalizes Augustine's *peccatum originale* in his German *Erbsünde*. Cappelørn traces Kierkegaard's concerns with the problem between first sin and hereditary sin and the question of predestination in his early works and early journal entries (Cappelørn, "The interpretation of hereditary sin in "The Concept of Anxiety" by Kierkegaard's pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis," 135). He cites February 1837 Journal BB and May 1842 entries in particular as already concerned with the question of sin.
[52] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 25.
[53] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 31.

Haufniensis uses anxiety to resolve this concern about how sin relates to each human being. The traditional Augustinian-Lutheran understanding of hereditary sin is that sinfulness is inherited by every human being as a result of being human and the progeny of Adam. Cappelørn argues that Haufniensis rejects such an understanding of sin because hereditary sin undercuts human freedom and human responsibility for their actions, "without freedom, there can be no individual culpability, and with culpability, there can be no individual guilt. And without guilt for which human beings are themselves capable, there can be no individual sin."[54] Instead, first sin is not the first sin of Adam but the first sin of any individual as they make the first leap into sinfulness, "Vigilius Haufniensis replaces the traditional notion of hereditary sin with his own interpretation of original sin or the first sin, as a qualitative leap in each individual human being's own life caused neither of necessity or by accident."[55] Every individual, therefore, is not simply born into sinfulness but only has the potentiality to sin and commits the first sin for himself.

Every human being is born in a state of innocence – that is they have not moved against by God. However, even in the state of innocence, anxiety is present because human being are born with freedom and have the potential to assert this freedom. Eventually the human being will fall into anxiety and make a free move, but the consequence is that he falls into sin. Just as Adam is innocent and becomes guilty, every individual also moves from innocence to guilt.[56] Although sin already exists in the world, each individual experiences it as if for the first time and repeats the fall. Just as it occurred for Adam, it occurs for each human individual as well.

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[54] Cappelørn, "The interpretation of hereditary sin in "The Concept of Anxiety" by Kierkegaard's pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis," 132.
[55] Cappelørn, "The interpretation of hereditary sin in "The Concept of Anxiety" by Kierkegaard's pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis," 141.
[56] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 35.

Haufniensis says, "anxiety is the dizziness of freedom, which emerges when the spirit wants to posit the synthesis and freedom looks down into its own possibility, laying hold of finiteness to support itself…in that very moment everything is changed, and freedom, when it again rises, sees that it is guilty."[57] In the moment of freedom, the individual is anxious because they see all the possibilities they could choose, and they become guilty. This process emerges as a qualitative leap, "all of this *is* only for freedom, and it *is* only as the single individual himself posits sin by the qualitative leap."[58] In this leap, the human being moves from a state of innocence into sinfulness. After the qualitative leap, the human being becomes aware of the differentiation between good and evil Anxiety makes all human beings individually aware of their freedom. Each fall into sin is an individual move from each person's experience of anxiety. Although all human beings experience anxiety, this is not a collective or inherited experience but an experience that begins anew with each person.[59] Therefore, freedom and responsibility are preserved while also maintaining the lineage of the human experience of sin.[60]

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[57] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 61.
[58] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 61.
[59] The purpose of this chapter is not to explain Haufniensis' critique of *liberum* arbitrium, but I make note of it given its theological significance within Kierkegaard scholarship and in general. The term *liberum arbitrium* is often traced back by scholars to Augustine's account of freedom. However, Grøn argues that Haufniensis rejects the notion of *liberum aribitrium*, but he qualifies that this term is not simply the Augustinian *liberum aribitrium* but a general notion of being able to choose good and evil without interest, "what Kierkegaard rejects is the notion of freedom as the ability to choose good and evil indifferently, that is to say, to choose between good and evil *without* being in one or the other. If we can indifferently choose between good and evil, we are situated outside of both possibilities: we are faced with both possibilities and can freely, arbitrarily, throw our weight onto one or the other side of the scale" (Grøn, *The Concpet of Anxiety in Søren Kierkegaard*, 74). In addition, Bradley notes that Haufniensis references Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* in his discussion on the traditional views of moral freedom. Although Haufniensis rejects the notion that sin is simply inherited, he also acknowledged the history of humanity that contributes to the moral understanding of sin, "yet Kierkegaard rejects the Pelagian (and Kantian) ahistorical defense of individual responsibility that comes at the price of isolating the moment of deepest moral significance from community and history" (Bradley, "*Ligatio ex Nihilo*: Original Sin and the Hope for Redemption," 90). I am inclined to support Grøn's position given the multiplicity of positions on freedom that Haufniensis references.
[60] While my focus on the question of sin is centered on its connection to freedom, this debate on hereditary sin is important for Christian theology at large given its importance in understanding human ontology and Christology such as the biblical claims of Jesus as the second Adam.

The anxiety that leads to sin is the first anxiety experienced by the individual. In the second part of *CoA*, Haufniensis also discusses an anxiety that can lead a human being to salvation. This anxiety he calls anxiety about evil, and it can cause the individual to become aware of their sin and to repent. Since the individual is now aware of good and evil, they may now choose to do the good[61] over evil. In choosing the good, they are aware of their past guilt and repents of their past decisions. This type of anxiety roots out sin from the individual, so he can choose faith, "anxiety is freedom's possibility, and only such anxiety is through faith absolutely educative, because it consumes all finite ends and discovers all their deceptiveness."[62] While anxiety leads to repentance and repentance an understanding of sin, it is faith that moves beyond anxiety. In faith, the human being moves beyond anxiety as they are no longer anxious about the possibilities before them. [63] They choose the good and makes a commitment to the good. In freedom, the individual moves out of the dangers of the first anxiety. This is the second qualitative leap, moving from sinfulness into salvation. The realization of *CoA* is that the religious is the only way out of despair.[64] Faith allows moral goodness to not only to be an aspiration but also attainable.

The individual consists of contradicting elements: they are both physical and "psychical,"[65]and they are also both finite and infinite. [66] Because of these contradictions, the human being is constantly unbalanced and unable to establish a firm selfhood. This leads to

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[61] "The good, of course, signifies the restoration of freedom, redemption, salvation, or whatever one would call it" (Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 119).
[62] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 155.
[63] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 117.
[64] Kosch, "Freedom and Immanence," 135.
[65] The Danish: "Mennesket er en Synthese af det Sjelelige og det Legemlige." Perhaps a more comprehensible translation would be incorporeal.
[66] "That anxiety makes its appearance is the pivot upon which everything turns. Man is a synthesis of the psychical and the physical; however, a synthesis is unthinkable if the two are not united in a third. This third is spirit" (Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 43).

anxiety, and this anxiety leads to sin. One sins when one forgets that one is both and only focuses on one's finitude or infinitude while neglecting one's other aspect. When the individual focuses too much on the temporal and finite and forgets about the eternal, they sin, and vice versa, "he sins who lives only in the moment as abstracted from the eternal…on the other hand, as soon as sin is posited, it is of no help to wish to abstract from the temporal any more than from the sensuous."[67] This occurs because of the instability within the human being – each contradicting element is at odds and seeks dominance. Sin is the inability to reconcile the contradicting aspects and bring them into proper synthesis or balance. Under this understanding of anxiety, faith then resolves the conflict between these conflicting sides of the human being. Faith is able to harmonize the conflicting aspects of the human being, the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal through putting these elements in the right order.[68]

This distinction is important to show Haufniensis' understanding of what it means to be human and why humans fall into sin. Although humans are also animals, there is no discussion on the sin of dog or cat. However, there is an element particular to the human that makes sin possible. This is why Haufniensis discusses that the human is both finite and infinite. Humans are finite because they have physical bodies and are mortal. However, humans also contain the infinite because they have the potential to be in relation with God and because they have freedom (the ability to assert themselves against what they ought to do). Therefore, the infinite is manifested in anxiety and sin.

Although anxiety may lead the individual to seek salvation, there is a danger that anxiety will lead the individual to fully reject the religious. This rejection is called the demonic, which is

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[67] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 93.
[68] This is what Haufniensis claims in this account. However, other pseudonyms such as Johannes Climacus claim that this is reconciled because of the paradox of Jesus who is both fully human and fully divine.

the anxiety about the good – the human individual is faced with the choice of good and evil and he turns away from the good. The demonic person cannot face the reality of their sinfulness and attempts to cover it up with other objects or pursuits. They reject freedom and the good, but they cannot escape from it, "the other formation is the demonic. The individual is in the evil and is in anxiety about the good. The bondage of sin is an unfree relation to the evil, but the demon is an unfree relation to the good."[69] In trying to reject freedom, the demonic is confronted again by freedom because the individual has chosen freely to reject the good.

The demonic may emerge because the presence or awareness of God is discomforting to the human individual, "the thought of God's existence [*Tilværelse*], when it is posited as such for the individual's freedom, has an omnipresence that for the prudent individuality has something embarrassing about it, even though he does not wish to do anything evil."[70] The way out of the demonic is disclosure as the demonic refuses communication with anything external to themselves, "freedom is always *communicerende* [communication] (it does no harm even to take into consideration the religious significance of the word); unfreeedom becomes more and more inclosed [*indesluttet*] and does not want communication."[71] The demonic person rejects the good, and rejection of the good is also a rejection of freedom.

II. Problem of the Account: How Does Freedom Lead to Salvation?

However, the problem that arises is that Haufniensis admits that while anxiety leads to faith and repentance, these are insufficient to explain how the human individual receives salvation. The problem with repentance is that repentance does not negate the actuality of sin:

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[69] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 119.
[70] This seems similar to *Sickness unto Death* (1849) about sin in which sin is despair in the presence of God. It is in the presence of another that the individual comes into full realization of her sin, but this triggers further anxiety and possible rejection of the good.
[71] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 124.

"the posited sin is an unwarranted actuality. It is actuality, and it is posited by the individual as actuality in repentance, but *repentance does not become the individual's freedom*. Repentance is reduced to a possibility in relation to sin; in other words, repentance *cannot cancel* sin, it can only sorrow over it."[72] Furthermore, even with repentance, punishment is still necessary, but repentance allows the individual to understand why punishment will occur.[73] Repentance does not return the individual to a pre-fall existence because it does not return the individual back into a state of non-culpability. While repentance may prevent the individual from sinning in the future, it cannot turn back time to cancel past sin.

Grøn further points to the problem with repentance, which is that it is ethically untimely. He explains, "even repenting the evil we have done is ethically ambiguous. It is required that we repent, but repentance is always one step behind; it comes too late and moreover delays the act that ethics demands."[74] Repentance only occurs after an ethical misstep occurs, and it has no ethical existence prior to sin. While it may be argued that it is the ethical follow up in light of sin, repentance only occurs after unethical action, so the human being is already in a state of sinfulness. Repentance is, in this sense, always ethically ambivalent.[75] A repentant life is better than a life of unrepentant sin, but it already shows that the individual has committed past evil.

In addition, although Haufniensis references faith multiple times in *CoA*, he rarely – if at all – mentions grace.[76] I find this a strange omission given that Haufniensis is attempting to make an observation on freedom and morality within an explicitly Christian framework. The account of the second leap lacks the transformation that is addressed in the first leap from

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[72] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 115. Italics are my own additions.
[73] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 115.
[74] Grøn, *The Concept of Anxiety in Søren Kierkegaard*, 39.
[75] Thanks to James Gillard for the wording of this sentence.
[76] Alistair McKinnon "Kierkegaard on Faith: the Space of a Concept" 414-432.

innocence into guilt. It seems that even after the second leap, the individual remains in guilt but yet holds out for salvation at the same time. However, this account of salvation does not mitigate the guilt, so the individual is still doomed by their history even if they continually choose the good in the future. "Repentance," as Haufniensis informs us, "cannot cancel sin."

In addition, the omission of grace is strange given the Danish Lutheran context that the book is written in. Grace[77] is a crucial part of Lutheranism and Protestant Christianity at large because grace is the key to salvation.[78] This is not a simple oversight in Haufniensis' writing – a lack of discussion of grace ignores the foundational Gospel message without which a discussion of sin has no conclusion. Although Haufniensis' lack of discussion of faith is also a concerning omission in a discussion of sin, it is even more problematic that Haufniensis has omitted grace because it is grace, not faith, that draws human beings out of sin. Faith is not possible without there being grace first. Therefore, I argue that is grace, and not faith, that makes human freedom possible. Human freedom manifest itself as an act of faith, but grace must proceed it.

In light of Haufniensis' description of the demonic, the freedom to make the second leap becomes more and more implausible. From Haufniensis' description, it seems that a transformation into salvation may only occur from a spontaneous move from the will. However, the demonic has rejected the good and is deceived into thinking that their choices represent their freedom when in reality they show that the demonic person is trapped in unfreedom. The demonic becomes trapped within himself, and the further the anxiety grows, the less free he

[77] The Danish word for grace is *Nød.* However, other pseudonyms do mention grace. In particular, Climacus alludes to grace early on in *Philosophical Fragments*. He discusses the relation between the teacher and the learner and how the learner arrives at truth: "let us call him [the teacher] a *savior*, for he does indeed save the learner from unfreedom…let us call him a *deliverer*, for he does indeed deliver the person who had imprisoned himself, and no one is so dreadfully imprisoned, and no captivity is so impossible to break out of as that in which the individuals holds himself captive" *Philosophical Fragments*, 17. Sin is untruth, and truth is only given by the teacher who is also the deliverer and savior.

[78] See Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 5, Galatians 2:21.

becomes. If the demonic is confronted by anxiety, he risks withdrawing even further into incoming reserve. Although Haufniensis argues that freedom still remains even for the demonic because the demonic is making a free choice in withdrawing, this does not solve how the demonic can choose the good given the description of various types of the demonic and how one may move between these tropes. Through these descriptions, he shows that the difficulty of escaping the demonic. The individual may think that he is escaping the demonic only to become trapped within another trope – this self-deception is central to the demonic who rejects freedom yet makes a free choice in that rejection. In addition, the anxiety over the good continually builds upon itself, and the demonic sinks further into himself, making it more difficult to return to freedom.

Therefore, although Haufniensis argues that the individual should seek repentance, this is not a full solution to the problem of sin. This is problematic because the human individual is left in a precarious position – awareness of their sin without being able to rectify it in any way. While the demonic refuses to reconcile with anything external to itself (be it the world, the good, or the divine), the individual who is open to the good seems also unable to do it out of their own volition either. If human beings are unable to will themselves to not fall into guilt, then it is strange that Haufniensis expects that they are able to will themselves into salvation. The spontaneous ability to make the second leap and to choose the good is antithetical to the hold that the first anxiety and guilt has over human beings. Given that the individual becomes caught by anxiety and inevitably falls into guilt, it does not make sense that they are able to will their way out after the fall if they could not will themselves to not fall into sin in the first place.

III. Haufniensis' Omission of Grace

While these problems may at first glance discount Haufniensis' account or detract from his argument, I contend that Kierkegaard omits a full account of how anxiety leads to salvation because this is a problem that Haufniensis is unable to solve given that Haufniensis writes outside of the religious. His understanding of freedom is incomplete because he cannot explain how it is possible for the human being to choose the good. Haufniensis writes not as a Christian immersed in the religious but as an observer making a rational account. The problem with Haufniensis' account is that he attempts to ignore that sin is a religious concept that cannot be separated from the religious. Haufniensis only explains sin and its solution as if it was a moral issue, but morality does not necessitate including sin. Haufniensis' project collapses because of its premise of treating sin (and therefore salvation) as only a moral concept when sin is already religious. I argue that this is a deliberate move for Kierkegaard because he wants to show that Haufniensis is unable to fully discuss grace. As an observer, Haufniensis can only explain anxiety and freedom to a certain point, but he cannot provide a full account of how they relate to sin given that sin lies in the religious and not just the moral.

Grace, the counterpart of faith, is essential to human freedom in this instance because it allows freedom from guilt and/or sin. In Christian traditions, grace moves human beings from the punishments and expectations of sinfulness into salvation. Faith is the human's responsibility to the good, but grace is what makes the good accessible in the first place. That is why I argue that it is the omission of grace (and not the lack of discussion of faith) that is the missing component to human moral freedom in this text. Although human beings are responsible to be faithful and to choose the good, this freedom is only possible because of a move from the divine that allows absolution of guilt and freedom from sin.

In the introduction, Haufniensis states that he is writing *CoA* as a psychological discussion on anxiety and how it connects to sin.[79] Because Haufniensis is focusing on the psychological, he focuses his writing on how sin manifests within the human being. However, grace exists externally from the human being, so he cannot discuss it in a psychological framework. *CoA* is focused on how anxiety, which emerges externally from the individual, transforms the human being into an awareness of sinfulness. Haufniensis' approach clarifies certain aspects of the concept of anxiety and freedom – such as how sin emerges in the world, but he is also limited by the parameters of science and reason. Faith is a religious concept, and it does not exist in the sensible world – it cannot be grasped empirically. Likewise, the concept of freedom may be elucidated up to a certain point, but it cannot be described fully in a psychological discussion when examining the religious aspect of freedom. Haufniensis uses the introduction to set up the boundaries of his discussion, which is framed around the psychology of anxiety.

The problem with his methodology is not that it is too limiting but that he misses the mark entirely in understanding sin and freedom. Although Haufniensis observes sin and freedom manifests itself through anxiety psychological, he uses anxiety as a placeholder to describe how grace transforms human beings. While he may have certain justifications and aims to setting this scope on his writing, he neglects to recognize that grace is such a central factor in the human experience of sin and freedom and omitting grace makes his writings irresolvable.

The limitations of Haufniensis' approach can be seen in his use of the "leap." The language of the leap masks an incapability to explain the qualitative change that occurs within the human being – from innocent to sinfulness to salvation. The first leap is the fall from

[79] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 14.

innocence to guilt, which is framed as a qualitative leap, but Haufniensis admits that the leap is ambiguous and difficult to explain, "there is nothing in the world more ambiguous…but, to repeat once more, it could never occur to the explanation that it should explain the qualitative leap."[80] The leap from guilt to salvation is another qualitative leap but again this leap is ambiguous. The leap bridges the moment between two states (innocence to guilt and guilt to salvation), and it is clear that some sort of transformation occurs. Giles explains:

> The use of the term 'leap' can be understood as a way of showing that an act of free choice is experienced as an activity in which we 'leap' towards a specific goal, rather than as something in which we are necessarily driven by previous events. It is a 'qualitative' leap because the action taken is something qualitatively different" neither logically nor causally connected to preceding events.[81]

The leap shows that there is a disruption between the before and the after. It is a sudden instance that appears and then disappears again. At the moment before the leap, there is freedom to choose between possibilities, and anxiety emerges in this deliberation when the human being both fears and desires a particular choice.

However, the language of the leap does not clarify what exact happens in the moment and how it happens. Giles indicates that Haufniensis never fully explains the qualitative leap and how it precipitates freedom, "although this concept [the qualitative leap] is clearly a central one for Kierkegaard's account of freedom, it is one which he never fully explains. Further, it is on which few commentators have bothered to try to deal with."[82] The qualitative leap cannot be disclosed because it is not the effect or consequence of a previous cause. It is "radically free," free even from causality.[83] The leap may seem like a causal relation between guilt and salvation,

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[80] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 43.
[81] Giles, "Kierkegaard's Leap: Anxiety and Freedom," 71.
[82] Giles, "Kierkegaard's Leap: Anxiety and Freedom," in *Kierkegaard and Freedom*, 71.
[83] I note here that when I say freedom from causality here, I mean only in the moral context. I do not think that Haufniensis is concerned with freedom from natural causality in this text. Instead, this is a moral causality, free from the consequences of sin. Whether or not Kierkegaard believes that human beings are free from natural causality is an argument that I bypass.

but it is supposed to show the subversive and unexpected transformation between the two states. This shows the importance of the concept of anxiety. Giles argues that the inexplicable nature of the leap can only be experienced, so Haufniensis can only discuss the trajectory that leads up to the leap, which is anxiety, "since the leap itself cannot be defined and is something which can only be known about through direct experience, then for Kierkegaard to convince us of its existence he must be able to direct our attention to the instance in which the leap takes place. And herein lies the importance of anxiety for his account of free will."[84] Anxiety signifies the moment of change, which Haufniensis calls the leap. Anxiety brings the individual up to the moment of the leap and represents the transformation of the individual. I agree with Giles' argument, and, in light of this observation of the leap, Haufniensis too can only discuss up to the moment of the leap and the moment after the leap, but he cannot explain the leap itself.

The leap shows the limitations of Haufniensis' psychological approach because Haufniensis cannot account for why there is a transformation within the human being from guilt to salvation. The leap is a placeholder for what occurs in between the two states. Because grace comes externally to the human being, he can only explain the human experience, which is a move from guilt to salvation. This move is opaque and inexplicably psychologically because it occurs without human intervention, and the human being can only observe the consequence.

I also note that the language of the leap is not a new invention within Kierkegaard's authorship but is an allusion to discussions surrounding the Pantheism Crisis. In particular, this is a reference to Lessing's letter "On the proof of the spirit and of power," in which Lessing jokes about crossing the ugly ditch with a leap. The ditch he is referencing is moving from an understanding of historic truth to a metaphysical one. This discussion of truths will be picked up

[84] Giles, "Kierkegaard's Leap: Anxiety and Freedom," 79.

by another pseudonym in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.[85] Although this is not directly related to moral freedom, this reference situates Haufniensis (and Kierkegaard more broadly) within a greater philosophical dialogue. More importantly, it also changes the connotation of the leap from a serious position that may be taken as the solution for sin to something with much more ambiguous. When Lessing references the leap, he does not consider that he will actually cross the ditch as he admits that he cannot do so. Instead, it used to show the impossibility of the task and the limitations of reason in reconciling these different types of truth. The leap becomes a placeholder term for something that cannot fully be grasped by reason.

The limitations of Haufniensis' description of the leap also explain why the discussion of faith in chapter five is so constrained. Grøn points out the lack of discussion of faith as a robust concept in *CoA*, "anxiety saves only through faith, and even through Kierkegaard does not explore faith further, faith must mean that it is God who gives back to man what he has lost."[86] He argues that faith must allude to an active move from the divine even if this is not explicit within the text. In addition, the possibly of salvation is supposed to be a paradox – according to the account within *CoA*, it is not rationally possible for the individual to leave guilt. The paradox of faith is that forgiveness/redemption will still come for the human being even though he is unable to make an active move to remove guilt/sin.[87] There is no way for human beings to rectify the wrong doing that they have committed in the past – they may commit to not sin in the future, but future resolve does not absolve guilt. The paradox of salvation is that somehow humans are absolved of their past wrong action even though there is nothing that humans may do

[85] Within *CUP*, Climacus also references Lessing directly in this discussion on truth in his evaluation of the difference between subjective and objective truths. Objective truth can be taken as historical, factual truth which can be evaluated with rational certainty. Subjective truth has a different valence and cannot be analyzed by reason alone.
[86] Grøn, *The Concept of Anxiety in Søren Kierkegaard*, 149.
[87] Grøn, *The Concept of Anxiety in Søren Kierkegaard*, 151.

to rectify it.[88] The lack of emphasis on faith (and its omitted counterpart, grace) is not a mistake but reflects the paradoxical nature of salvation that goes beyond what maybe said in the text.

Kosch supports this claim that the discussion of faith and grace is purposefully lacking. She argues that the religious must reveal itself to the human being, but this revelation is complicated because the human being cannot fully understand or affirm its existence, "the only sufficient condition would be the communication's in fact having come from God – but there I no way to know that this if this is the case. Grace, in other words, is both objectively and subjectively opaque."[89] Grace cannot be discussed scientifically or analyzed because it exists outside of the realm of reason because God too also exists outside of our scientific realm. I argue that grace is specifically missing from this account because it represents an action or move that is wholly external to the human being. Faith requires necessary free choice on the part of the human being whereas humans have no control over grace and bringing it about.

Haufniensis is aware of grace and of the limitations of his methodology, and he makes several comments throughout the book that points to the concept of grace. In the introduction, he says, "sin, then, belongs to ethics only insofar as upon this concept it is shipwrecked with the aid of repentance. If ethics is to include sin, its ideality comes to an end."[90] The fact that sin exists already presupposes a failure to ethics, so sin cannot be purely an ethical concept. Already he acknowledges that sin exists outside of the realm of ethics and outside the parameters of his

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[88] Furthermore, Martin Luther explains that human beings are seen before God as both fully sinner and fully redeemed. This paradoxical way of perceiving human morality is how human beings are able to receive salvation.
[89] Kosch, "Freedom and Immanence," 135.
[90] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 17-18. Here, Haufniensis adds a long footnote in which he discusses the ideality of ethics as it appears in several other pseudonymous works such as *Fear and Trembling*. Haufniensis argues that Silentio uses his discussion of the aesthetic and the ethical in order to illuminate the religious. He interprets *FT* to indicate existence transcends the demands of the ethical with the religious, and he recognizes also the need for the religious within *Repetition* to break the young man out of his despair. From this footnote, it is clear that Haufniensis is highly aware of the religious and of the various, religious concepts, but that he is focused on a psychological account which necessarily excludes the religious from explicit discussion.

study which is purely on the human. Since sin involves the divine (because it not the wrongdoing before another human being but an assertion against God), it is already a religious concept before it is an ethical one. However, because Haufniensis is focused on the psychological, he cannot discuss the religious aspect of sin because God exists outside of psychology.

He returns to this acknowledgement at the very end of *CoA*: "therefore he who in relation to guilt is educated by anxiety will rest only in the Atonement. Here this deliberation ends, where it began. As soon as psychology has finished with anxiety, it is to be delivered to dogmatics."[91] This is the only mention of the Atonement by Haufniensis. By ending the book with this line, Haufniensis concludes his study by acknowledging what may still be discussed by through a different methodology, that of the religious. This quotation is extremely important because it reveals the missing element in his discussion on sin, which he cannot express because the Atonement is not scientific. Through the reference to the Atonement, he hints at an external move that solves the problem of guilt within human beings, that is salvation comes from the grace of the divine, but since the Atonement is not rooted in human anxiety except in its connection to sin, he bypasses it in his book

Broadly speaking, the Protestant Christian understanding of atonement is defined in two ways (which are interconnected): the reparation of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross (and resurrection) and the reconciliation of humankind with God also through Jesus. Atonement traditionally viewed as external gift from God without any action or initiative by the human being. However, every denomination has its own nuances on the interpretation and emphases of the atonement. In his article, "Kierkegaard on the Atonement: The Complementarity of

[91] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 162

Salvation as a Gift and Salvation as a Task," Barrett explains that Kierkegaard's understanding of the atonement is drawn primarily from his education, "in general Kierkegaard was drawn to the Western/Latin view of the atonement because it emphasized the continuing importance of striving to lead a life of obedience to God's law of love, and the horrendous tragedy of failing to pursue the ultimate *telos* of human life that God had ordained."[92] Although Kierkegaard does not formulate a doctrine of atonement for himself, he can be understood as incorporating the theological doctrine of his time period (which his audience would also be aware of) into his text. In particular, Barrett argues that Kierkegaard views the Atonement in four ways: Christ's satisfaction over sin; Christ defeats sin; the transformation of individuals through God's love as revealed in Christ; and human imitation of Christ, which is now possible because of the cross.[93]

Regardless of the particularities of the interpretations of the Atonement, Haufniensis' point is clear: at the end of his study, there is still more to say on sin and salvation, and this discussion is religious in nature and pertains to the Atonement. Since the Atonement is not psychological because it comes externally to the human, he cannot discuss it in his own text. However, the discussion of sin cannot be complete without it, so he references it at the very end of the book. The omission of the Atonement points to the omission of grace as well because the Atonement is directly related to grace because it only occurs as a consequence of grace from God. Because of God's grace, Christ comes down to earth, dies on the cross, and is resurrected again. While the Atonement does not need to be a necessary factor in ethics, Haufniensis makes it a concern as he is writing not just about morality but specifically morality within Christianity.

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[92] Barrett, "Kierkegaard on the Atonement: The Complementarity of Salvation as a Gift and Salvation as a Task," 10-11.
[93] Barrett, "Kierkegaard on the Atonement: The Complementarity of Salvation as a Gift and Salvation as a Task," 6.

Within the body of the book, Haufniensis also alludes to an external force beyond the sphere of the text, which is another allusion to divine grace. He says in the section on the demonic, "the demonic therefore manifests itself clearly only when it is in contact with the good, which comes to its boundary from the outside."[94] The demonic not an external force acting upon the individual. Rather, the individual is triggered by the good since they are anxious over the good, and they flee from the good and becomes the demonic. The good is external to the person, and on first glance, it could be any contact with the outside (human or not). However, within the context of the book as a whole, the contact with the external good points to a particular good that is beyond the human. Since all humans fall into guilt, this good cannot be a purely human good. In addition, the demonic person refuses to acknowledge the good and to repent, so the good must be connected to repentance. Therefore, the good, external to the human being, is a divine good that leads to salvation. In addition, that the relational aspect of atonement (in particular, the reconciliation between the human being and the divine) is emphasized in Haufniensis' description of the demonic and the outside. The demonic person refuses to be in relation to others, and in the atonement, the individual is reconciled with other human beings, with the world, and with the divine. An acceptance of the atonement would break the demonic out of its inclosing reserve, but a move must be made first by what lies externally to the demonic. Grace and the salvation that it brings come only from the external without any action from the human

[94] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 119. The Danish: "Det Dæmoniske bliver derfor først ret tydeligt, idet det berøres af det Gode, hvilket da udenfra kommer til dets Grændse." I note the Danish in particular here given its ambiguous wording as well as a note on the translation. Thomte has translated *bliver* as "manifests," which is a strong interpretation of the verb which is most commonly translated as "becomes." A rough translation of the first half of the sentence would be instead: "therefore, demonic becomes clear." I consider "becomes" to be a better translation given certain connotations of space in the world "manifest" and the addition of the reflexive. In addition, *Grændse* can also be understood as both physical and metaphysical boundaries, and it can be used to designate geopolitical borders. My thanks to Cæcilie Varslev-Pedersen for her help in the Danish.

being. Grace makes it possible for the human being to have the freedom to choose the good, but grace cannot be accessed fully from an examination of anxiety because it exists external to it.

In conclusion, Haufniensis' approach illuminates the psychological account of human freedom and its role in morality. Anxiety reveals to human beings their own ability to make free choices, but human beings will inevitably fall into sin out of the dizziness of free possibilities. The human being becomes aware of freedom but only in the leap into sin. As each human being individually falls into sin through the experience of anxiety, Haufniensis avoids complications between hereditary and first sin such as questions of the lack of freedom in hereditary sin and the separation of Adam from the rest of humankind. Anxiety may also lead the human being out of sin as well if a human being has anxiety over evil and is willing to repent and seek salvation [and, crucially, if that salvation is granted from outside by means of grace]. However, humans may also reject the good and develop anxiety over the good – they risk becoming the demonic.

Haufniensis' psychological approach to the question of sin and freedom omits how freedom can possibly choose the good. Although he explains that the human being must repent in order to reach salvation, he does not explain how repentance absolves guilt nor how human beings may choose the good given their state of sin. Instead, from his description, it seems as if the move to salvation is a spontaneous leap made from the will of the individual alone. However, Haufniensis points subtly to what is necessary for moral freedom to be possible, that is, an external movement from outside the human. He acknowledges that he cannot discuss this explicitly given that he is writing a psychological account of anxiety, but he hints that this is the religious concept of grace in his closing words of the book. Grace is the counterpart of faith as the external movement that makes salvation possible while faith is the internal one. Haufniensis

does not argue for an autonomous, spontaneous leap from sin into salvation, but he is unable to explain what the external (or outside) might be given his focus on the human being.

Chapter 3: Kierkegaard's Arc of Authorships

The Point of View serves as a type of autobiography, and it is in this book, published in full after his death, that Kierkegaard addresses his own authorship. In this text, he claims that his early pseudonymous works are not to be considered purely aesthetic but that they are also concerned with the religious question of what it means to become Christian. Furthermore, he wrote these early works intending that they will be read side by side with his upbuilding discourses. In my first two chapters, I showed the inability of the early pseudonyms to fully address the question of moral freedom. I do not consider this a lack of precision or a mistake on Kierkegaard's part. Rather, this is why he uses the pseudonyms in the first place, which is to show a particular position and ultimately criticize this position for its fault. The pseudonym is not reflective of Kierkegaard's own belief, something that he claims several times throughout his lifetime. Instead, I argue that only by reading both the pseudonymous works and the upbuilding discourses that the concept of moral freedom can be understood fully in his authorship, and this is supported by Kierkegaard himself.

Within this chapter, I will provide an exegesis of *POV* itself to show that Kierkegaard explicitly explains how to read his early pseudonymous works and why I intend to turn to the upbuilding discourses in my fourth chapter. I will then provide several interpretations by scholars. Ultimately, I argue for Mark Tietjen's view that we must take Kierkegaard with a hermeneutic of trust, and that this can be verified in reading the upbuilding discourses on moral freedom.

I. Kierkegaard's United Authorship

Kierkegaard's authorship is often split into two authorships: the aesthetic works published under pseudonyms and the religious works published under his own name.

Kierkegaard finds concern with this separation within *The Point of View*, and he states that both authorships are actually centered on one religious question: the question of what it means to be a Christian.[95] The authorship, especially the aesthetic works, is supposed to show the individual that Christendom is such an illusion and to lead them to question whether they are truly a Christian. Although the entire authorship is religious, the aesthetic remains present even in the religious work; Kierkegaard emphasizes this to dissuade interpretations that his authorship is a development or maturation of an aesthetic author into the religious.[96] This contradicts the "stages" approach that many Kierkegaard scholars have used throughout the years – that Kierkegaard's works mature from the aesthetic to the ethical and finally to the religious. Instead, by writing aesthetically, Kierkegaard means to lure the reader to confront the problems on his own terms. He does not force the confrontation, but the reader will experience the problem if he does a careful study of the text. This is very similar pedagogical to what Socrates does within the dialogues, and Kierkegaard admits that he is very influenced by Socrates. The biggest problem that Kierkegaard believes his reader faces is Christendom. However, the individual is too entangled within Christendom to be aware of its dangers and the individual is lured into a sense of false security about their salvation. Christendom is an illusion and a falsehood deception (as opposed to a deception to the truth), and Kierkegaard finds it particularly worrisome because it deludes the individual into thinking that they are a Christian with confidence. However, this leads to complacency and the individual is no longer earnest in following Christ.

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[95] Indeed, this separation between authorships breaks down when looking at his later works. Works such as *Sickness unto Death* are written under pseudonyms yet are very religious in content.
[96] Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, 30.

Instead, Kierkegaard published seemingly aesthetic, non-religious works under pseudonyms. Kierkegaard calls his mode of writing indirect communication. He acknowledges the deceptive nature of the pseudonymous works – that they often state conflicting arguments and collapse at the end. Deception may be used to mislead an individual into untruth, but it can also be used to lead the individual into truth – this latter is indirect communication. The pseudonymous authorship is this type of deception.[97] The pseudonymous works are represented as aesthetic in order to the hide their religious pursuit. He believes that this is necessary because his Danish Lutheran society was highly "religious" in that religious rituals and education was widespread but that the essence of Christianity and the radical nature of it had been lost. This is why he separates state religion (Christendom) from Christianity. However, if he attempted to discuss religion directly, the Danish society would reject it outright because of it is discomforting and radical, often demanding sacrifice.

The purpose of publishing two seemingly different genres of work is that they are able to build off of one another. The pseudonymous works are intended to raise questions about seemingly set beliefs and philosophies. This is why Kierkegaard is often viewed as being a Hegelian or a Kantian because he is emulating their philosophies in his pseudonymous works. Kierkegaard hoped that his audience would then turn to his personal authorship to read the explicitly religious work. In his reflection of his early works, he states that each of the early pseudonymous works was accompanied by a religious one, "the directly religious was present from the beginning: *Two Upbuilding Discourses* (1843) is in fact concurrent with *Either/Or*.

[97] "Direct communication' is: to communicate the truth directly; 'communication in reflection' is: to *deceive into the truth*. But since the movement is to arrive at the simple, the communication turn must sooner or later end in direct communication. It began **maieutically** with esthetic production, and all the pseudonymous writings are *maieutic* in nature. Therefore this writing was also pseudonymous, whereas the directly religious – which from the beginning was present in the gleam of an indication – carried my name" (Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, 7).

And in order to safeguard this concurrent of the directly religious, every pseudonymous work was accompanied concurrently by a little collection of 'upbuilding discourses' – until *Concluding Postscript* appeared, which poses the issue, which is *the issue* κατ᾽ἐξοχην [in the eminent sense] of the whole authorship: *becoming a Christian*."[98] The upbuilding discourses, which he wrote and published simultaneously to the early pseudonyms, addresses directly the question of what it means to be a Christian.

The early pseudonymous authorship are balanced with the upbuilding discourses up until *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, which shows a break in Kierkegaard's approach. When he wrote *CUP*, Kierkegaard believed that his authorship was at an end, and he concludes the publication of *CUP* with a newspaper article about his authorship. In the "First and Last Declaration," Kierkegaard states that although he wrote the pseudonymous works, he does claim ownership over the ideas expressed in this books.[99] The pseudonyms are not his own opinion, but he hopes that they would bring the reader to read more reflectively "the original text of individual human existence-relationship" – an allusion to the Bible.[100] His statement in this newspaper is affirmed in *POV*, which he wrote later in his life.

After *CUP* and his return to writing, there is a blurring of the personal and the pseudonymous authorship as the latter pseudonyms are not presented as solely aesthetic works. He says, "the first division of books is esthetic writings; the last division of books is exclusively religious writing – between these lies *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* as the *turning point*. This work deals with and poses *the issue*, the issue of the entire work as an author: becoming a

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[98] Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, 8.
[99] "In a legal and in a literary sense, the responsibility is mine,* but, easily understood dialectically, it is I who have *occasioned* the audibility of the production in the world of actuality, which of course cannot become involved with poetically actual authors and therefore altogether consistently and with absolute legal and literary right looks to me," (Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 627).
[100] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 629-630.

Christian."[101] Although the later works are also concerned with the question of being a Christian, they no longer follow the pseudonymous-personal publication parallel in the same way.

Kierkegaard acknowledges that most of his audience will not receive both authorships despites his intention as he observed the wide reception of *Either/Or* but very little readership of the first two upbuilding discourses. He says in *POV*: "with my left hand I passed *Either/Or* out into the world, with my right hand *Two Upbuilding Discourses*, but they all or almost all took the left hand with their right."[102] The language of the right hand and left hand is reminiscent of biblical contrasts in particular the passage in Matthew 6 in which Jesus commands that the right hand should not know what the left hand does and vice versa. This allusion is particularly fitting because it reveals the separation between the two authorships as being separate in method and emphasis but still that both are working towards the same goal. In addition, this passage also anticipates much of Kierkegaardian scholarship which has had different interpretations and ways of how it addresses the personal authorship and the relation between the personal and pseudonymous works.

Kierkegaard claims he can only write about his writings now because he could not talk directly and had to remain silent, "as long as I religiously considered the strictest silence as my duty, I strove in every way to preserve it…since I religiously considered silence as my duty, I have not done the least thing to remove this misunderstanding. But I considered silence as my duty, because the authorship was not yet at hand in its totality and thus the understanding could be only a misunderstanding."[103] He lacks the authority of the author of the works even though he

[101] Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, 31.
[102] Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, 36.
[103] Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, 23.

is technically their author. Kierkegaard states that he only becomes aware of this goal and path of his authorship in hindsight, only in reflecting nearing the end of his authorship does he see this. Only after his authorship is now finished can he now discuss all his books in as an entirety.

Furthermore, his authorship is a reflection of his personal relationship with God, which is fully inward and therefore cannot be made public, ""it is self-evident that I cannot present completely an explanation of my work as an author, that is, with the purely personal inwardness in which I posses the explanation. In part it is because I cannot make my God-relationship public in this way, since it is neither more nor less than the universally human inwardness, which every human being can have without any special call."[104] As Silentio has hinted in *FT*, Kierkegaard risked misunderstanding in his discussing his relationship with God directly.[105]

II. Scholarship Response and Interpretation

Although this is Kierkegaard's argument about his own works within *POV*, there is a mixed and varied reaction within the scholarship on how to interpret the book. Given Kierkegaard's use of pseudonyms and irony, many scholars (such as Joakim Garff) question whether the author "Kierkegaard" is not another layer of irony. If the author named Kierkegaard is yet another pseudonym then *POV* serves not as a capstone on the authorship and works as whole but merely as another particular interpretation. Here I turn to several interpretations of *POV* and Kierkegaard as an author writ large.

In his article, "The Eyes of Argus: The Point of View and Points of View With Respect to Kierkegaard's "Activity as an Author," Joakim Garff argues that the authorial authority of *POV* is a deception, and the reader cannot take seriously the Kierkegaard persona that wrote the work. One concern he has with *POV*'s assertation that it is the definitive authority is that it

[104] Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, 25-26.
[105] Footnote back to Silentio on communication

conflicts with the distinctions made by earlier writings, "if we cast a sidelong glance at the entries in the *Papers*, where Kierkegaard comments on *The Point of View*, we can see that the conflicting status claims made by these points of view, plus their mutual incompatibility, were of decisive importance to him when he set the work aside for posthumous publication."[106]

In addition, Garff psychoanalyzes the psyche of the author behind *POV*. Kierkegaard as author of *POV* is not necessarily the true Kierkegaard because the opacity of the pseudonyms makes the authorship. Kierkegaard qua person remains concealed out of fear of loss of interestingness. The revelation that the authorship is religious in nature makes the authorship uninteresting, and Kierkegaard has to hide himself as the author even in *POV* as a substitute.[107] "if the book is to be "true," then it must be accompanied in documentary fashion by a series of private existential declarations. But it is exactly by adding these existential declarations that Kierkegaard risks having the book take on the piquancy of a confessional piece, which would make it the object of the intrusive stare of a prying public, who will see the sensational in the confessional."[108] Therefore, Garff argues that Kierkegaard can only assert authority over the entire authorship by installing himself as a third party relation to his writings. He would become an objective figure in regard to his authorship, which lends credibility to *POV*, but he would also lose authority as he is no longer privileged to make an assertion over the authorship.[109]

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[106] Garff, "The Eyes of Argus: The Point of View and Points of View With Respect to Kierkegaard's "Activity as an Author," 48.

[107] "The most personal of personal things remains concealed, and perhaps he undertakes this concealment right here because the revelation of the religious point of the authorship was a loss of interestingness, and the person behind the book must compensate for this loss by concealing himself and thus re-establishing this interestingness," (Garff, "The Eyes of Argus: The Point of View and Points of View With Respect to Kierkegaard's "Activity as an Author," 44).

[108] Garff, "The Eyes of Argus: The Point of View and Points of View With Respect to Kierkegaard's "Activity as an Author," 50.

[109] "if this really is "the most" that Kierkegaard can say about his relationship to his total production, then he has assigned himself the position of "third party," and he has simultaneously gotten involved in a quite remarkable dilemma. If he in fact installs himself in the position of a "third party," his statements about the authorship take on a reassuring objectivity. But at the same time he must give up his natural right to define the overall significance of the authorship, and *The Point of View* loses its unique status and becomes one among many - debatable - points of

My problem with Garff's interpretation is that he discounts the authority Kierkegaard possess as the affirmed signed author. He discounts the authority of Kierkegaard to address his own work, yet Garff possesses only the same amount of authority to determine / discern *POV* as Kierkegaard himself. If we discount the authorial intent within *POV* then the credibility of the entire authorship as an authorship falls apart as well. The understanding of the religious authorship, the works published under his own name, cannot be a cohesive authorship. Instead, we separate Kierkegaard the author into multiple "Kierkegaards." Although there are differences in what Kierkegaard states about his authorship, he maintains certain similarities in his understanding of his pseudonymous text even as early as the "First and Last Declaration." Even in that text, he is pointing towards the biblical, which is the main concern of the upbuilding discourses. There is already an intentionality of what the pseudonyms are and their relationship to Kierkegaard the published writer.

In addition, Kierkegaard brings up the role of Governance because he admits that it is only in looking back that he is able to have full clarity in how his authorship enfolded. I do not believe this discounts his authority or "retcons" his earlier observations of his writings. However, Kierkegaard as a person is also growing and developing, and it is only in his maturation that he is able to look back to see the arc of his authorship. This is reflected in the role of Governance, which alludes to an understanding of Christian transformation – that the individual only sees the change or personal development having come to the end of transformation, which was opaque as it unfolded.[110]

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view," (Garff, "The Eyes of Argus: The Point of View and Points of View With Respect to Kierkegaard's "Activity as an Author," 50-51).

[110] This may be an allusion to the Christian concept of anagnorisis – Augustine speaks of this in the Confessions, and scholars have traced his influence on Kierkegaard. Transformation is apparent only in seeing the "before" and "after," but not in the process itself. This is the real explanation of the leap of faith. The leap is the transformation but the activity of the leap is inscrutable. It is only in the build up and the aftermath that one sees the change that occurs.

In his book, *Points of View*, Mackey explains that contradictory nature of irony disorients and destabilizes the individual and allows for the possibility of repositioning. He says, "for orientation (which in the case of irony would have to mean disorientation) we are reminded of the ordinary meaning of irony. Irony in the ordinary sense is (as we have always known) a figure of speech in which what is said is the opposite of what is meant."[111] Because irony equivocates on what it means and what it says, the listener is confused and forced to make judgments for themselves and confront the meaning behind the words. Mackey argues that irony is not communication but a way of preventing communication, of concealing the author from the reader.[112] In his interpretation, irony can only block communication; it cannot herald further communication.

Therefore, Kierkegaard uses irony to distort the true author. He argues that Kierkegaard is only able to write his authorship (as he claims in *POV*) only through the grace of God and Governance. He says, "all property (propriety of ownership, proper ownership) is of God. And the whole of man's work – the whole of Søren's work as a writer – has been indulged by God as a charitable charade."[113] Mackey carries this argument to the identity of Kierkegaard as an author – instead, even the signed works of Søren Kierkegaard is a pseudonym. In his interpretation, Kierkegaard is also a pseudonym for the real author, who is God, "Søren Kierkegaard was one of his own pseudonyms. Or perhaps all of them are God's pseudonyms. That is what Søren would have us believe."[114] However, Mackey's point is not that we cannot trust Kierkegaard's claims about his own authorship but that we must take much more seriously the role of Governance as stated in *POV* itself.

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[111] Mackey, *Points of View: Readings of Kierkegaard*, 13.
[112] Mackey, *Points of View: Readings of Kierkegaard*, 14.
[113] Mackey, *Points of View: Readings of Kierkegaard*, 175.
[114] Mackey, *Points of View: Readings of Kierkegaard*, 188.

My concern with Mackey's argument is that he misinterprets irony – a question that Kierkegaard himself addresses his first work, his master's dissertation, *The Concept of Irony*. Irony disorients and destabilizes the individual, but Mackey misses the mark in saying that irony blocks communication. Rather, Kierkegaard is using irony in order to move into deeper communication. In *COI*, Kierkegaard argues, "as soon as irony is controlled, it makes a movement opposite to that in which uncontrolled irony declares its life. Irony limits, finitizes, and circumscribes and thereby yields truth, actuality, content; it disciplines and punishes and thereby yields balance and consistency."[115] Irony still reveals the truth, but it does so in an indirect way.

The importance of indirect communication is that it preserves the integrity of the reader – he remains free to choose how to respond to the text. Irony preserves the freedom of the reader – they are not forced to agree with what is said and are open to explore further philosophical reflection. In the same way, Kierkegaard is not forced to attempt to persuade the reader but is able to maintain his own thoughts and theories. Regardless of Mackey's view on the communication of irony, I agree that irony distorts the authorship, and when we investigate the use of pseudonyms, we should be pointed towards Governance and the divine. Mackey's greater point that the authority of the authorship does not necessarily rest on Kierkegaard alone as Kierkegaard himself acknowledges the role of Governance in his works.

Authority and Communication

This is a point that is supported by Lane's understanding of the authorship. In *Kierkegaard and the Concept of Religious Authorship*, Lane defines religious authorship as, "before God, to speak or write about God and the world (including religion and things religious),

[115] Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, 326.

in a religious way, with a religious concern or interest, to a specific audience."[116] He argues that Kierkegaard perceives himself as a religious author. The pseudonymous authorship is not just an aesthetic authorship in its form (in that is playful, almost theatrical method), but each of the positions taken up by the pseudonyms are explained and revealed in both their strengths and weaknesses if read carefully, the pseudonyms should be understood as undermining aesthetic, ethical, or philosophic views that (if taken as the religious) would leave one misunderstanding the religious or work against one actually living in the religious."[117]

Lane argues that the authorship is primarily religious and not philosophical because the underlying interest is the question of Christianity, "both the religious author and the philosopher may seek clarity about the requirement, or may seek to undo confusions with regard to the religious. Such were certainly of concern for Kierkegaard in both his pseudonymous works and in his straightforwardly religious works. But underlying this concern for clarification is the supreme concern to the religious author – where one stands in relation to Christianity."[118]

Indirect communication is important because it reflects Kierkegaard's own understanding of his lack of authority – rather, Kierkegaard always defers to God as the true figure of authority and the role of other human beings is only to help facilitate growth and understanding: "*indirect communication* is required because the teacher is not The Teacher (only God can do this) but a fellow pupil (something the pupil must know also) and that in such a situation we must remember the ultimate aim 'that every man comes to stand alone in the God-relationship.'"[119] The point of Kierkegaard's authorship is not to establish a new theological or philosophical dogmatic – it is not to make a Kierkegaardian system. If this were the case, indirect

[116] Lane, *Kierkegaard and the Concept of Religious Authorship*, 4.
[117] Lane, *Kierkegaard and the Concept of Religious Authorship*, 20.
[118] Lane, *Kierkegaard and the Concept of Religious Authorship*, 32.
[119] Lane, *Kierkegaard and the Concept of Religious Authorship*, 110.

communication would be a poor mode to support a theory. Instead, indirect communication is supposed to lead the reader towards God. Lane explains that indirect communication shows that Christianity is not just a metaphysical system or dogmatic, it is a way of existence that must be lived out, "for Kierkegaard the defining oneself before the religious is a crucial aspect to this communication if it is to be religious because otherwise a mere knowledge is communicated and not a life."[120]

The authorship is not about the reader's relationship to Kierkegaard but about Kierkegaard's own God-relationship and how this might incite the reader's own God-relation. Kierkegaard emphasizes the point on Governance between his relationship to his works is a reflection of his God-relation. In pursuing the question of what it means to be a Christian in earnest and without authority, Kierkegaard is able to avoid the pitfall of deception – that he knows what it means to be a Christian and he can be secure his Christian identity. Rather, his authorship pursues the question in earnest and destabilizes the audience's opinion and dogma.

Here I turn to Mark Tietjen, who argues mostly strongly in *Kierkegaard, Communication, and Virtue: Authorship as Edification* that both the pseudonymous work and the edifying discourses serve a primary purpose for Kierkegaard for the edification of the reader in developing as a Christian. It is not only the Upbuilding Discourses (which are considered the edifying works) that work for this purpose but the authorship as a whole.[121] The pseudonyms and the religious authorship should be read together. Furthermore, there is a consistency to his

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[120] Lane, *Kierkegaard and the Concept of Religious Authorship*, 124.

[121] "the spheres should not be interpreted reductively, as the final word on the possibilities of human existence, but as one scheme through which one can make observations about a human life in ways that both attend to general features of humane existence and allow for different instantiations based on the uniqueness and particularities of human lives. The pseudonymous authors themselves offer particular embodiments of the spheres, a picture of them *in action*, but a picture that does not exhaust the sphere itself. Likewise, concepts such as love or the ethical are embodied by actual characters who live their lives and philosophize according to the principles and values that generally characterize their stages." (Tietjen, *Kierkegaard, Communication, and Virtue: Authorship as Edification*, 34).

use of the pseudonyms and of publishing under his own name, which should not be easily disregarded.[122] Tietjen also finds it concerning that scholars begin by discounting Kierkegaard's authority over his writings - if there is a deception in the text, we should still start with trusting the text and observe how the deception unfolds.

Even skepticism about the text can still move the reader to some sort of edification, which would be the end goal regardless. Trusting *POV* leads to edification, which might be lost in skepticism of the text, "Thus a compelling reason to trust the account of *The Point of View* is the momentous possibility of personal edification of an ethical and religious nature, a possibility seemingly lost under an interpretation motivated by suspicion. There is certainly risk involved in this, yet that alone is not a sufficient reason for suspicion."[123]

Another reason to trust *POV* is that it provides a greater, cohesive understanding of the authorship as a whole, "a hermeneutic of trust draws on the importance of placing *The Point of View* in the larger context of the authorship, the majority of which is signed, religious writing. A hermeneutic of trust reads *The Point of View* as a sound explanation of a vast authorship, not all of which contains equal amounts of indirect devices particularly attractive to contemporary deconstructionist readings."[124] The simplicity of trusting *POV* does not discount its importance but shows that it is a more sound view than attempting to deconstruct Kierkegaard as an author.

Hartshorne's influential work, *Kierkegaard Godly Deceiver: the Nature and Meaning of His Pseudonymous Writings*, argues for this same understanding of Kierkegaard's authorship.

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[122] "Kierkegaard employs pseudonyms at certain times and does not employ pseudonyms at other times, and with the exception of the Anti-Climacus works that represent Christianity in its ideal form— something Kierkegaard did not wish to boast of his own life— he does so in a consistent, coherent manner that suggests an important, though simple, inference: one can read books he chose to sign as his own and therefore as containing positions that are his. I claim these observations "suggest an inference"; if they do not, it might be due to assumptions of suspicion, but that is precisely the point: why begin with suspicious assumptions rather than the converse?" (Tietjen, *Kierkegaard, Communication, and Virtue: Authorship as Edification*, 80).
[123] Tietjen, *Kierkegaard, Communication, and Virtue: Authorship as Edification*, 82.
[124] Tietjen, *Kierkegaard, Communication, and Virtue: Authorship as Edification*, 82.

Hartshorne argues that the authorship was ultimately religiously motivated and Kierkegaard was unable to see its holistic significance in the process of writing, "he cannot understand the whole despite understanding it to the most minute details because, like any mortal, he cannot understand the ways of Providence that, in his case, informed an aesthetical authorship with religious purpose.[125]" Kierkegaard is both the author but also the conduit for the writing, "in his own deeply felt Christian conviction – he was not the author but the instrument. Governance guided his entire life and, above all, his work as an author. Conscious from the very first of being under instruction, he wrote as he had to write, and was guided toward the religious goal of the total authorship."[126]

Instead, Kierkegaard's writing may push the reader to reflect, but reflection only illuminates the deception but it cannot fully remove it, "reflection will not take him out of existence, but it can underscore, even exacerbate, the contradiction in which he lives."[127] The contradiction is only removed through grace, not through any particular human action.[128] The problem in seeking truth in this account is that Kierkegaard is attempting to indirectly discuss something that cannot appear in true by human standards, "neither objective truth nor subjective truth can be identified with the miracle of divine grace."[129]

However, how I differ in my argument with Hartshorne is that Hartshorne still considers Kierkegaard the author of all his works even though Kierkegaard denies this. Hartshorne still interprets Kierkegaard to be the authority behind the pseudonyms even though Kierkegaard

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[125] Hartshorne, *Kierkegaard Godly Deceiver: the Nature and Meaning of His Pseudonymous Writings*, 79.
[126] Hartshorne, *Kierkegaard Godly Deceiver: the Nature and Meaning of His Pseudonymous Writings*, 80.
[127] Hartshorne, *Kierkegaard Godly Deceiver: the Nature and Meaning of His Pseudonymous Writings*, 27.
[128] "for Kierkegaard, there is only one escape from a philistine existence, only one true salvation. It is to become a Christian. But that happens only by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. It is not something we do, not a higher run on the ladder of spiritual achievement, not a higher stage of existence," (Hartshorne, *Kierkegaard Godly Deceiver: the Nature and Meaning of His Pseudonymous Writings*, 27).
[129] Hartshorne, *Kierkegaard Godly Deceiver: the Nature and Meaning of His Pseudonymous Writings*, 43.

claims multiple times that each pseudonym has its own persona, convictions, and values. Nevertheless, Hartshorne is right in his understanding of how the pseudonyms should be situated within the authorship overall.

III. Reading United Authorships

In light of Kierkegaard's own words and the interpretations by various scholars, I argue that Kierkegaard's writings can be divided into several authorships which may be categorized as the personal authorship (works published under his own name), the early pseudonymous authorship (pseudonymous works up until and possibly including *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*), and the latter pseudonymous authorship (pseudonymous works after *CUP*). I draw this specific distinction between the two pseudonymous authorships given the divisions of the style and content of these texts. The questions and themes that exist in the early pseudonymous works are often reinterpreted or dropped altogether in the latter pseudonymous works. In addition, *CUP* marks a transition as it explicitly addresses the question of what it means to be a good Christian.[130]

Therefore, in light of the early pseudonyms' discussion of freedom, a turn to the personal authorship and the upbuilding discourses is crucial to understanding Kierkegaard's concept of moral freedom. I have spent the first two chapters of this project focused on two early pseudonyms that address the question of moral freedom, and now I argue that it is necessary to turn to the upbuilding discourses in order to fully understand moral freedom. There is little scholarship on freedom in the upbuilding discourses. Kosch even discounts their usefulness in discussing freedom: "it is in these [the pseudonymous works] that Kierkegaard engages most philosophically with issues surrounding moral agency and the foundations of ethics. The various

[130] This distinction I draw from the Copenhagen school of thought, in particular the works of Arne Grøn and Michael Theunissen.

discourses and *Works of Love* speak…a language quite foreign to philosophers and their concerns."[131] However, Kierkegaard makes it clear that they are important to fully understanding his authorship. I believe that there is a further religious valence to moral freedom, which is hinted at in *FT* and *COA* but not discussed fully.

Kierkegaard's own discussion of governance points to this interpretation of freedom and grace. It is only in hindsight that Kierkegaard becomes aware of God's grace in his own writings. Although he chose freely to begin his authorship project and he had particular designs for it from the beginning (as his aim was always the question of what it means to be a good Christian), he did not necessarily understand the impact of the project as a whole. It is only through the hand of Governance that the project has a greater cohesion and clarity than what he had imagined.

Kierkegaard chooses to begin his writing and writes freely in his chosen aim of answering the question "what does it mean to be a Christian?" It is only in hindsight that he sees how God has worked through his writing. At the center of the question of freedom is the relationship between human beings and the divine. Kierkegaard sees his relationship with God played out through his authorship and this is even arguably a reflection of his writings. Governance takes the role of God and allows Kierkegaard to discuss God even with the limitations of language. Governance indirectly explains the way that has God has worked through Kierkegaard's authorship without claiming authority as to God's intention or actions. Kierkegaard chose freely to write and to seek answers on Christianity, and he is only able to see the role and relationship with God after the fact.

[131] Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard*, 10-11.

Lastly, the problem with reading *POV* with suspicion is that calls into question the entire authorship and the authority of any particular passage. There maybe deconstructionist readings of Kierkegaard, but to ignore the stated intention of the author is problematic and calls into question about the reader's own preconceived stances. Beginning with suspicion of the text already suggests an aversion to the text and the claims about Christianity that Kierkegaard is trying to convey. Indeed, suspicion of the text already affirms Kierkegaard's use of indirect communication as direct communication immediately raises questions among scholars of the lack of credibility of the text. Kierkegaard may write ironically but deception is multifaceted and even the process of being deceived reveals further insight about both the reader and the author. The reader is deceived and this deception reveals preconceived notions and judgments of the reader. The deception is intentional, so it reveals the goals and aims of the writer and the reason why he intends to deceive.

Chapter 4: The Gift of Grace as Bringing About Freedom

This final chapter of my dissertation is the culmination of Kierkegaard's concept of freedom. The two pseudonymous works claim that human freedom exists but cannot explain how it is possible. Both works cannot have knowledge of what is lacked but show the reader that there is something missing to the experience of freedom that cannot be explained by the noumenal. My third chapter argues that we must instead turn to the personal authorship which serves as response and answer to the questions that emerge from *FT* and *CoA* as claimed by Kierkegaard himself in his autobiography. In this chapter, I turn to the upbuilding discourses directly to show what is missing in order for human moral freedom to be possible: that is the gift of grace from God. I am focusing on the 1843 Four Upbuilding Discourses and 1844 Three Upbuilding Discourses as these are the discourses published in correlation to *Fear and Trembling* and *Concept of Anxiety*. In particular, I will focus on "Every Good and Perfect Gift is from Above," "The Lord Gave and the Lord Took Away, Blessed be the Name of the Lord," and "The Expectancy of Salvation." Although Kierkegaard will continue to publish upbuilding discourse and other works under his own name well into his authorship, I am focused on these very early works because they are written intentionally by Kierkegaard to connect with one another and because of the tonal shift and break in the authorship that is set up with *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.[132] In order to maintain this separation, I will not look at later works that discuss freedom (such as *Sickness unto Death*). Finally, turning to the discourses addresses my argument in the third chapter that we must take Kierkegaard in good faith that the problems that he raises with the pseudonyms may be answered with his personal writing.

[132] This is a separation maintained by Kierkegaard in *POV* as he initially intended to retire from writing after *CUP*, and much of the content of *CUP* addresses the works that had already been published at this time.

Within this chapter, I will highlight particular passages within these particular discourses as their accompanying prefaces. From these passages, I argue that it is clear that the missing component of the pseudonymous works is the concept of grace and how grace becomes manifested in human experience, and this is only stated explicitly in the personal authorship. I will also incorporate David Kangas and George Pattison's articles on the topic. My concern with much of the secondary literature of the Upbuilding Discourses is that they are take for granted the foundational aspect of the idea of the gift. I have chosen these two contemporary scholars' interpretations of the early upbuilding discourses because I have found that they are focused on seeking the meaning and theological and philosophical implications of the discourses and seek to address exactly what the gift is.

I. God's Role in Human Transformation

The prefaces of each set of discourses contain the same message: that the author does not have the authority to preach and that these discourses are intended for an individual whom the author hopes will receive and understand the book. He says, "although this little book…is not unaware of the two that preceded it, it nevertheless is not confident that they have prepared the way so that with certainty it dares to count on being included with them or with certainty dares to promise this to the one who sends it out."[133] Although I highlight this particular passage, Kierkegaard repeats a similar passage at the beginning of each set of the upbuilding discourses. This repetition emphasizes Kierkegaard's intentions with the discourses – that he is seeking for an individual who is looking earnestly at the question of what it means to be a Christian. This repetition is stylistically in keeping with his use of repetition in other parts of his authorship. He

[133] Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 107.

repeats it at the beginning of each discourse to reinforce how importantly he considers this message.

In addition, the repetition of the prefaces corroborates Kierkegaard's understanding of his authorship in that his pseudonymous work *Either/Or* was popularly and critically acclaimed but the discourses published at the same time were read by very few people. He recognizes that the discourses would not be well received or accessible to most readers. Instead, he is focused on the reader who is seeking to understand Christianity and grace. As discussed in the third chapter, Kierkegaard's aim with his entire authorship is to the address the question of what it means to be a Christian. Through the progression of his publications, he comes to realize the difficulty of communicating such a project, and he accepts that his true aim of his writings may not be well accepted by the general public.

In the discourse, "Every Good and Perfect Gift is from Above," Kierkegaard reiterates the parent-child relationship as a reflection of the human-God relation. God's compassion can be seen in the gifts that God gives to human being. "Every Good and Perfect Gift is from Above" begins with a reiteration of the Fall and exile from the Garden of Eden. The connection to the Genesis story also connects the discourse to *CoA*, in which Haufniensis seeks to explain the emergence of sin in the world through his discussion of anxiety. Here, the gift of the God resolves the crisis of sin that happens in Genesis 3 and serves as an alternative solution to Haufniensis' explanation on how human anxiety over freedom inevitably leads to sin.

Although Kierkegaard does not lay out in detail what the gift is, he alludes to it in "Every Good and Perfect Gift is from Above:" "God pronounced another judgment that even the human being, who nevertheless was the most perfect creation, that even he was evil. This was broken I was not in a judgment of wrath in order to inspire fear but in a metaphorical say that try to find

an expression for the divine in the most beautiful relation in earthly existence. The word said: You, who are evil - not as if this were the theme of what was said but as a truth decided once and for all and merely emotion."[134] Human beings are condemned because of their sinfulness, but God pronounces a second judgment which removes the penalty of sin – i.e.: grace. Kierkegaard consistently uses the metaphor of God as father in discussing the gift.[135] It is easier for the child to accept the gift, but as human beings grow up, they begin to doubt and despair over whether the gift is from God.[136] The gift from God is not about receiving knowledge but is about an essential need connected to human being's lack of perfection.

He directly connects freedom to the gift, "so let us deliberate in more detail and do our part to understand and in our deliberation be captured for freedom, as it were, by the beautiful apostoloic words that explain both the what and the whence in: *that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.*"[137] The language that Kierkegaard uses here is ironic – it is in freedom that the individual is captured and this freedom comes in the realization that the good comes from God. The gift is a transforming experience in which the human being is caught up and altered, but this change leads to the emergence of freedom. Once the individual has undergone this experience, their relationship to God (and therefore the good) is also transformed. On the other side, because it is a gift, the human being has the responsibility of receiving it.[138] Here is where freedom reemerges – freedom initially led to anxiety and from anxiety to sin. With the gift of grace, salvation becomes possible for human beings, but humans must first

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[134] Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 130.
[135] if it holds true that just as a father has compassion on children, God has compassion on the one who calls upon him, that just as a father gives his child good gifts, God gives good gifts to those who pray to him for them – if this is firmly set, then the comfort offered is the most reliable of all," Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 129.
[136] Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 132.
[137] Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 129
[138] Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 139.

accept the gift of grace. This decision is a decision freely made by human beings and it is a moral decision because it establishes the ability to choose good over evil.

In "the Lord Gave and the Lord Took Away, Blessed be the Name of the Lord," (a reference to Job 1:20-21), Kierkegaard explains that the story of Job shows that God as giver is reflected in its inverse – that God can take away: "Job traced everything back to God; he did not detain his soul and quench his spirit with deliberation or explanations that only feed and foster doubt, even though the person suspended in them does not even notice that. The very moment everything was taken away from him, he knew it was the Lord who had taken it away, and therefore in his loss he remained with the Lord."[139]

This is not to say that that the gift of grace is one that can be taken away by God but that experientially it should not be taken from granted. I connect this passage to the process that Silentio lays out in *FT*: the movement of faith must be preceded by the movement of infinite resignation, in which the individual gives up all hope and expectation. As seen in the story of Job, what is missing in Silentio's account is that even the movement of infinite resignation must be preceded by a recognition of human need in God and about God's omnipotence as giver and therefore taker. Freedom cannot be assumed as given because grace is a gift, unexpected and undeserved. Therefore, the ability to choose the good over evil cannot be taken for granted either as human beings are trapped within their anxiety.

Furthermore, as seen in the prefaces and in Kierkegaard's autobiography, he recognizes the reality that much of his public audience misunderstands – either willfully or ignorantly – the main goal of his writing: what it means to be a Christian. Again, I do not argue that the gift of

[139] Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 121.

grace is taken away if the individual does not receive it. However, the concept of the gift necessitates both a giver and a receiver. Without a receiver, there is no gift.[140]

Here, I turn to several pertinent secondary sources to further elucidate the meaning and implications of the gift. In his article "The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard's *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)," Kangas discusses the connection of the gift to the good. He says, "According to Kierkegaard, we shall see, the *good is a gift* and - here is something strange - this is not, he claims, a metaphor *(et Billede),* but an "expression of actuality."… From this standpoint, Kierkegaard's claim that the Good is a gift would appear as an effort to *represent* the Good under some aspect; gift would be an image of the Good."[141] The Good is already a philosophical concept with certain expectations and implicit meaning. By connecting the Good to the gift, Kierkegaard uses the gift as a reflection for the Good.

The necessary consequence of this assertion is that the gift (and therefore the Good) is not connected to knowledge. Through knowledge, we create divisions in our experiences and separations in our concepts. Knowledge is not the gift but our ability to gain knowledge reflects our ability to understand how things come into being, "What does *knowledge* have to do with *gift!* What links the two, first of all, is the question of origin - i.e. the *givenness* of things. To know something, from this perspective, is not only to be able to describe its structure but also to account for its genesis and to articulate the path of its realization."[142] We recognize that

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[140] Two examples come to mind about this phenomenon. One is the rejection of Jesus in his hometown (as seen in Mark chapter 6 and Luke chapter 4): at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he attempts to teach in Nazareth and is rejected by the men in the synagogues. They even attempt to murder him in the Luke account. The second example is from C.S. Lewis' *The Last Battle* (the last book of the Christian allegory, *The Chronicles of Narnia*) in which the protagonists are thrown into the stable and come into the land that they will come to realize is the Narnian version of heaven. Although the protagonists accept that they are in this new version of the world and begin to accept that they are essentially in the end times, they encounter a crew of dwarves who refuse to acknowledge this reality and believe that they are all still trapped in the stable. Even when the dwarves come face to face with Aslan (Lewis' Christ figure stand in who is a lion), they refuse to accept that they are no longer in the dark stable.

[141] Kangas, "The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard's *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)," 101.

[142] Kangas, "The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard's *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)," 103.

particular things are given to us by an external source. The gift is something that is unable to be acquired or achieved – unlike knowledge – the gift may only be received.[143]

I note here that this is an interesting epistemological argument given Kierkegaard's influence from Socrates, which we often consider when discussing their uses of irony. However, if we consider the *Meno* and *Republic* and its assertions about knowledge and recollection, I argue that there are some similarities to this account within the early upbuilding discourses. Although knowledge does not come from the cycle of rebirth and recollection, neither is certain kinds of knowing or understanding in a general sense something that can be attained. Instead, it must be *given*.[144] As we have seen repeated throughout the early writings, the message that Kierkegaard attempts to convey is that there are certain concepts that cannot be fully known unless they are experienced. This is the downfall of Silentio and Haufniensis – that neither can fully understand faith and salvation although they attempt to talk around them. This is also why the prefaces reiterate the image of Kierkegaard sending his book out into the world to seek out the individual who may receive the writing.

Kangas also argues that the gift is not metaphorical but a true reflection of what the Good actually is: "the properness or literality that Kierkegaard refers to - i.e. that gift and father are not metaphors but expressions of actuality - is not the same thing as a hardening of the image or a forgetfulness of its status as an image."[145] Here, this connects to my arguments in chapter one and two that Silentio and Haufniensis cannot access the good because they are caught up in philosophical and rational knowledge, which limits their ability to see the gift. Only in edification can human beings become open to relating to the absolute, which cannot be

[143] Kangas, "The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard's *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)," 109.
[144] I would not consider that this givenness leads us necessarily to revealed theology.
[145] Kangas, "The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard's *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)," 111.

understood through knowledge, "Edification is this overcoming, the positing of truth as interiority or subjectivity. The necessary condition for thinking truth as subjectivity, for edification, however, is to think absolute being (in this case, the Good) not in terms of an ideal meaning but in terms of the withdrawal of ideal meaning. Only by positing an absolute figure - a figure not *of* something more proper but a figure of itself - is it possible to open up a relation to the absolute which is not a knowing, a relation which keeps the meaning of the absolute open."[146]

Furthermore, this gift of the Good comes from God, who is beyond human knowledge, "Kierkegaard's repeated emphasis on the fact that the gift comes down *from above,* that there is no way to the Good, rearticulates the idea of a God "beyond being" - that is to say, as beyond determinability and knowability."[147] What is the connection of the Good to the concept of God? Kangas argues the Good is not a general abstract concept. Instead, the connection of the gift to the Good implies that there is an actor who performs the giving.[148] What is given in the gift-giving is God – the human being is able to come into relation with God through receiving the gift.

Kangas' final book carries over his ideas about the religious discourses beginning with the intent and purpose of the discourses. He notes that Kierkegaard's personal authorship does not assert itself as an authoritative work.[149] Instead, he aims to flip traditional understands of concepts on their head and examine concepts from their inception and development.[150] Kangas' observation that Kierkegaard deconstructs and rebuilds these concept fits into the name of the

[146] Kangas, "The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard's *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)," 113.
[147] Kangas, "The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard's *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)," 115.
[148] Kangas, "The Logic of Gift in Kierkegaard's *Four Upbuilding Discourses* (1843)," 114.
[149] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 1.
[150] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 2.

discourses: the upbuilding discourses. Instead of using rationality on its own to understand freedom, the discourses use human experience to also convey what freedom actually is and how it is possible.

The discourses do not serve as theoretical discussions or argumentation on the existence of God – that is beside the point. Whether or not God exists is something that has very little experiential value. Instead, Kierkegaard writes explicitly to a socially religious audience who still engage in the traditions and trappings of religion without necessarily seeking to rationally prove the existence of God.[151] More broadly, Kangas argues that God does not give us knowledge in the gift – the gift is a reorientation in human thinking, "the gift is affirmed [in "Every Good and Perfect Gift…" (1843)], not in knowledge, but in the incipience of a new orientation itself, a 'new beginning'"[152] As Kangas says in the above article, what the gift provides cannot be knowledge because this gift from the good which exists externally to the human. The difficulty of the gift is that "the gift must always already be received, and given, prior to being received and given…this is why Kierkegaard explicitly emphasizes that God is the only one who, in giving, has *already* given."[153] The gift that is given is not an earthly need that human beings lack. Rather, it is a need that fulfills what it means to be human in the highest sense.[154] Human beings do not seek out the given – it is given freely.

Human beings are already always in relation to God (the creator). Human beings always find themselves already in existence – they have no awareness of what precedes themselves. To be in relationship to God is to accept the inability that human beings can be essentially separated

[151] In the background of Kierkegaard's writing is also Kant's *Critiques* and the boundaries that Kant sets on the deployment of pure reason.
[152] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 28.
[153] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 37.
[154] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 40.

from the divine. Instead, Kangas argues that Kierkegaard already begins in the experience of faith, "the discourses, therefore, though maintaining a pure affirmation – or rather *because* of this affirmation – neither presupposes nor lead to the belief in the existence of a higher being. The whole structure of belief and doubt is set aside. It is replaced by the attunement Kierkegaard calls "faith" (*Troen*)."[155]

Although the text is rooted in the biblical narrative, Kangas generalizes divine away from personal Christian God, "God doubles as both the object of choice, what is chosen, and that which conditions the very possibility of the choice. In the latter sense "God" names the condition of the possibility of a choice that concerns the fundamental attunement of the human being."[156] God represents the ability that human beings can make free choices. This can be taken in that God is the creator of human beings and therefore creating humans to be free. This can also be taken in the fashion of Kant's 1st Critique – in that God represents the grounding of the possibility of human experience and human choice. When we say the word "God," we really mean this possibility within human experience. However, these two points cannot be separated for Kierkegaard. This must be the case because God as a giver must be a personalized God because the emphasis is on God as being in relation with human beings. The reason why God represents choice is because God is giver, gift, and given.[157] To be in relation to God is to be in relation to the event of giving.[158] However this relationship goes beyond the relation a human being may have with an intangible object or theory – grace means that the human being is forgiven of sin but forgiveness necessitates an other who was impacted by the sin. Forgiveness necessitates a personal relationship which can be attributed as the father-child relation. In giving

[155] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 9.
[156] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 9.
[157] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 38-39.
[158] Kangas, *Errant Affirmations: On the Philosophical Meaning of Kierkegaard's Religious Discourse*, 39.

grace, God crosses over from just being a thought experiment necessary for human morality but takes an active role in human work.

In Pattison's chapter, "Philosophy and Dogma: the Testimony of an Upbuilding Discourse," he connects the human-God relationship found within the discourses with grace. As he says, the upbuilding discourses reflect a need for human beings to understand redemption, a redemption that culminates in realizing an essentially human lack that only God may fill.[159] The human being realizes that he is dependent on God and this need is already fulfilled by grace even prior to his realization. The point of contact with the divine is in the good aka the gift. Only in receiving the gift does the human being realize their dependence on God but also that this need is already fulfilled.

However, this dependency does not negate human moral freedom. Pattison points out that Kierkegaard asserts that the human-God relationship can only occur if freedom remains, "already in this discourse Kierkegaard points to the God-relationship as the only relationship in which this can happen in such a way that both giver and receiver retain their freedom."[160] Such an understanding of grace also implies that receiving the good and being in relation with God is always an incorporated part of human life. The possibility of being able to do the good is dependent on the gift from God. Pattison says:

> "The possibility of coming to be able to do good is, in other words, already present in our living, moving, and having our being in God, that is, in the life we "always already" have as creatures. To be the recipient of God's good gifts is therefore not something we shall only experience in that Promised Land to which God is leading us, but is the very condition of human existence. The condition that is given as the possibility of redemption is nothing other than the condition by which creation is maintained in being."[161]

[159] Pattison, "Philosophy and Dogma: the Testimony of an Upbuilding Discourse," 159.
[160] Pattison, "Philosophy and Dogma: the Testimony of an Upbuilding Discourse," 158-159.
[161] Pattison, "Philosophy and Dogma: the Testimony of an Upbuilding Discourse," 159.

Instead of looking forward to the good after death or in the promised afterlife of the Christian tradition, human beings are able and expected to enact the good already in the present age. The Kingdom of Heaven is not just an expectation but is already here on Earth.

As we see from the exegesis of the primary text as well as both Kangas' and Pattison's analyses, the gift of God is the gift of grace which allows a renewal of the human-divine relationship. I argue that the gift from God must first and foremost encompass grace. Grace is that which makes human salvation and forgiveness from their sins possible.[162] In the wake of the gift of grace, human experience is changed as possibilities become open. Before grace, human beings could not be forgiven for their sins, so salvation was closed to them. With grace, human beings have the opportunity for repentance and absolution – they can choose to do good over evil. However, this freedom only matters if choosing the good over evil results in a different consequence. As in *COA*, the freedom to choose the good over evil does not change the consequence of the fact that all human beings have undergone the fall into sin because of their anxiety. Already in that account, human beings are condemned to punishment and it is only through the Atonement that there can be a different outcome.

However, Kierkegaard does not outright say grace because grace cannot be learned from a discourse or even a sermon – it can only be experienced and only through the experience of the gift. The metaphor of the good father who gives his children gifts reflects the ultimately good God who also gives human beings the gift of the Good and therefore the ability to do the good. The metaphor can only be understood fully if the human being experiences receiving the good.

This is what is missing in Silentio and Haufniensis' account – they comment and observe the individual's choice to accept or reject the gift but have no access to the initial of the giver

[162] I am hesitant to attempt to provide a more technical definition of grace given that one of the arguments of this project is that grace cannot be understood from a theoretical perspective only.

giving the gift. Grace solves the problems raised in my first and second chapters about faith and anxiety respectively. Grace is what makes Abraham's faith possible as well as permits Abraham's attempted filicide and reconciliation. The salvation that anxiety gestures at is only possible because human beings *can* choose the good over evil, which is not possible in the initial account of anxiety and how it leads to the fall. Sin may be inevitable, but salvation becomes open as an opportunity because of grace. Neither pseudonym could discuss grace openly, however, because neither is speaking as an individual seeking the experience of the Christian earnestly – although both cite the Bible extensively. Human beings are must recognize their freedom and this freedom must encompass an awareness of human lack and dependence on the divine.

II. Grace and Freedom

This account also leaves open moral freedom because the individual is not forced to accept the gift. As Kierkegaard writes in his prefaces, he is seeking the reader who will understand his account, acknowledging that most of his audience may miss the point. The gift can be refused or misunderstood. However, without the giver giving the gift, the recipient lacks even the possibility to receive the gift. Such is the case of the relationship between grace and freedom. Grace must be first given before an individual may choose to accept or reject it. Freedom is important to this account and not simply a consequence of the gift because of Kierkegaard's repeated narrative in his prefaces. He is looking for one who will receive this message. Although the condition for the possibility of reception has to first be given, once it is given (by God) it must be taken up freely by the single individual. Because of grace, human beings are free to make moral choices – to choose between good and evil to use the language of *CoA*.

Only within the personal authorship does Kierkegaard clarify the emergence of moral freedom for human beings. He uses the pseudonyms to show that while humans have the freedom to choose between good and evil, this freedom must emerge externally to the human being. In the discourses, it becomes clear that freedom comes as part of the gift of grace from God. This discussion of freedom does not rationally prove the existence of freedom as such, but Kierkegaard is able to show through a gap in human knowledge to point to what lies beyond human rationality alone, i.e. the existence of freedom and grace and our relationship to God. Although human beings cannot directly prove the existence of grace, the experience of moral freedom points to its relevance within human life. This may be seen in the struggles that Silentio and Haufniensis have in discussing freedom and writing around the concept of grace, a problem that Kierkegaard is able to bypass through his use of Scripture and centering his explanation of grace not in knowledge but in experience: the experience the reader has in reading the pseudonyms as well as the general human experience of father-child relationships. Although grace must first come into being before moral freedom, within finite human experience, the individual recognizes their freedom before grace.[163]

The experience of the gift comes in the transformation of the human being, which they come to realize in examining their life. This shift is what is observed by Silentio in the moment before and after the leap of faith. The individual is radically shifted within the leap and is only aware of the change after the leap is performed. Silentio cannot explain what occurs in the moment of the leap, but he is able to point to its existence simply because the individual has become different in its aftermath.

[163] In this way, Kierkegaard performs for grace what Kant performs for the postulates. My thanks also to James Gillard for his contribution in this chapter and in particular in this paragraph.

Finally, what the gift brings results in human salvation, and the expectation of salvation represents human freedom. Humans do not have a choice of receiving the gift of salvation – it is a gift that will manifest, but they have the freedom concerning how they respond to this gift. salvation. Kierkegaard in this discourse makes clear the different responses that humans may have towards salvation, whether to reject it or to expect it with earnestness. The wish for salvation is considered in Kierkegaard's age to be frivolous, a way of speaking. The experience of expectancy is transformative for the human being – their goals and actions in life are altered in anticipation of salvation. It is in this anticipation that freedom remains. This too is transformative as it changes how humans relate to one another and to the world at large.

The experience of expecting salvation leads to doubt as it is an experience that is not comparable to other human experiences. The risk of the expectation of salvation is to focus on the finite. Although the finite is important and remains even in grace, finitude is limited and in focusing only on the finite, the human being risks misunderstanding grace, "he does not in turn expect God's grace by virtue of some finite condition, because then it is not grace, and then the concern will also quickly turn into earthly security."[164] It is here that we risk falling into the same trap as the pseudonyms. This is not to say that the chosen actions of the individual who is expecting salvation is what saves them. Kierkegaard asserts at the end of the discourse that grace is what makes salvation possible, "even our good deeds are nothing but human fabrications, fragile and very ambiguous, but every person has heaven's salvation only by the grace and mercy of God."[165]

In discussing the gift, Kierkegaard sidesteps the problems that plague his pseudonyms as he is able to discuss the concept of grace, which transforms the human individual. Grace comes

[164] Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 268.
[165] Kierkegaard, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, 271.

from the Christian God and is the key to salvation. Furthermore, the language of the gift allows for the possibility of human freedom. A gift is given by God to human beings, but humans have the freedom to respond to the gift – either to accept or reject. If they accept the gift, they are also able to choose to act morally good in the future as they are no longer hampered by sin. This message is not necessarily philosophically or theologically radical, but Kierkegaard takes what is a standard Protestant Christian message and explains it in a way that emphasizes its radicality and true difficulty to comprehend. By using the pseudonyms to show how difficult freedom is and what is flawed in certain approaches of addressing freedom, he is able to set up and show the connection between freedom and grace. The concerns of *Fear and Trembling* and *The Concept of Anxiety* are resolved in the upbuilding discourses as they show that while human freedom is crucial for salvation, it must first be ignited by an act of something utterly foreign to the human, that is called grace.

Conclusion

My project is concerned with the concept of moral freedom as it appears in Kierkegaard's early pseudonymous and personal authorship. Kierkegaard's Christianity influenced his teachings, and, accordingly, my thesis is that we will discover the full significance of his concept of freedom in relation to his understanding of grace. Because human beings are finite and limited, their free choice does not come from their own capacities. Rather, according to the Kierkegaard, the ability to make the free leap comes from divine grace, which allows human beings to transform from beings bound by natural inclination to those with reason and free will. Grace explains how this leap out of sinfulness is possible, and it allows human beings to make the leap that is inexplicable to reason. Kierkegaard argues in his personal authorship that we are restricted by our natural inclinations and the limitations of reason, but we can make the choice to do the good because of divine grace.

The objective of my project has been to show that there is moral freedom within Kierkegaard's writings. I have focused on his early authorship – both personal and pseudonymous. These pseudonymous writings portray how human beings observe and enact their freedom, but they leave obscure why this freedom is possible. The personal writings show that human beings are given moral freedom through grace from God. For my primary sources, I focused on *Fear and Trembling*, *The Concept of Anxiety*, and *The Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*. I also used *The Point of View*, his posthumously published autobiography, as a source to elucidate how Kierkegaard himself approached his writing and its narrative arc.

I have used *FT* and *COA* to show the gaps in Kierkegaard's understanding of freedom and how his account cannot be whole if the focus is only on the human. The discourses show what is the missing to moral freedom – that is divine grace. With this project, I resolve the

question of how moral freedom is possible for Kierkegaard as well as challenge the notion that there is a strict distinction between his pseudonyms and personal publications.

Given that I only focused on the early years of Kierkegaard's writings, there are many more text on the topic of freedom. The most evident one is *Sickness unto Death*, but other scholars have recommended looking at *Practice in Christianity* and the later discourses such as "The Lilies of the Valley." There is more to delve into the topic of freedom in those text, and there could also interesting comparisons of how Kierkegaard discusses freedom in his early works verses in his later works and why might there be this shift as he progressed in his life. Although he maintains that his main question does not change throughout his authorship, there is tonal and content shifts in his writing before and after the publication of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, and these are worth pursuing further.

Another connection that I referenced in my first chapter but did not go into are the connections and references that Kierkegaard makes to philosophers of his time period: most famously Kant and Hegel but also perhaps more importantly scholars embroiled in the Pantheism Controversy such as Jacobi and Lessing. I have noted in my first chapter all the ways that Kierkegaard is responding to Kant and Lessing in *FT*. Although I do not reference this in my project, it is very well known that traditional existentialists such as Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus are very influenced by Kierkegaard. The leap of faith occurs several times more in Kierkegaard's authorship, and more can be done on connecting Kierkegaard's leap to both his predecessor (Lessing) and successor (Camus) who pick up on this motif. In his essay, "The Myth of Sisyphus," Camus also references the leap and cites it directly from Kierkegaard in considering the question of philosophical suicide. What is striking to me is that both Lessing and Camus stand in opposition to Christianity and faith and yet they are connected through

Kierkegaard's leap of faith. Sartre as well is incredibly influenced by Kierkegaard's concept of freedom, which is evident in *Being and Nothingness*. Although this is not a novel revelation, I see further scholarship on Sartre's reception of Kierkegaard in light of the latter's adherence to not only the divine but a direct divine-human relationship through grace.

Lastly, as I have observed in my third chapter, scholars such as Tietjen and Hartshorne already advocate for reading the authorships in relation to one another. This approach is not novel, but I believe that it can shed further light to other questions within Kierkegaard scholarship not just moral freedom. Kierkegaard purposefully separated his authorship into two sections because he was afraid that his words would be overlooked if he communicated directly. Instead, he wanted to follow in the greater Western pedagogical tradition of Socrates of guiding the reader to the answer instead. Understanding Kierkegaard's narrative and methodology can be an important tool in how we think about discourse, communication, and pedagogy. Kierkegaard is often considered a poet, a theologian, and a philosopher. I believe that further work on how he sets up his authorship and publications can elucidate how we understand education and philosophical communication.

This project has also expanded upon the question of the source of moral freedom within 19th century continental thought. It connects philosophy to theology and shows that the theological concept of grace is incredibly important to understanding moral freedom in Kierkegaard. The distinction between the philosophical and the theological is an artificial separation for Kierkegaard scholarship. I have shown that any philosophical discussion of moral freedom in Kierkegaard is incomplete without also examining the theological. Secondly, this project addresses a methodological question on how scholars might view holistically Kierkegaard's writing. I have shown the missing pieces that Kierkegaard omitted from *Fear and*

Trembling and *The Concept of Anxiety* and how certain approaches and ways of thinking are not fully sufficient to address the question of moral freedom.

Finally, I have shown that any distinction made between the philosophical and theological within Kierkegaard is artificially drawn, and that Kierkegaard himself sees no diction. The question of moral freedom is irresolvable when the focus is only on the human. He shows in *FT* and *COA* the pitfalls of only looking at the finite human as he is unable to fully explain how freedom is possible in these accounts. Instead, he can only point to language as such as the "leap" as a way to address what cannot be discussed directly. Given that this is Kierkegaard's own aim and also the inability to fully understand him without the so-called religious writings, the religious must be taken into account when reading Kierkegaard.

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