

Either/Or

Aestheticism

boredom is the root of all evil; it is ruinous for humanity
idleness is not boredom; on the contrary it is a divine life
(the gods and beautiful women are idle by not bored)

the **rotation method** can be used to overcome boredom
one can either "change the field" or "change the crop and cultivate"
the former is extensive, whereas the latter is intensive

changing the field defeats itself; it is plain endlessness supported by illusion
one is constantly moving around or changing things
e.g. leaving the country for the city, changing silver dishes to gold

Kierkegaard suggests changing the crop and mode of cultivation
it involves the principle of limitation, the "only saving principle in the world"
the more you limit yourself, the more fertile you become in invention
e.g. prisoners in solitary confinement can be entertained merely by a spider

every change in the mode of cultivation involves remembering and forgetting
the ability to forget is conditioned upon the method of remembering
one must not permit their memories to vanish completely
ordinarily, people wish to forget only what is unpleasant, not what is pleasant
if they allow this, it will pay a visit in an unexpected moment
thus one must not forget them absolutely, but forget them for the sake of remembering

poetic memory is being creative with your own past; remembering what you want to remember
experience undergoes a transformation, losing all of its painful aspects
to remember in this manner, one must be careful how he lives and enjoys
enjoying an experience to its full intensity makes it impossible to remember or forget

remembering and forgetting insures against sticking fast
it also makes it possible to realize a complete **freedom**

one must never enter into friendship, and guard against marriage
especially take care not to enter relationships with the possibility of many members
when you are one of several, you have lost your freedom
marriage brings one into fatal connection with custom and tradition
it also causes you to stick fast because your spouse remembers what you forget

Ethical

your life is a masquerade; nobody has succeeded in knowing you
you are nothing but a relation to others, and what you are is by virtue of this relation

the ethical perspective says man must find a unifying power of personality
you must acquire a self; you become a self, you were not born a self

the **choices** you make form what you are, according to the ethical personality
ethical: there is a self to be forged that comes out of the choices that we make

the choices we make always affect who we are

arbitrary: we do not want a self to come about; point of existence is freedom/ability to choose
there are really no choices in the aesthetic; choosing is an expression of the ethical

arbitrary person spends all their time avoiding certain choices because they are merely choices
ethical person says choices are never merely choices

similar to a ship: by not turning, one is still choosing to go in a certain direction

arbitrary person has nothing to reveal, and thus cannot be loved

ethical person can be loved because there is something that can be revealed

recognizing the importance of a decision is how you know how to make the decision
children are aesthetic, but once they mature, things they do make a difference
in life you must make choices that are meaningful

Fear and Trembling is the story of **Abraham**

most people think that by considering the outcome of the story they will be moved to believe
however, they are really swindling God out of the first movement of faith: infinite resignation

We don't understand what Abraham went through for three days; how is this possible?

Abraham couldn't have lied to Isaac because then he would have been deceptive

But he couldn't tell Isaac the truth because that would destroy Isaac's faith in God

He couldn't lie to himself because that would destroy his choice

Kierkegaard says this cannot possibly have happened

*Kierkegaard says we have paradox and we have resolution
what Abraham did had no solution*

Faith/Absurd

Would it not be better to stop with faith?

Hegel wants to go further; he wants to get past Providence

movements of faith must be made by virtue of absurd

God is beyond our understanding, thus he is absurd

Knight of Infinite Resignation/Knight of Faith

the knight of infinite resignation prepares the way for the knight of faith

he gives up the finite in return for the infinite

drained the cup of life's sadness for the bliss of the infinite
(Kierkegaard gave up Regina for the sake of God)
in order for Abraham to give up the finite, he had to kill Isaac

the knight of faith gives up the finite, but also trusts that he will receive it all back
his trust is based on the strength of the absurd
(the absurd is that which contradicts reason itself)
faith is required to believe in the absurd

faith in the absurd manifests itself in Abraham's belief that he would kill his son, but would nevertheless receive him again in his lifetime

infinite resignation requires strength, energy, and freedom
movements of faith are beyond our own strength; they require God
its within my power of understanding to make movements of infinite understanding
but after the movement of resignation, by virtue of the absurd to get everything--is beyond human power, it is a prodigy

once we've given up the finite its gone; it is beyond human power to have faith
our reason cannot make us understand the movement of faith
faith isn't just saying you believe in God, it is action

Teleological Suspension of the Ethical

the ethical as such is the universal; it applies to everyone at every instant
it is its own purpose; it does not have a purpose beyond itself
the ethical is our aim, it is what we are all about

Particular Individuals is the particular which has its telos in the universal
its task is to abolish its particularity in order to become universal
after the individual realizes the ethical, they cannot regress to be aesthetic
when a person does so, they are sinning; returning to particularity from universal

one realizes his duties at the ethical stage
there is a universal duty to not kill
was Abraham going to commit a sin by killing Isaac?

can there be a higher purpose than the ethical?
yes! Abraham was fulfilling a particular religious duty
now we have come to **Individuals as Particulars**
the religious have a personal relationship with God

there is a teleological end for humans beyond the ethical
but the purposes of the ethical do not disappear

it is impossible for anyone to understand what Abraham is doing
once Abraham speaks, he is using universal language
thus what he is doing cannot be expressed, and he cannot be understood like tragic heroes
paradox: he places himself, a single individual, in an absolute relation to the absolute
he is not justified by anything universal, but precisely by being a single individual

what he is acting for is above the universal
had Abraham decided not to kill his son, he would be sinning

Tragic Heroes are the ethical counterpart to the religious knight of faith
he gives himself over completely to the universal
gives up what he values most for the sake of the universal
unlike the knight of faith, the tragic hero can be understood

Agamemnon resigned himself to the loss of his daughter, Iphigenia
he sacrificed her so the Greeks could win the Trojan War
they killed them for the good of the people, and thus can be understood and wept

Temptation

when one draws on a lower stage of life instead of a higher
Abraham is tempted by the ethical: could choose to take the ethical rather than religious path

Philosophical Fragments

the problem of truth?

for **Socrates**, all learning is recollecting what we already know
Socrates is not a teacher, he is a midwife
a midwife does not create a baby, she just helps get the baby out
Socrates doesn't have the truth, he just helps get the truth out

Socrates says every human essentially knows everything
everyone has access to the truth, its just a matter of remembering

the actual moment in time you learned something is insignificant
the **Moment** is when the God emerges within history
everything before and after is different once this happened

the incarnation of God is the true teacher because it brings something new into history
it is a unique truth that cannot be understood except at the moment it happened

this Moment is an actual historical moment, but at the same time it is eternal

the eternal becomes temporal, which makes it a paradox
the meaning of temporality came in that Moment when the eternal arose
history was fundamentally changed from that time on

Love

one cannot love in the aesthetic because there is no "self" to reveal
love is the revelation of the self

the king and the humble maiden
they cannot understand each other because one is above the other
this is the problem with God and human beings
God is much higher than humans, so can God love humans?

the only way to have true love is for the divine to descend to the human level
God must become a human being; he must incarnate
any other way would be deceptive in the eye of love

the king cannot bring the maiden up to his status
that would alter her, which means you do not love her the same way

thus it is a paradox because God becomes a human, but it is still God
love can only be accomplished by way of incarnation
this is because that person is eternal and temporal at the same time

Truth is Subjectivity

objective thinkers find truth through approximation
subjective thinkers find it through appropriation

faith cannot be attained by approximation; but only by appropriation or acceptance of uncertainty
it is a state of objective uncertainty where the individual affirms his subjectivity
similarly, faith must be surrendered in order to be objective

truth is a paradox, because it is objectively defined as subjectivity

subjectivity is the truth when you realize that rationality fails
when you have run to the limit of your concepts

subjective truth has to do with the passions
when we've stuck in the objective and subjective, we come to a resolve
possibility is