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Kierkegaard and Bloch on Hope

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Kierkegaard and Bloch on Hope

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Résumé

L'espoir, ce résidu du vase (πίθος) de Pandore, a été soumis aux jugements ambivalents de la philosophie. Bien que l'espoir puisse être considéré comme une forme de vœu pieux qui nous trompe ou comme une attitude qui contribue à l'action morale, le verdict concernant son affiliation avec les malheurs et les épreuves qui frappent l'humanité est toujours en attente. La question, au préalable de tout jugements, qui continue de faciliter ce procès ne peut être formulée de manière plus simple : qu'est-ce que l'espoir? Søren Kierkegaard et Ernst Bloch ont consacré une partie importante de leurs écrits pour aider à clarifier une telle question. Or, que peut apporter la comparaison entre un existentialiste chrétien et un matérialiste spéculatif sur le sujet de l'espoir? Loin de déboucher sur une plaisanterie, une comparaison de leurs concepts révèle comment l'espoir contribue à la critique, à l'action, et ultimement, à la rédemption. Malgré les différences substantielles entre ce qu'ils soutiennent comme l'objet de l'espoir, ils partagent certaines caractérisations de l'espoir qui sont philosophiquement saillantes. Contre l'affirmation selon laquelle l'espoir nous induit en erreur, ils soutiennent que l'espoir nous donne la chance de rompre avec les idées dominantes du statu quo. Cette distance nous offre une expérience nouvelle et critique des problèmes auxquels nous sommes confrontés, tout en pointant vers la possibilité de leur rectification. Contrairement aux émotions édifiantes ou aux humeurs comme la joie et l'optimisme naïf, Kierkegaard et Bloch soutiennent que l'espoir doit être décidé quant à ses attentes. L'espoir implique alors notre résolution d'anticiper et de contribuer à la possibilité de la rédemption. Enfin, l'espoir est considéré comme rédempteur en soi sous forme d'une lutte pour la possibilité - *car sans possible, pour ainsi dire on ne respire pas*.

Mots-clés : Philosophie, espoir, rédemption, intériorité, dialectique, possibilité

Abstract

Hope, that residue of Pandora's jar (πίθος), has been the subject of ambivalent philosophical judgments. Pit against being considered a form of wishful thinking that is misleading or an attitude that contributes to moral action, the verdict concerning hope's affiliation with the illnesses and hardships that befall humanity is still pending. The question, preceding any judgment, that continues to facilitate this trial can be formulated in no simpler way: what is hope? Søren Kierkegaard and Ernst Bloch dedicated a significant portion of their authorship to help clarify such a question. Yet, what can a comparison between a Christian existentialist and a speculative materialist deliver on the topic of hope? Far from leading to the butt of a joke, a comparison of their work reveals how hope may contribute to critique, action, and ultimately, redemption. Despite the substantial differences between their objects of hope, they share certain characterizations of hope that remain philosophically salient. Against the claim that hope is misguided, they argue that hope affords us the chance to break away from the dominant ideas of the status quo. The distance affords us a new and critical experience of the issues we face, while anticipatively pointing towards what may redeem them. Distinguished from uplifting emotions or moods like joy and naïve optimism, Kierkegaard and Bloch argue that hope must be resolute about its expectation. Hope then involves our decision to anticipate and contribute to the possibility of our redemption. Lastly, hope is argued to be redemptive in itself as a struggle for possibility–*for without possibility, a person seems unable to breathe*.

Keywords : Philosophy, hope, redemption, interiority, dialectics, possibility

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations will refer to their corresponding publications. Complete references to the publications are offered in the bibliography.

CA	*The Concept of Anxiety* (1980)
CUP	*Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments vol.1* (1992)
EE-KK	*Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks: Volume 2 EE-KK* (2008)
EO1	*Either/Or Part 1* (1987)
EO2	*Either/Or Part II* (1987)
EUD	*Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* (1990)
FT	*Fear and Trembling* (1983)
JP F-K	*Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers Volume 2, F-K* (1970)
NB26-30	*Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks: Volume 9 NB26-NB30* (2017)
NB31-36	*Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks: Volume 10 NB31-NB36* (2018)
PF	*Philosophical Fragments* (1985)
PH1	*The Principle of Hope vol. 1* (1995)
PH2	*The Principle of Hope vol. 2* (1995)
PH3	*The Principle of Hope vol. 3* (1995)
SUD	*The Sickness Unto Death* (1980)
TA	*Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Age, A Literary Review* (2009)
UDVS	*Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (1993)
WL	*Works of Love* (1998)

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Introduction to the Question: What is Hope?

From the *Canon of Pure Reason*, "What may I hope?" is Kant's formulation for the third fundamental question of philosophy (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A805 B833). This is quite surprising given the meager space occupied by hope in the annals of Western philosophy. But what is truly surprising is that Western philosophers, the *redeemers* of truth, have not extensively discussed the hope that seems to be constitutive of philosophical questioning.[1] In response to Kant's third question, I inquire in the manner of Pontius Pilate: "What is hope?"

To this end, Peter E. Gordon's account of Adorno's relationship to Kierkegaard, in *Adorno and Existence*, provides an intriguing point of entry to the question:

> Because Kierkegaard embraced the absurdity of Christian truth against worldly knowledge, he represented the intellectual's capacity to think *against* mere existence and against the empirically given. The norms of public life that Kierkegaard disdained were those that conspired against the "possibility of anything radically new." For the task of the genuine Christian, Adorno argued, was to sustain *hope*, a hope which Kierkegaard had defined as "the sense for... possibility." But insofar as the critical intellectual according to Adorno is to hold open *possibility* against existence, then Kierkegaard's idea of hope preserved not only a critical but even a utopian meaning... Such arguments may suggest a certain affinity between Adorno and Ernst Bloch, whose three-volume *Principle of Hope* (1938-1947) also invoked Kierkegaard in its complex history of utopian thought. (Gordon 2016, 33)

Setting aside the question concerning the 'affinity' between Adorno and Bloch, the potential contact between the concepts of hope belonging to Kierkegaard and Bloch is perhaps more than just intriguing. It dwells on an aspect of hope that has not been emphasized by philosophers as

[1] Against the familiar adage that 'wisdom begins in wonder', we can argue that wonder, alone, actually stifles knowledge–therefore wisdom. To recall Spinoza's definition of wonder from his definitions of the affects, "[w]onder is an imagination of a thing in which the mind remains fixed because this singular imagination has no connection with the others." (*Ethics*, II/191) A certain kind of hope can be thought to participate in the 'erotic' escalation to truth, a striving that is uncertain about whether or not the truth will or can be attained. That is, hope seems to be involved in the process of coming to know what was previously not known.

much as, say, the relation between desire, belief, and hope,[2] or the difference between particular ('I hope *that*') and general hope (i.e. Gabriel Marcel).

Bringing us closer to the central question of the dissertation, what Adorno came to admire in Kierkegaard was that he held possibility open by thinking against existence. This is also what Bloch's project intended to realize. How this concerns hope can be explained in the following way: the situation of hope is one in which the current flow of events are thought to be wrong or to be driving towards catastrophe. Without any obstinate threat, hope would not have the occasion to manifest itself–we do not hope if nothing seems to be going wrong or seems to be in need of correction. So hope emerges as the expected redemption of current circumstances. This requires a 'break' or a 'rupture' with current states of affairs. Finally, it is the *moment* in which and through which hope manifests itself that is called into question here. How does hope distance itself from the present in a way that *can* restore any possibility for redemption?

Furthermore, the concepts of hope belonging to the "basically honest Kierkegaard" (PH1,72) and Bloch have received less attention in the English speaking world than what they are, perhaps, due. As such, they should be further investigated. Though we may ask what hope means according to both Kierkegaard and Bloch, it would be more fruitful to pursue their distinctive arguments about how we are to achieve redemption. From such a vantage point, the concerns that motivate each author and culminate in their different concepts of hope can be laid bare, allowing for dialogue between them. The guiding questions of the dissertation address how are we to achieve redemption according to Kierkegaard and Bloch, and what they, in turn, redeem for the concept of hope.

[2] Contemporary examples include R.S. Downie and J.P. Day. Otherwise, these relations have been explored by Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, and Kant–to offer but a few.

A Note on Redemption

Redemption broadly refers to the act or process through which someone is freed from captivity or punishment.[3] Its Latin root, *redimere* (to buy back), centers on a required payment. The emphasis is most apparent when we speak of the redemption of a slave, of a prize, or the 'redeeming power' of the flowers that are thought to make one fall back into a beloved's good graces. In short, redemption in the strict sense of *redimere* is a purchased deliverance.

Against this etymological root, the contemporary use of redemption draws less on a required 'purchase'. Redeeming oneself can be thought to come at the 'cost' of an apology or a promise to do better in the future. A disobedient child is redeemed after receiving a penalty and promising to obey. The pecuniary aspect of redemption has been attenuated to a transaction that might deem an apology to be a sufficient bargaining chip. By relaxing the stipulation of a monetary exchange, redemption becomes nearly synonymous with salvation, despite the fact that they are strictly distinguished according to theological doctrines. To facilitate the effort of finding correlates in Kierkegaard and Bloch's work, redemption, unlike *redimere*, will be broadly understood as the process of making right what was formerly wrong.

What could be remarked from this broad definition is its emphasis on 'correction'. To redeem something is to make it right where it was wrong. Although the process can be understood as good in itself, we would not speak of redemption without presupposing that something needed correction in the first place. An exciting musical performance can be thought to 'redeem' the mediocre one that preceded it. Though the exciting act can be considered good in itself, we emphasize the fact that it somehow emended or even excused the former one when we call it a 'redeeming' performance. In the relevant sense, redemption involves the process through

[3] *OED*, entry 'redemption'.

which something that was previously wrong is made right, not the process through which something becomes good. This particular definition of redemption provides a salient way of delimiting what counts as redemption for Kierkegaard and for Bloch while keeping questions concerning the realization of the ‘highest good’ separate. As a final note, to ask what redemption means for Kierkegaard and Bloch will also involve the question about the situation that requires correction according to each author, what will be referred to as the ‘site of redemption’.

What now shall we call such a Teacher, one who restores the lost condition and gives the learner the Truth? Let us call him *Saviour*, for he saves the learner from his bondage and from himself; let us call him *Redeemer*, for he redeems the learner from the captivity into which he plunged himself, and no captivity is so terrible and impossible to break, as that in which the individual keeps himself.

- Johannes Climacus, *Philosophical Fragments*

1. Kierkegaard's Concept of Hope

Three separate inquiries will guide my exegesis of Kierkegaard's concept of hope. First and foremost, to clarify the condition that gives rise to hope for Kierkegaard, the question concerning the site of redemption must be addressed. An overview of what Kierkegaard thinks is in need of redemption will also help clarify what hope opposes. A reconstruction of Kierkegaard's concept of hope will subsequently be developed around the topics of hope as a form of expectation, the dialectic that belongs to hope, and the object that hope comes to expect in its most mature form. The three topics figure into Kierkegaard's clearest formulation of hope, that "to relate oneself expectantly to the possibility of the good is to hope" (WL, 249). On this basis, I will then consider the merits of hope according to Kierkegaard.

To pause for a brief comment on Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship, my reading of Kierkegaard rests on the weak assumption that a small number of specific issues ground Kierkegaard's authorship. His concern with how academic Hegelianism and Christianity in 19th-century Denmark tended to subsume the individual into a historical process provides an example of an issue that can safely be assumed to be central for Kierkegaard's authorship. Granted such an assumption, my methodology consists in citing or referring to passages that coherently reflect the overarching concerns that belong to his authorship. To facilitate the effort, my starting point will consider texts that Kierkegaard published under his own name, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* (EUD) and *The Works of Love* (WL). Journals and notes will be referred to when Kierkegaard decisively pronounces himself on certain issues.

1.1 The Site of Redemption for Kierkegaard

Redemption is undoubtedly an eschatological concept for Kierkegaard. Though sometimes reserved as an epithet of Jesus Christ (the Savior and Redeemer) (EUD, 478; WL, 3 and 69), Kierkegaard uses the term to describe individuals who redeem themselves by gaining renewed motivation and interest from a formerly indifferent or quiescent state. From "Patience in Expectancy", Kierkegaard remarks that:

> if a person's soul comes to a standstill in the monotony of self-concern and self-preoccupation, then he is bordering on soul rot unless the contemplation stirs and moves him. Then if he is moved, if he, who lays like a paralytic and invalid, gained strength in the moment of contemplation to pull himself together but complete healing did not follow immediately, it nevertheless will always be a blessing for him that he was moved and stirred, since only in this is there redemption, sometimes at once, sometimes gradually. (EUD, 207)[4]

Redemption opposes the 'standstill' of a 'paralytic' soul that is too focused on itself, whether in self-concern or self-preoccupation. In other terms, redemption is gained in the movement that opposes despair. From the *The Sickness Unto Death* (SUD), Anti-Climacus argues that, whether in despair 'to will not to be oneself' or 'to will to be oneself' before God,[5] individuals fail to relate themselves to the power that established them, which is to say that despairing individuals fail to appropriate Christianity (SUD, 52-53, 61, and 70). Despair is inertial since it marks a failure of the *self* to synthesize its constituents: finitude with infinitude, necessity with possibility, and temporality with eternity. The individual fails to become a self, thereby failing to gain freedom, so long as she or he is in despair. Subject to the relevant sense of redemption, it would be intuitive to consider despair as the site of redemption for Kierkegaard.

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[4] This claim is mirrored in the *Works of Love* when Kierkegaard claims that "a need is felt for a refreshing, enlivening breeze, a mighty gale, that could cleanse the air and dispel the poisonous vapors, a need for the rescuing movement of a great event that rescues by moving what is standing still" (WL, 246).

[5] What it means to be 'before God' for Kierkegaard is to be aware of to have the concept of God. To despair before God is to resign or defy faith after one has been presented with Christian doctrine (SUD, 77-78).

However, there is a more fundamental condition that requires redemption. What can be observed in Anti-Climacus's formulation of despair is an echo of the biblical story of the Fall:

> The misrelation of despair is not a simple misrelation but a misrelation in a relation that relates itself to itself and has been established by another, so that the misrelation in that relation which is for itself also reflects itself infinitely in the relation to the power that established it. (SUD, 14)

The story of Adam and Eve presents the first instance where a misrelation reflected itself infinitely before God, the power that established the first human beings. By positing evil through sin, the individual, like Adam, comes to be ignored by God, *damned*, a fate that Vigilius Haufniensis characterizes as dismal even for those who are evil given that even evil cannot do without God (CA, 111-112 footnote).[6] If sinful individuals are ignored by God, it is not because sin is negative or privative (CA, 111; SUD, 96-100). Rather, Kierkegaard understands sin as a position, an 'unwarranted' actuality, for which God's punishment is ignorance (Malantschuk 2003, 207-208). Original sin, which can only be posited through an individual act (CA, 32-35), separates the individual from God. In turn, the separation causes the misrelation of the self that characterizes despair. Original sin must then be understood as the cause of despair. Given that sin presupposes itself according to Kierkegaard in the same way that freedom does (CA, 32), there is no concept that holds priority over sin to explain why individuals must be redeemed.[7] Despair certainly resists hope when the individual is made aware of her or his offense before God. Nonetheless, for Kierkegaard, we require redemption because we have sinned.

Kierkegaard's fundamental claim is that original sin, which causes despair, makes redemption necessary (FT, 16-23 and 122-123; CA, 155-162; SUD, 122-124). There are more

[6] To further support the claim, in a journal written in 1852, Kierkegaard claims that "[God] calls upon [men], he wants to exist for them and that they should exist for him—while, in the disfavor of his infinite loftiness, he punishes the ungodly by ignoring them." (NB26-30, 62)

[7] Kierkegaard is quite intent to reject the notion that the cause of sin is *concupiscence*, inordinate desire or appetite. He makes no appeals to meta-psychological concepts to explain the necessity of original sin. However, of course, Kierkegaard does offer a psychological examination of the state that precedes original sin: anxiety.

than moral-psychological reasons for why Kierkegaard supposes that individuals seek redemption from their state of sin (i.e. liberation from anxiety, despair, guilt, and suffering). From the religious standpoint, sin threatens the individual to eternal damnation. Viewed philosophically, to be a sinner is to be in untruth (PF, 15).[8] Hope is then a concept belonging to the category of the individual for Kierkegaard, one that accounts for the relation between the individual and the possibility of her or his redemption from sin and its consequences.

1.2 Kierkegaardian Hope

i. Hope as Expectation

Although hope figures into Kierkegaard's numerous discussions of the 'expectancy of faith' in the *EUD* of 1843-1844, it is described most explicitly in the *WL* published in 1847. The *WL* is a particularly important collection of Kierkegaard's edifying discourses because it reflects some of the arguments presented by Johannes Climacus in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscripts* of 1846, a text which has come to be known as Kierkegaard's most thorough philosophical effort. Within the chapter "Love Hopes All Things—and Yet Is Never Put to Shame", inspired by 1 Corinthians 13:7, Kierkegaard claims from the outset that "to relate oneself expectantly to the possibility of the good is to hope" (WL, 249).

Fundamentally, hope is defined as an individual's relation to possibility. The relation is qualified as one of expectation, which admits three distinctive modes for Kierkegaard. Mere expectation, or 'indifferent' [*ligegyldig*] expectation, is found in individuals who equally expect the possibility of the good or evil (WL, 249-250). To 'merely expect' is to be uncommitted, to

[8] There are two justifications that Kierkegaard could offer for why sin, considered philosophically, is untruth. For one, sin marks a contradiction between ideality and actuality. From a different angle, to sin is to resist the truth, or more accurately, to willingly forfeit the condition for understanding and appropriating the truth of Christianity that has been presented in the moment. Both cases reveal that sin is a movement that pulls the individual away from God or from the paradox of faith. Given that the paradox is the truth of Christianity, any turn away from it would, philosophically, be considered 'untruth', a movement that resists the appropriation of the truth.

not choose whether good or evil will obtain. Just as we sometimes indifferently weigh the possible fates of competing sports teams—the only grace of dull games, to *merely* expect is to observe possibilities without choosing to expect any of the possible outcomes we foresee—so mere expectation is uncommitted.[9] On the other hand, Kierkegaard argues that the person who hopes 'chooses' to expect the good whereas the person who fears 'chooses' to expect evil. The three modes of expectation—hope, fear, and mere expectation—are grounded on the individual's choice to expect the good, evil, or both equally, which is to say neither.

Hope is then a mode of expectation. But Kierkegaard does not mean 'expectation' in the sense of a belief about contingent future events. In the epistemic sense, an expectation is a judgment concerning the probability of an event. Bearing strictly on a cognitive act, epistemic expectation comes closest to what Kierkegaard means by mere expectation, "to relate oneself to the possible purely and simply as such" (WL, 249). Reminiscent of the polemic raised by Johannes Climacus against the abstraction inherent to objective or speculative thought, a person is divested from the outcomes she or he evaluates (CUP, 193).[10] While calculating probabilities, a person 'equally' expects one outcome or the other, not in the sense that each is judged equal in its 'relative frequency', but in the sense that each outcome is indifferently regarded as one possibility among others. Where mere expectation was argued to be 'uncommitted' for Kierkegaard, epistemic expectation is also *disinterested*. It lacks both commitment and personal

[9] This very lack of commitment to possibility is how Kierkegaard characterizes the person who despairs: "Despair collapses and now sometimes uses possibility as a diverting stimulant, that is, if one can be diverted by the inconstant, futile, weird phantasmal flashes of possibility [...] Coldly and defiantly the person in despair refuses to hope with regard to the other person, even less to work for the possibility of good in him; but it amuses the person in despair to have the other person's fate flutter in possibility before him, no matter whether it is the possibility of hope or of fear. It amuses him to play with the fate of the other person, to imagine one possibility after another, to seesaw him in the air, so to speak, while he himself, haughty and unloving, scorns the whole affair" (WL, 254-255).

[10] Note the instance of the term 'indifferent' in the following passage: "The way to the objective truth goes away from the subject, and while the subject and subjectivity become indifferent [*ligegyldig*], the truth also becomes indifferent, and that is precisely its objective validity [*Gyldighed*], because the interest, just like the decision, is subjectivity" (CUP, 193).

interest in the outcomes that are evaluated. According to Johannes Climacus, what could be called a purely epistemic expectation has the effect of neutralizing the ethical value of both outcomes for the individual. He argues in the *CUP* that since objective thought is concerned with 'what' is said as opposed to 'how' it is said, "[f]rom the objective point of view, there is no infinite decision, and thus it is objectively correct that the distinction between good and evil is canceled" (CUP, 203). Expectation in the epistemic sense accounts for part of what Kierkegaard means by mere expectation: expectation that, beyond lacking commitment, is also disinterested.

Instead, Kierkegaard understands expectation in a way that stresses anticipation—call it the existential sense of expectation (WL, 250-252; EUP, 218-219 and 259-260). The person who hopes essentially anticipates the good because the modality of its expectation is characterized by a choice to expect what is good.[11] Consider Kierkegaard's distinction in the *WL* between the sagacious person who abandons hope and the loving father. The sagacious person despairs because anything could happen, so the good is not guaranteed. Sagacity then makes it a maxim to abandon hope and to abstain from anticipating anything particular (WL, 251, 254, and 257). In strict contrast, Kierkegaard describes the loving father who hopefully stands by his prodigal son. At the feet of his son's deathbed, the loving father hopes 'all things' for him because so long as there is still time, salvation remains possible for him. Faced with the possibilities of the son's damnation or salvation, the father chooses to hope (WL, 221 and 263). His behavior reveals that he expects his son to be saved during his eleventh hour. The persistence of his tendency to love and hope for his son should be understood as an anticipation of his son's salvation.

[11] Mark Bernier aptly notes that, from Kierkegaard's treatment of Anna in "Patience in Expectancy" of the EUD, the 'expectation' of hope can be conceived as a kind of 'waiting' for the good (Bernier 2015, 90). If expectation is qualified as a kind of 'anticipation' here, rather than 'waiting', it is because Kierkegaard treats hope, just like faith and anxiety, as ways in which the individual is educated. To 'wait' can mean that one does nothing while expecting the good. In addition, someone could simply 'wait', neither for this nor that outcome. Anticipation involves an action (i.e. preparation) that is directed towards outcomes that are believed will occur.

From the polarized examples, expectation should be understood as having more to do with 'how' one expects rather than 'what' one expects. This existential understanding of expectation is especially important for Kierkegaard because hope, just like anxiety, must play the role of 'educating' the individual into Christianity (WL, 253).[12] To recall the standstill of despair, if hope were just a matter of calculating outcomes or 'waiting' for the good, then the individual would have no task to accomplish and would face another standstill.

To further qualify 'how' hope relates to its object, Kierkegaard distinguishes hope from wish, longing, or longing expectation. For simplicity's sake, the three can be collected under the rubric of the 'wish'. In the *WL*, Kierkegaard argues that the wish is "an expectant person's relationship to the possibility of multiplicity. When hope is understood in that way... it is easy enough for the youth and the child to hope, because the youth and the child themselves are still a possibility" (WL, 250). Though contrived as an example, a child 'wishes' to be a doctor one day and a lawyer the next, while the paths that can lead to such ends remain vague. No particular commitment has been made by the child despite the fact that multiple possibilities have been considered. Likewise, Kierkegaard draws on how the youth entertain multiple wishes without committing to any one of them when he argues that youthful wish is a form of mere expectation, one that considers any possibility to be as good as the next, or for the cynical, as bad as the next.

There is another aspect of wish, apart from the multiplicity of its objects, that distinguishes it from hope for Kierkegaard. Perseverance is also involved in hope. The case is made clear when Kierkegaard argues in the *WL* that "to hope is composed of the eternal and the temporal, and this is why the expression for hope's task in the form of eternity is to hope all

[12] On anxiety, Vigilius Haufniensis expresses that "[w]hoever is educated by anxiety is educated by possibility, and only he who is educated by possibility is educated according to his infinitude" (CA, 156).

things, and in the form of temporality to hope always" (WL, 249). Setting aside the question of how 'hoping for all things' is a matter of hoping for a singular object, we can only hope for a singular end if we are perseverant. Discontinuity in either what we expect or in our perseverance would reveal our 'hope' to be mere expectation. A similar argument is raised in the *CUP* by Johannes Climacus, who addresses how eternal happiness distinguishes itself from relative ends:

> the absolute τέλος [eternal happiness] has the remarkable quality of wanting to be the absolute τέλος at every moment. If, then, at the moment of resignation, of collecting oneself, of choice, an individual has understood this, it surely cannot mean that he is supposed to have forgotten it the next moment. (CUP, 401)

Kierkegaard's argument is that wish does not necessarily aim at a single highest good (the absolute telos), nor does it perseveringly expect the same object. When taken to its logical conclusion, hope for Kierkegaard must be 'eternal' given that it should be understood as the perseverant expectation of a single highest end (WL, 248). This means that hope must aim at an end that is unchangeable, an Archimedean point that should stretch beyond the individual's life into that of future generations. The analogy Kierkegaard draws for our relation to the future is of a sailor who looks up to the stars rather than the flux of waves for guidance (EUD, 19). As the stars provide fixed trajectories for the sailor, so too the eternal must stand for the individual. Any change in one's commitment or in the expected object reveals 'hope' to be mere expectation. Temporally, Kierkegaard maintains that to hope is *always* to expect the good.

ii. The Dialectic of Hope

But to 'always' expect the good suggests that there is always something to hope for—and indeed there is (EUP, 205-206 and 214; WL, 256-258; SUD, 7-8).[13] On Kierkegaard's account, *the eternal coincides in time as possibility*, and the eternal includes God, who is omnipotent (WL, 249; SUD, 39). One of his journal entries directly addresses the issue. Written a year later

[13] In the negative, he argues that "anyone who refuses to understand that the whole of one's life should be the time of hope is veritably in despair" (WL, 252).

than the *WL* in 1848, Kierkegaard expresses himself on the connection between the possibility for redemption and God's omnipotence: "[a]t all times there is a world of help possible, because for God everything is possible; if I have done something wrong ... there is at all times a world of help, because for God everything is possible." (EUD 478)

Grounded on the belief that for God, everything is possible, Kierkegaard treats the entire span of a life as a time for redemption. However, hope is neither immediately nor always eternal, as the case of the youth or worldly sagacity attests. What the youth and the sagacious hope for is not necessarily the highest good. Their hope also lacks perseverance. Furthermore, Kierkegaard even finds that ethical individuals[14] fail to have hope, in the fullest sense, despite the fact that the object they expect is seemingly constant and universal, pertaining to others as well as to themselves. True hope must then be the result of a dialectic of the *self,* a change that takes place within the individual qua individual, which is why Kierkegaard's definition of hope is precisely 'to relate *oneself* expectantly to the good' rather than 'to expect the good'. The self must relate to itself in the appropriate way, to the appropriate object, for it to count as hope. A question that follows is how the self comes to such a relation. The 'good' will be dealt with subsequently.

Another of Kierkegaard's journal entries presents a general outline for the dialectic of hope. In 1845, Kierkegaard writes that:

> The dialectic of hope goes this way: first the fresh incentive of youth, then the supportive calculation of understanding, and then—then everything comes to a standstill—and now for the first time Christian hope is there as a possibility. (JP F-K, 247)

The *terminus ad quem* is referred to as Christian hope, an expectancy that coincides with the eternal hope that Kierkegaard's *WL* raises. Against Christian hope, another kind of hope can be

[14] Ethical life is characterized by Kierkegaard as a strict adherence to a singular moral principle. Whether the perfect realization of virtue, the state of perpetual peace, or the mediation of *Sittlichkeit*, the ethical individual is singularly focused on an ethical end. For Kierkegaard, the ethical remains relative when compared with the absolute, which is to say, the eternal.

distinguished.[15] For all the titles that can be attributed to hope that is not Christian (mundane hope on Bernier's account and natural hope on Fremstedal's), 'temporal' hope suffices. Hope that is temporal is *eo ipso* not eternal hope. To consider a passage from the *CUP*:

> In temporality, the *expectancy* of an eternal happiness is the highest reward, because an eternal happiness is the absolute τέλος, and the specific sign that one relates oneself to the absolute is that not only is there no reward to expect but suffering to endure. As soon as the individual cannot be satisfied with that, it signifies that the individual regresses to worldly wisdom, to Jewish attachment to promises for this life, to chiliasm and the like. (CUP, 402)

Worldly wisdom, including the promises for this life and chiliasm, opposes the eternal perspective of Christianity. Christian expectancy must renounce all temporal ends in order to absolutely relate itself to the possibility of eternal happiness, and the renunciation is what causes the Christian to suffer. Any hope that is not informed by Christianity then qualifies as temporal hope because, whether rooted in paganism or Judaism, natural theology along with what Kierkegaard calls the 'Jewish attachment' to promises for this life remain committed to temporal ends. As a corollary, any naturalistic account would fail to explain the development of Christian hope, so Kierkegaard resorts to a dialectic that includes a collision with divine revelation. To return to the journal entry that presents the dialectic of hope, four moments are distinguished: a) the fresh incentive of youth, b) calculative understanding, c) a standstill, and d) Christian hope.

Apart from the distinction between hope and youthful wish that Kierkegaard offers in the *WL*, the fresh incentive of youth is described as pre-reflective and naive in the *EUD* (EUD, 212, 252, and 259). In light of its qualification as 'pre-reflective', the fresh incentive of youth is not conscious of the objective uncertainty of what is wished for.[16] Children wish to become

[15] Note that any 'hope' that comes short of eternal hope, or more accurately, Christian hope, qualifies *ipso facto* as 'mere expectation'. Although I discuss two different 'kinds' of hope here, I am not suggesting that they both count as hope for Kierkegaard. Rather, I discuss them as kinds of hope because they are usually considered to be hope, despite Kierkegaard's intention to dispute their status as hope.

[16] Roe Fremstedal also offers such an interpretation of the first moment of hope (Fremstedal 2012, 52).

presidents, celebrities, or athletes without being aware—and perhaps because they are not aware—of how difficult and objectively uncertain their expectations are. The lack of reflection inherent to the incentive of youth would explain, for Kierkegaard, why the youth do not commit to any particular expectation. While unaware of the objective uncertainty of the ends that they wish for, the youth throw commitment to the wind because any possibility can be fulfilled so long as it is wished for. The youth's lack of reflection seems to ground Kierkegaard's propensity to distinguish hope from youthful wish—a lack that causes the youth to wish for a multiplicity of ends. The hope of the incentive of youth lacks reflection, so the first dialectical moment of hope lacks a committed expectation and a sense for the objective uncertainty of its object.

In contrast, the hope of calculative understanding is committed and has a sense for the objective probability, and therefore uncertainty, of its expectancy. Kierkegaard remarks in the *EUD* that the person with experience pursues a single end from which all other possible ends are organized and related (EUD, 260). A person with experience relegates a multiplicity of ends to a single one in the same way that aspiring musicians learn to play many different musical pieces in order to develop their musicianship. Likewise, calculative understanding, what Kierkegaard refers to as the 'stockbroker of finitude' (FT, 36), organizes what could be hoped for in relation to a singular end. The possibilities that are most likely to promote the singular end will be the ones that the calculative understanding will pursue. Unlike the fresh incentive of youth, calculative understanding commits to a singular end from which other possibilities are ordered based on how likely they are to contribute to the singular end.

To briefly remain on the topic of the hope of calculative understanding, two kinds of hope seem to figure into the second dialectical moment given that two different objects could be

expected.[17] The calculative understanding could expect temporal happiness in the sense of a state of pleasure or joy. Such a hope is manifest in the clever aesthete who 'rotates the crops' in order to avoid boredom (EO1, 270-272). Or, as a counterpart to the aesthetic object of hope, the individual who undergoes the ethical 'qualitative leap' hopes to actualize the highest ethical principle by adhering to universal principles and norms—yet another kind of hope that presupposes reflection (FT, 54; Malantschuk 2003, 34). The ethical conception of the good can be categorized in the second moment of hope because it presupposes the calculative understanding that derives and observes universal principles and because it precludes faith.

Both aesthetic and ethical conceptions of the good qualify as possible objects of hope for calculative understanding. Although these distinct hopes could have been divided into their own moments, Kierkegaard would likely group them together because they are grounded in human understanding despite their radical differences. In short, since the different kinds of hope that could belong to calculative understanding do not ground themselves on faith, *they remain temporal hopes*. Reflective aesthetes actively aim to avoid boredom. Likewise, ethical individuals seek to 'externalize' themselves by attempting to realize what they hold to be the highest ethical principle. Although an ethical individual *might* not expect the realization of the highest ethical principle by any *fixed* date, perhaps not even during the span of her or his life, the principle is expected to be actualized *some day*.

The first moment of hope lacks reflection, and the second remains temporal. Despair marks the third moment of the dialectic, which introduces a decisive break with temporal hope

[17] Roe Fremstedal only includes the hope of the reflective aesthete in the second moment of the dialectic of hope. Doing so, however, poses a particular difficulty: where does ethical hope fit into the dialectic? The ethical individual hopes for something–so ethical hope cannot fit into the moment of despair. But ethical hope cannot figure into Christian hope because it expects a temporal good. Note that Fremstedal's reading does not place ethical hope into any of the four moments of the dialectic at all. My suggestion is that ethical hope resembles the hope of the reflective aesthete in so far as both expect a temporal end and both appeal to the faculty of understanding to justify and conceive of the object of their hope. On that ground, aesthetic and ethical hope can both be considered as variants of temporal hope. They are then best thought to belong to the second moment of the dialectic.

for the individual. Kierkegaard's dialectic suggests, at this point, that temporal hope inevitably leads to despair. In this lies part of Kierkegaard's aesthetic and ethical pessimism, notably, that temporal hope necessarily fails. A corollary that should be observed at this point is that for Kierkegaard, the individual cannot achieve anything without revelation (EUD, 308-310; CUD, 486). A few reasons could be offered here.

Internal and external pressures are two justifications for Kierkegaard's pessimism. Whether we pursue an aesthetic or ethical end, we can succumb to boredom, incontinence, procrastination, or impatience, a few internal disruptions we are responsible for among myriads that postpone or preclude the fulfillment of our ends. These pressures can be categorized as *temptations* (EUD, 38-39). For instance, Vigilius Haufniensis warns against the anxiety over sin that can lead the individual to perpetually succumb to temptations for which she or he pleads repentance for (CA, 115), Anti-Climacus warns of the forms of despair that lead us to abandon our hopes, and Johannes de Silentio cautions against the infinite resignation that fails to retrieve what has been resigned 'by virtue of the absurd' (FT, 46). Yet despite these temptations, Abraham exemplifies an individual who endured in his faith and hope, thereby achieving a 'repetition' or a renewal of meaning through hope (FT, 76-77).

Apart from internal temptations, ethical individuals might hope to relieve world hunger, for example. However, political and social conditions of history continue to resist the fulfillment of any such goal. For Johannes Climacus, world history resists the individual's ethical choices because "[i]n the world-historical, an essential role is played by factors of another kind, different from the ethical-dialectical: namely, the accidental, circumstances, that play of forces in which the reshaping totality of historical life absorbs the individual's action in order to transform it into something different that does not directly belong to him." (CUP, 134-135) The accidental nature

of world history can go so far as to bestow hardships and losses that can make an individual abandon hope entirely (EUD, 214; WL, 247 and 257). Nevertheless, like Abraham, Job resisted the temptation to despair when God took everything from him, and he was given back twice what he had lost (EUD, 116-118; *Repetition*, 212-213).

For Kierkegaard, internal and external temptations partly account for why temporal hope necessarily fails and must be resigned. Despite these hindrances, biblical figures like Abraham and Job provide examples of individuals who persevered in their faith and hope (Isaac for Abraham and prosperity for Job). Both of their hopes were fulfilled. Internal and external temptations should then be understood as hindrances to real possibilities, but there is a further point that Kierkegaard offers for why temporal hope does not fall into the category of such real possibilities. There is a conceptual contradiction that accounts for why temporal hope fails according to Kierkegaard, and original sin is that very reason. Since all are in a state of sin, which only God can forgive, the individual is in a hopeless state without Christianity (SUD, 116-117). If Abraham and Job achieved a repetition, it is precisely because they persevered in their faith and were rewarded in return. Kierkegaard essentially understands God as the source that can offer us redemption, the middle term to which the individual must submit.

The fourth moment of hope is, finally, Christian hope. Given the dialectic outlined above, Christian hope must be thought to presuppose reflection and to exclude temporal expectancy. Kierkegaard's concept of Christian hope is fundamentally inspired by the Pauline doctrine of 'hope against hope' (Romans 4:18). Hope becomes possible when temporal hope is abandoned, or stated otherwise, hope in the individual emerges in opposition to mere expectation. The Greek cognate for hope, ἐλπίς, denotes either mere expectation or hope—an ambiguity that Paul plays on. For Kierkegaard, Christian hope requires the resignation of any temporal expectancy, and

that the individual endure the suffering caused by resignation with the help of hope, the expectation of an eternal reward (EUD, 23-25 and 262-263; WL, 258-259).

Since the object of hope is neither natural nor temporal, it does not aim at 'what a man sees'. On this point, Kierkegaard agrees with Luther's reflections on Romans 8:24-25:

> hope changes him who hopes into what he hopes for, but what he hopes for is not apparent. Hope therefore transfers him into the unknown and hidden, into an inward darkness, so that he does not know what he hopes for and yet knows what he does not hope for. Thus, then, the soul that hopes has become hope and, at the same time, what it hopes for, because it is staying with what it does not see, i.e., hope. For if hope were seen, i.e., if he that hopes and what he hopes for mutually recognized each other, he would not thus be transferred into what he hopes for, i.e., into hope and the unknown, but he would be carried away to what he would see, and he would enjoy what he had come to know. (Luther 2006, 240)

Luther's emphasis on the self-transference inherent to hope (that the self that hopes becomes what it hopes for) will be shown to belong to Kierkegaard's concept of hope as well. The essential point on which both seem to agree, perhaps in virtue of the fact that it is a particularly Christian doctrine, is that hope carries the individual to expect an end that is foreign to what is usually expected (i.e. an end that is not temporal nor natural). The point is made clear in "The Expectancy of an Eternal Salvation" where Kierkegaard cites II Corinthians 4:18 in support of the claim that the individual must be fixed on what is eternal given that temporal ends, unlike eternal ones, are perishable and at odds with each other (EUD, 266).

Christian hope presupposes reflection and the renunciation of temporal ends. Though hope relates itself expectantly to the possibility of the good, it remains objectively uncertain about the fulfillment of its expectancy because without uncertainty, hope would not require a choice. It is only when good or evil are objectively understood as possible that the choice can be made to expect one possibility or the other. The point will be returned to below, but the choice inherent to faith, particularly the belief that everything is possible for God, is clearly what

grounds Christian hope, which always expects the good. *Existentially*, hope for Kierkegaard is the choice to expect redemption when faced with the tension between the objective uncertainty of salvation and trust in God. *Dialectically*, hope is an upbuilding of the self through which the individual resigns temporal hope, thereby opening her or himself to the possibility of faith.

iii. The Object of Christian Hope

Christian hope 'hopes always' according to Kierkegaard, but it also 'hopes all things.' By 'all things', and keeping in mind that the object of Christian hope requires a collision with revealed doctrine, Kierkegaard offers the examples of the forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, eternal bliss, and a reunion with the people we have lost (WL, 262; EUD, 24, 27, 216, and 260). Quite simply, Christian hope expects salvation—redemption from sin and its consequences. It is primarily general because it amounts to God's promised salvation, which is not to say that it excludes particular possibilities. Rather, the particular ends belong to God's promise, but the focus of the expectation is on the promise itself. To follow a remark made by Fremstedal, Christian hope for Kierkegaard could be understood as a general trust in the future that Christianity promises (Fremstedal 2014, 178).

To hope 'all things' is to hope for salvation along with its promised ends. In addition, the expected object should not merely pertain to the individual's salvation. As Kierkegaard thematically insists in the *Works of Love*, love hopes all things for oneself as well as for others (WL, 255-256). By maintaining that Christian hope must also expect salvation for others, Kierkegaard implies that hope must preserve the belief that salvation is possible for everyone. When an individual gives up hope for another, what is also abandoned is the belief that everything is possible for God, which precludes one's own possibility for salvation (WL, 259-260). Kierkegaard essentially argues that those who despair because they are in distress, facing

hardships that they believe to be insurmountable—all those we would reasonably consider to be hopeless, are actually in a position to begin hoping for eternal salvation (EUD, 214). Salvation, for Kierkegaard, can and must always be hoped for.

Yet is there not an object of hope that stands even higher than the salvation of individuals for Kierkegaard? Comparing Kant and Kierkegaard on their notions of the highest good, Fremstedal argues that Kierkegaard ultimately supposes that the realization of the Kingdom of God is the object of hope. Drawing from passages of the *WL* where Kierkegaard argues that hoping for oneself while giving up on others is no different than despair,[18] Fremstedal argues about Kierkegaard that "[l]ove thus connects hope for oneself with hope for others, transforming the object of hope into something universal, arguably the Kingdom of God" (Fremstedal 2014, 194).

On the question of the highest good, Fremstedal presents a compelling interpretation. Nonetheless, it does not alter the relevant sense of hope nor redemption. The Kingdom of God is a posited result that follows from the negation of temporal states of affairs, which are afflicted by the consequences of sin. Redemption, for its part, is the *correction* of sin and its consequences. The question concerning the kingdom of God neither is central to Kierkegaard's argument. What is of importance is how hope can be appropriated. Climacus reveals this intention in the *CUP*:

> it should immediately be borne in mind that the issue is not about the truth of Christianity but about the individual's relation to Christianity, consequently not about the indifferent individual's systematic eagerness to arrange the truths of Christianity in paragraphs but rather about the concerns of the infinitely interested individual with regard to his own relation to such a doctrine. To state it as simply as possible... "I, Johannes Climacus... assume that a highest good, called eternal

[18] The point is made quite clear: "It is the same with despairing over another person-it means to be in despair oneself... Unfortunately it is a quick and easy matter to despair over another person-and presumably to be sure of oneself, full of hope for oneself; and the very people who in complacency are most sure as far as they are concerned are usually the quickest to despair over others. But however easily it may go, it cannot actually be done--except in thoughtlessness, which no doubt is easiest for many people. No, here again is eternity's like for like-to despair over another person is to be in despair oneself" (WL, 256).

> happiness, awaits me just as it awaits a housemaid and a professor. I have heard that Christianity is one's prerequisite for this good. I now ask how I may enter in relation to this doctrine." (CUP, 15-16)

Speculation about the full extent of the object of hope may become possible for the individual who has matured in faith and hope. Yet, the speculative thought that questions exactly what the Kingdom of God consists in is a topic for theology. For Kierkegaard, hope must aim at God's promise whether or not it is informed by a clear and complete account of what the promise involves. The immediate concern for the individual in despair is redemption from sin, so the general expectancy of salvation is both necessary and sufficient for Christian hope. This point is important, especially in contrast with Bloch, given that the latter will argue that the object of hope must be clarified.

1.3 The Task of Hope

So far, I have maintained that hope for Kierkegaard is the eternal expectancy of salvation that becomes possible when the individual renounces all ends or conceptions of the good that are temporal through despair. Unlike wish, longing, or even desire, hope is the result of a dialectic of inwardness. The site of redemption is sin, and the object of hope is eternal salvation. Apart from his concept of hope, what can be addressed is what Kierkegaard supposes hope achieves for the individual. To use a Kierkegaardian expression, the 'task' of hope can be questioned.

i. Faith

The first 'task of hope' consists in the very process of arriving at Christian hope. Upon experiencing despair that severs the individual from temporal expectancies, hope becomes possible. Despite its possibility, the Christian doctrine of hope can be rejected by the individual rather than appropriated. Anti-Climacus comments on the difficulty for despairing individuals to

appropriate Christian hope in a passage of the *SUD* following his argument for why despair is the universal 'sickness unto death':

> At this point, then, salvation is, humanly speaking, utterly impossible; but for God everything is possible! This is the battle of *faith*, battling, madly, if you will, for possibility, because possibility is the only salvation. When someone faints, we call for water, eau de Cologne, smelling salts; but when someone wants to despair, then the word is: Get possibility, [...] possibility is the only salvation. A possibility—then the person in despair breathes again, he revives again, for without possibility a person seems unable to breathe. At times the ingeniousness of the human imagination can extend to the point of creating possibility, but at last—that is, when it depends upon *faith*—then only this helps: that for God everything is possible. (SUD, 38-39)

The passage emphasizes the battle (task) of faith, which in the face of objective uncertainty must hold on to faith and the paradoxes that make faith possible with 'the infinite passion of inwardness' (CUD, 203 and 233). Although the task of faith is emphasized in the passage, hope clearly shares its part. Faith is described as battling 'madly' to believe that 'for God everything is possible'. However, faith is also said to battle for 'the possibility of salvation', a battle that is oriented towards the future. The battle then concerns the belief in the omnipotence of God and, subsequently, the belief that salvation is possible because of God's omnipotence. To hold onto Christian doctrine when faced with its objective uncertainty is the task of faith proper, one that involves a present belief about God's omnipotence. The latter, to battle for the possibility of salvation, corresponds to hope, the expectancy of a good future possibility.

The relation between faith and hope is then presented indirectly. Christian hope grounds itself on trust in God (and His omnipotence), so it requires faith. Faith becomes a presupposition of hope without which eternal expectancy would not be possible—the ingeniousness of creativity can conceive of different possibilities, but only trust in God can ground eternal expectancy. Mark Bernier offers a further nuance to the relationship between faith and hope for Kierkegaard. Faith, though it certainly involves the belief in the omnipotence of God, also involves a willingness to

hope (Bernier 2015, 187). Revising John J. Davenport's thesis that faith is trust in the 'absolute actualization' of the good (Davenport 2008, 907), Bernier argues that in order not to conflate faith with hope for Kierkegaard, faith is best understood as trust in God, including the *willingness* to hope rather than the expectation of the good (Bernier 2015, 188). Faith grounds hope on the trust that everything is possible for God, affording one the will to hope.

Faith discovers the possibility for eternal salvation. The first task of hope is then the movement through which the individual discovers Christian hope through faith. To appropriate Christian hope is to open oneself to the possibility of salvation for Kierkegaard: redemption is made possible through hope because hope is grounded on faith.[19] What can also be remarked is what hope avoids, as opposed to what it achieves. Although the expectancy of eternal salvation requires the resignation of temporal ends, Christian hope does not necessarily stop with an 'infinite resignation' (FT, 48-50). The movement of faith implicit to Christian hope can reach beyond resignation to 'repeat' the earthly pleasures and joys that were renounced in resignation (FT, 49, 115; CUP, 410-411 and 493). The individual can find joy in the world again upon appropriating Christian hope as seamlessly as the ballet dancer assumes a landing posture after an elevated leap (FT, 40-41), should that be what God gives back. To follow Malantschuk's reading of the relationship between individual freedom and God's omnipotence throughout Kierkegaard's religious writings, we must understand the pinnacle of human freedom to consist in self-denial, which involves a renunciation of all attachments to finitude and to our worldly existence (Malantschuk 2003, 211-215). Upon doing so, God can grant us salvation and our worldly existence back—always keeping in mind that from the perspective of the individual, such redemption is never guaranteed.

[19] Hence, Kierkegaard agrees with Luther that self-transference belongs to hope.

A difficulty does present itself at this point around the issue of whether Kierkegaard supposes that the individual who appropriates Christian hope can also hope for temporal ends. Kierkegaard does seem committed to the view that the religious individual finds joy again in the earthly things that were once related to as aesthetic or ethical goods (FT, 40). But does that entail that the individual, if she or he comes to Christian hope, can also hope for temporal ends? Certainly. What must be kept in mind is that temporal hopes do not count as 'hopes'—they would count as mere expectations given that they are temporal. Kierkegaard offers two constraints on temporal expectancies in the *WL*. Temporal hopes are compatible with Christian hope if their content is not opposed to the good (WL, 261) and if the importance they hold for the individual does not lead her or him to despair if disappointed (WL, 261-262). Examples of shameful expectancies include hoping that another fails or is harmed out of spite or revenge. For what concerns shameful attachments to temporal expectancies, despairing over the failure of one's commercial endeavors would be shameful given what it reveals of the individual: that she or he was absolutely related to a relative end.[20] Kierkegaard's concept of hope then situates itself between naive optimism and resignation. It is pessimistic about aesthetic or ethical hopes, but it

[20] The question has not been adequately responded to, nor is there room to address it in full here. A problem that could be raised from *Fear and Trembling* is the following: Abraham hoped that God would not actually require the sacrifice of Isaac. Part of Abraham's movement of faith was precisely to hope that Isaac would be spared after renouncing him. It would then seem that a concrete and particular hope played a constitutive role in Abraham's movement of faith. Nevertheless, de Silentio does depict Abraham saying to himself in consolation: "But it will not happen, or if it does, the Lord will give me a new Isaac, that is, by virtue of the absurd" (FT, 115). So Abraham did hold on to a temporal expectancy. The question is whether or not the expectancy was particular. Abraham hopes to regain Isaac, but that hope includes the possibility for a 'new' Isaac according to de Silentio. My thesis, though I cannot defend it in full here, is that particular hopes are consistent with Christian hope so long as they observe both constraints: that the content and the strength of the hope are not shameful. Kierkegaard would have no reason to suppose that the hope to win a soccer game and the joy that comes along with winning the game would be wrong or opposed to Christian expectancy. Rather, if losing the game would stir the individual to despair, or winning it would stir one's hubris, then the expectancy would be opposed to Christianity. An odd result is that individuals could hope for particular temporal ends, but upon their disappointment, they should not be led to despair. This result is reflected in the passages of *Fear and Trembling* where de Silentio describes the knight of faith who discusses the feast he believes is waiting for him at home, though he does not have 'four schillings' under his name. We are told by de Silentio that when the knight of faith returns home, "[h]is wife does not have it–curiously enough, he is just the same" (FT, 39-40). Christian hope demands resignation of all natural hopes, not in the sense that they cannot or should not be expected at all, but in the sense that they must be resigned first to make room for the absolute (eternal salvation), only to then be re-appropriated (*repeated*) as ends that are relative to the absolute.

procures itself an object to absolutely hope for while permitting aesthetic and ethical ends to be expected and enjoyed as relative ends.

ii. Patience and Despair

Hope has a further task according to Kierkegaard. The fact that an individual has gained hope is no guarantee that it will endure, for the simple reason that the individual can always succumb to despair. Hope must be gained and it must endure in its expectancy of the eternal good. In his 1847 *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, Kierkegaard remarks that there is only hope so long as there is a task, so hope must preserve its task by continuing to expect its object (UDVS, 279).[21] Where the possibility for redemption is discovered in the promise of eternal salvation, it must continue to struggle against despair, lest the task be abandoned.

The first occurrence of despair for the individual is an inevitable state that must surmounted. Yet, Kierkegaard further supposes that 'the sickness really is unto death' (SUD, 8-9, and 21), in the sense that faith and hope can always be lost to despair (SUD, 16-18 and 129; CUP, 233 and 237). Apart from the original experience of despair, hope, just like faith, must be patient. To be careful, patience does not only refer to the perseverance of hope for Kierkegaard. Patience first coincides with hope when the individual chooses to expect eternal salvation (EUD, 220-221). When temporal ends are renounced, there is no cause for impatience since nothing is expected to be fulfilled in time. Patience coincides with hope and it is also the condition for its preservation. This explains why Kierkegaard supposes that in the dialectic of salvation, "patience is the first and patience is the last" (EUD, 187).

[21] We can also note the following passage: "When it is so, according to the assumption of the discourse, that in relation to God a person always suffers as guilty, *then the joy of it is this, that the fault lies in the individual, and as a consequence of that there must always be something to do, there must be tasks, moreover human tasks*, and along with the tasks a hope that everything can and will improve if he improves, becomes more diligent, more prayerful, more obedient, more humble, more devoted to God, more heartfelt in his love, more fervent in spirit" (UDVS, 275).

At the outset of "To Gain One's Soul in Patience", Kierkegaard cites Luke 21:19 to introduce his discourse: "in your patience you will gain your souls" (EUD, 159). The biblical Greek cognate for patience in Luke's verse is ὑπομονῇ, which denotes a capacity for resolute continuance in a course of action. Unlike waiting, to be patient in hope for Kierkegaard, as for Luke, is to persevere in the resolute expectancy of salvation. Perseverance is then constitutive of patience. Once hope is gained in patience, it becomes a disposition that resists despair and holds on to the expectancy of eternal salvation.

For its part, despair is divided by Kierkegaard into the will not to be oneself (weakness) and the will to be oneself (defiance) when faced with Christianity (SUD, 49 and 67). In either case, despair marks a state of the self in which the individual abandons the task of becoming a self before God: "[s]in is: *before God, or with the conception of God, in despair not to will to be oneself, or in despair to will to be oneself*. Thus, sin is intensified weakness or intensified defiance: sin is the intensification of despair" (SUD, 77). Note the role that the will plays in the definitions of despair. Like hope, despair is grounded on an individual's decision.[22] Individuals who despair in weakness are unwilling to hope because they are unshakably attached to worldly goods (despair over the earthly) or because they do not believe that they can renounce worldly goods given the value and importance they attribute to them (despair of the eternal) (SUD, 60-61). For the next 'dialectical step', the despair of defiance is unwilling to hope because the individual refuses to abide by Christianity, or as Anti-Climacus writes, "[the despair of defiance] is unwilling to begin with losing itself but wills to be itself" (SUD, 67). For either, the individual in despair does not will to be a self before God. Doing so, the despairing individual "gives up possibility (to give up possibility is to despair) or, even more correctly, he is brazenly so bold as

[22] However, the decision revolves around whether or not the individual wills to 'be oneself' or 'not to be oneself', as opposed to the expectation of good or evil.

to *assume* the impossibility of the good" (WL, 253). When compared with hope, despair should be understood as the unwillingness to hope for Kierkegaard—an unwillingness that is founded on the assumption that the good is impossible.

As Kierkegaard understands it, despair encompasses people who abandon any expectancy of the good (weakness) as well as people who exclusively hope for temporal ends despite their awareness of Christianity (defiance). Anyone who does not expect eternal salvation is in despair for Kierkegaard. Both sagacity and secular thought are forms of despair, against which patience sets itself:

> And when the fulfillment does come, it is never mocking, never deceitful, because the good never mocks a human being. If it fails to come, then this is the best for him, and if it comes, it comes with all its eternal blessedness. How could this come too late-then it would itself have to be temporal. Therefore only impatience knows fear, but patience, like love, drives out fear. (EUD, 216)

To be careful, Kierkegaard specifically claims that patience drives out fear rather than despair in the passage of the *EUD*. Nonetheless, given that patience is the resolute continuance in an expectancy or in a course of action, it also resists despair in so far as despair is an unwillingness to hope. To make sense of the passage of the *EUD*, fear can be understood to stand between hope and despair. Though Kierkegaard himself does not clarify the relation between the two, the intensification of fear, especially when evil comes to be expected as a matter of course, should be thought to provoke despair. For instance, Job's temptation to doubt God's justice was provoked by his losses and afflictions. Faced with his trial, Job grieves:

> But when I looked for good, evil came to *me*; And when I waited for light, then came darkness. My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest; Days of affliction confront me. I go about mourning, but not in the sun: I stand up in the assembly *and cry* out for help. (Job 30:26-31)

Job's expectations of the good have been disappointed, and subsequently, he expects 'days of affliction'. Job clearly fears his future. Yet, he does not curse God. He ultimately does

not succumb to despair of defiance by rejecting God, although he seems to have abandoned his hope to fear[23]—which partly accounts for why Constantin Constantius's respondent finds Job "so human in every way" (*Repetition*, 204). Patience in Job was not strong enough to drive out his fear. Yet, Kierkegaard maintains that Job saw through the 'storm', the event that claimed nearly everything from him, and understood that "it was the Lord who had taken it away, and therefore in his loss [Job] remained on good terms with the Lord, in his loss maintained intimacy with the Lord; he saw the Lord, and therefore he did not see despair" (EUD, 121). Job is not a hero of faith (*Repetition*, 210), presumably because his patience was not strong enough to subside his rebuke to God (*Job* 40:2 and 42:1-6). Fear certainly influenced Job's rebuke, given that Job understood himself as being upright before God, causing his difficulty to understand why God took everything from him (*Job* 31:4). But Job's patience kept him from despair. From the example of Job, fear, whether motivated by loss or contingent suffering, should be understood as tempting the individual to despair. Throughout hardships, patience maintains that there is salvation for the individual, so it resists fear, which could drive one to despair when intensified.

[23] The letters from the young man reveal that: "Bit by bit [Job] loses everything, and hope thereby gradually vanishes, inasmuch as actuality, far from being placated, rather lodges stronger and stronger allegations against him. From the viewpoint of immediacy, everything is lost" (*Repetition*, 212).

Waiting likewise makes one desolate. But it can also make one drunk. Someone who stares too long at the door where he expects another to enter can become intoxicated. As by tuneless singing that draws and draws. Dark, where it draws us to; probably into nothing good. If the man, the woman whom one awaits doesn't arrive, the clear disappointment doesn't really undo the intoxication. It only combines with its result a particular kind of hangover that occurs here too. Against waiting, only hoping helps, which one must not only drink, but cook somewhat too.

- Bloch, *Traces*

2. Bloch's Concept of Hope

Of the most significant differences between Kierkegaard and Bloch, hope is fundamentally collective for Bloch. Kierkegaardian hope inherits from Christian eschatology and belongs to the category of the individual. For Bloch, specifically in *The Principle of Hope*, hope is interpreted as extending beyond individual aspirations into cultural tendencies, in its most concentrated form, artistic productions. Bloch's task is to integrate hope within dialectical materialism, what may earn him the title of a 'speculative materialist' (Habermas 1970, 323).

His exact relation to Marxism remains subject to debate and clarification. On the one hand, his thought aims at the concrete realization of socialism, whereas on the other, his work focuses on political superstructures rather than the economic base of society. In a sense, Bloch attempted to extend Marxism over issues that, though unorthodox, he thought could be traced back to Marx's political thought. If Bloch goes 'beyond' Marx, it is not in the same vein as the Frankfurt School. Where critical theorists such as Horkheimer and Adorno remain generally pessimistic about culture (as clearly attested in "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception"), Bloch believes that culture retains utopian tendencies that must be critically liberated and pursued. Suffice it to say that Bloch stands between classical Marxism and the Frankfurt School, neither wholly committed to a materialist critique of the economic base of societies, and neither pessimistic about the 'progress' that culture promises.

2.1 The Site of Redemption for Bloch

Throughout *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch firmly maintains that the road against deprivation and towards the highest good:

> "remains that of socialism, it is the practice of concrete utopia. Everything that is non-illusory, real-possible about the hope-images leads to Marx, works – as always, in different ways, rationed according to the situation – as part of socialist changing of the world. Becoming happy was always what was sought after in the dreams of a better life, and only Marxism can initiate it." (PH1, 17)

The 'most human of all emotions', (PH1, 75) hope is subjectively stirred by the socio-economic deprivation that individuals confront in their every day. Deprivation, especially that which causes unnecessary suffering, is the condition that must be redeemed for Bloch. Redemption then entails the task of correcting 'the badly existing' situation that perpetuates deprivation. Overcoming deprivation is not just a question of critique for Bloch. As he argues, "[c]oncrete decision in favour of the victory of light in real possibility is the same as countermove against failure in process." (PH1, 200) The light is socialism, and Bloch's method is to incorporate the hope for socialism into dialectical materialism (PH1, 9).

Given Bloch's project to render hope as a 'principle', a purely psychological or theological account would be insufficient. Referring to the above citation drawn from *Traces*, hope must not lead us into the dark, 'probably into nothing good'. On the side of the subject, Bloch sets out to account for the affective ground of hope. Objectively, hope can be mediated into a *docta spes*, where it gains militant optimism about the task of clarifying utopia according to a dialectical materialist understanding of process. Bloch's program is quite clear: the most immediate task of hope is to realize concrete socialism, from which other utopic ends can be clarified and pursued. Utopia is no state, but a pulse in history that seeks to bring an end to deprivation, working to develop a better world. Hope is how the individual becomes involved in such an ongoing historical process.

2.2 Hope as an Expectant Emotion

i. Dreams of a Better Life

The outset of *The Principle of Hope* turns to a phenomenology of wishful dreams to expose the numerous ways in which what is missing from our lives, deprivation, manifests itself in fantasies. Beginning with youth, "[a]ll we do is crave, cry out. Do not have what we want." (PH1, 21) The deprivation is felt as longing, one that is manifest in early youth's tendency to dream of different lives in the comfort of their home (PH1, 23-24). The wishful land that belongs to the earliest stage of youth is, for Bloch, best represented as the island. It compensates for deprivation by reintroducing wonder into what is often mundane and restrictive.

But the dream of a better life changes when it encounters another ego, a travelling partner. As Bloch notes, around the age of thirteen, the wishful land extends itself to the sea and distant castles. The experience of the other draws the dreamer outside of home life, thus vanquishing the anxiety of venturing too far which once constrained the infant to the island. What is missing is something radically different that can relieve boredom (PH1, 25).

By the time the youth reach puberty, however, the lands of wishful dreams return nearer to home and are no longer characterized by a lonely, imaginative life. Others are incorporated as objects of desire, in the case of an idealized beloved, or as competitors and spectators who recognize the greatness of the dreamer (PH1, 26-28). For example, Bloch raises the dream of the underprivileged boy who returns home in a 'coach-and-four' accompanied by his bride of unparalleled beauty, or the famous actress who forgives her family and friends for the anterior abuse they made her suffer (PH1, 29). What is missing, which gives rise to such images of the future, is the development of the dreamer's full potential.

Uncertainty does come to a rest as teenagers, steadily growing into adulthood, settle themselves in the world. Bloch's account of wishful dreams becomes very familiar at this point. To set the tone for wishful dreams encountered in adulthood, Bloch remarks that "[s]omething important is missing now just as it was then, so the dream does not stop inserting itself into the gaps. An element of defeat probably also settles in, the flight often dips. An element of vulgarity emerges which no longer has healthy red cheeks, but is hard-boiled. But the dreamer believes he has at last found out what life ought to be offering him." (PH1, 29) The major distinction between the dreams found in youth from those of adulthood, for Bloch, is that adults reduce what is wished for into images that are easier to realize and that are more conventional.

Old age sets the final appearance of wishful dreams. With it comes a reduced affective pull towards wishful images: "the flashy teenager and the old fop can share a turbulent desire for new life. Nevertheless, we no longer yield so willingly to temptation." (PH1, 36) What 'petty' old age wishes for is wine and purse. The bottle numbs the various discomforts of which old age becomes susceptible, and money appeases the fear of becoming frail along with the 'neurotic drive' of the elderly to hold on to things (PH1, 36). A longing for youth becomes an object of wish for elders who do not become petty. Yet such a wish for youth, which can cause suffering, can also become a wish to harvest what was collected throughout one's life. Whether in memories of achievements or a home to finally rest in, the wish for retirement aims to gather what was collected throughout one's life as the fruit of maturity (PH1, 38-39). Wishful dreams come to an end, at last, in the wish for rest (PH1, 39-41).

Though wishful dreams are often thought to belong to youth, Bloch points out how they manifest themselves throughout life. They continue to express longings for better lives, ones in which what is missing is provided. For Bloch, it is a sign that the human being remains deprived.

If dreams imagine life without deprivation, they can potentially be worked out so that the fantastic images they present can be mediated into real possibilities. However, the subjective correlate of hope is insufficient in dreams alone to clarify the real possibility of what is missing.

ii. Urges, Wishes, and the Basic Human Drive

What must be questioned is the psychological ground of wishful dreams. Should there not be a relation between deprivation and wishful images, hope could easily be dispelled as pure fantasy, a dream that is 'nothing but foam'.[24] Bloch's starting point is precisely to clarify how we psychologically relate to deprivation such that we become aware of it and work towards its fulfillment. What is required is an account of 'anticipatory consciousness' to interpret how we relate to that which is 'Not-Yet-Conscious'.

To this end, Bloch's psychological theory is mostly inspired by classical psychoanalysis, from which he departs quite radically. What must first be said is that living organisms are motivated by urges. Ceding to his own language,

> That we are alive cannot be felt. The That which posits us as living does not itself emerge. It lies deep down, where we begin to be corporeal. This push within us is what we mean when we say, man does not live in order to live, but 'because' he lives. Nobody has sought out this state of urging, it has been with us ever since we have existed and in that we exist. The nature of our immediate being is empty and hence greedy, striving and hence restless. But all of this does not feel itself, in order to do so it must first go out of itself. Then it senses itself as 'urge', as a quite vague and indefinite urge. No living thing can ever escape from the That of urging, no matter how tired it may have become of this. This thirst constantly announces itself but does not give its name. (PH1, 45)

But the urging is not always without a name. When the urge is felt, it becomes a longing for something (PH1, 45). The craving to go anywhere, to do anything, focuses on an external object in longing. That 'object' becomes a goal-content when it is clarified. What classifies the longing

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[24] To recall the German proverb 'Träume sind Schäume'.

into a particular class of drives is the goal-content of the longing itself (PH1, 46). Drives are then felt urges for goal-contents.

Differing from other animals, human beings are motivated by more than felt urges. Particularly, wishes emerge when human beings begin to imagine the goal-content of their drives (PH1, 46). What is peculiar about them is that they seek *what is thought* to be 'better'. On this point, Bloch appropriates the ethical dimension that Aristotle associates with βούλησις (wish or rational desire).[25] To βούλησις, Bloch further includes the imagination, which forms an image of the urge's goal-content. His argument is that through the imagination, wishes can relate to images of better lives that are not yet actual.

Bloch further comments on the relationship between wishing and wanting. Wishes can long for ends that are impossible. On the side of fantasy, a wish to sock one of the speculative *Laputans* along Gulliver's travels, or more commonly, a wish to go back in time to undo a wrong are equally impossible, though either can be object-goals of a wish. Though we can wish for such ends, we cannot possibly want them (PH1, 47). Nonetheless, wanting something depends on whether we wish for it or not. The relevant implication that Bloch wants to draw from the dependence of wanting on wishing is that the more plausible and clear our wishes become, the stronger we want them (PH1, 108). Part of the reason for Bloch's emphasis here is that he will go

[25] Most clearly, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Rhetoric*. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, following a discussion about the appropriate object of wish, Aristotle suggests that "[i]f these consequences are unpleasing, are we to say that absolutely and in truth the good is the object of wish, but for each person the apparent good; that that which is in truth an object of wish is an object of wish to the good man, while any chance thing may be so to the bad man, as in the case of bodies also the things that are in truth wholesome are wholesome for bodies which are in good condition, while for those that are diseased other things are wholesome—or bitter or sweet or hot or heavy, and so on; since the good man judges each class of things rightly, and in each the truth appears to him? For each state of character has its own ideas of the noble and the pleasant, and perhaps the good man differs from others most by seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them." (*NE*, 1113a20-33) From the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle likewise defines that "[r]ational desire is wishing, and wishing is a desire for good—nobody wishes for anything unless he thinks it good." (*Rhetoric*, 1369a3) I refer to the notion of what is better here as an 'ethical' rather than a 'moral' dimension to emphasize that what is 'better' should be thought of as what promotes εὐδαιμονία, human flourishing or happiness, not what promotes moral rules of conduct. The comment must be made to distinguish how Kierkegaard treats the ethical, notably, as the moral (more precisely, Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*).

on to characterize the attitude of hope as *militant optimism*. Hope must be passionate and clear about its object if it should be effective in realizing its goal-content.

The question that Bloch takes up next is whether any drive that underlies wishes can be designated as the ‘basic’ human drive. After considering Freud’s erotic and death drives, Jung’s frenzy drive, and Adler’s power drive, Bloch finds that psychoanalysis tends to presuppose an even more original motivating force: hunger (PH1, 65). To circumvent his extensive critique of Freud, Jung, and Adler on their respective drive theories, Bloch contends against psychoanalysis that: 1) drives belong to the body, 2) self-preservation is a more suitable basic drive, and 3) self-preservation is transformed by socio-economic and historical conditions.

Bloch questions ‘who’ drives the animal, ‘who’ moves in the living moment, or ‘who’ wishes in human beings (PH1, 47-48). The first clue along the inroad to the basic human drive is discovered in our tendency to think that drives ‘overcome’ us. Whether through violent urges or passions, our conscious state can be ‘overcome’ by what drives in us. Though we certainly feel the drives, aware of their demands and relieved when they are satisfied, the substance that carries these drives is the body, not the ego. Hence, Bloch remarks that “when the animal eats, its own body is satisfied, and nothing else.” (PH1, 48) Drives belong to the economy of the body, employed in so far as the body aims to avoid what is damaging and to search for what preserves it (PH1, 49). The agent, this ‘who’, of drives is then the body.

Bloch’s materialist rendition of drive theory leads him to maintain that self-preservation, of which hunger is the most clear manifestation, is the most basic human drive. Against psychoanalytic works like *Civilization and its Discontents* that dwell on the manner in which mass neurosis results from the order instilled by civilized societies, Bloch is keen to point out that “the unemployed person on the verge of collapse, who has not eaten for days, has really

been led to the oldest needy place of our existence and makes it visible." (PH1, 65) Discussions about the influence of culture on mass neuroses occlude such a 'needy' place.

A difficulty does present itself in the case of the human being, since we carry a complex of drives, most of which we produce ourselves. Bloch refers to Xerxes' demand for a 'new pleasure' as a historical example of such a tendency (PH1, 49). Despite our ability to produce new desires and the complex of drives we carry, Bloch contends that self-preservation is the most universal and basic ground from which secondary, latent drives can emerge. Without the satisfaction of hunger, secondary drives would lose any motivational force.

Bloch does maintain, however, that the basic human drive is not the same throughout history. Self-preservation admittedly dates back to the earliest living organisms. For animal and plant life, though species undergo mutations and cultivations that alter their self-preservation, say the ornamental rose that stems from dog-roses or the tamed pigeon from wood pigeons (PH1, 68), original varieties *can* be preserved artificially. A return to anterior human life, in contrast, is not possible (PH1, 67-68). To quote Bloch himself, "[e]ven a great number of so-called primitives today are, as we know, nothing of the sort, they are not the oldest human creatures. Rather, they represent the waste products of great cultures; they are not old physis, but have long since become new physis, by virtue of inheriting historically acquired qualities." (PH1, 68) Hunger remains the 'oil in the lamp' of history for Bloch, but historical changes shape our means for relieving hunger–a level of detail seldom addressed by psychoanalysis (PH1, 69). Our needs adapt themselves to changing social circumstances and are further mediated with the fluctuation of work relations and market economies (PH1, 69). Hunger is then present within financial or economic interests, and appetite likewise grounds libido and the power-drive, both of which are secondary with respect to hunger. Such observations lead Bloch to suppose that hunger continues

to extend itself, producing newer drives, while the self continues to extend itself, remaining open and moved. The self-extension that is caused by hunger is Bloch's psychological explanation for how we *begin* relating ourselves to that which is 'not-yet-conscious'.

iii. Hunger and Expectant Emotions

When hunger extends itself, what could be supposed is that it does so blindly, in the manner of an *élan vitale*. However, hunger does not only give rise to immediate drives. Bloch contends that felt-drives[26] also originate in hunger. By felt-drives, what is intended are drive-feelings that the subject becomes intensely aware of, whether in mental feelings or emotions (PH1, 70). The latter possess 'inner temperatures' that culminate in states-of-minds or moods, all of which manifest themselves before an external object is mentally related to as an object-goal. Though Bloch does not draw any concrete examples, we can easily imagine the frustrated mood of the employee who earns a low wage for laborious tasks. Being denied a particular service due to a shortage of supplies at a restaurant or a grocery store, the frustration can fluster into a bout of anger–the individual leaves the service establishment, but not without expressing his or her strong disapproval. The external object, to be heard in one's frustration, was only related to given the situation. Before the object was presented, a felt-drive nonetheless belonged to the individual. From this angle, Bloch distinguishes emotions from sensations and imaginations, which always relate to clear and distinct intentional objects (PH1, 70-71).

Bloch maintains that emotions intend external objects. His rejoinder to Brentano and Husserl is that the nature of emotional intending is different from sensations and imaginations: "the emotions are given to themselves as intentional acts in the form of states. And they are given to themselves in the form of states, intensively, because they are chiefly moved by the

[26] Felt drives are distinguished from felt urges given that they have object-goals.

striving, the drive, the intending, which underlies all intentional acts." (PH1, 71) The objects emotions intend are not clear at first, unlike imagination and sensation. As such, emotions yield intransitive mental feelings, like the light-heartedness of a successful entrepreneur or the feeling of being in love shared by the youth and erotic personalities. They become transitive when they gain more sensation and image contents. The object-goals of emotions become clear and distinct first through introspection, where the emotion becomes accessible to the subject, and secondly through imagination and thought (PH1, 71).

With this account of emotions in mind, Bloch introduces his classification of *filled* and *expectant* emotions (PH1, 73-74).[27] Filled emotions such as envy, greed, and admiration are short term and intend objects that are nearly attainable for the individual or that are available in the world. Expectant emotions such as anxiety, fear, hope, and belief are long term. They intend objects that are not yet attainable nor available in the world. Expectant emotions are partly in doubt about the plausibility of the external objects they intend. Within the horizon of time, expectant emotions imply a real future since their object is 'Not-Yet' available, 'Not-Yet' become, or simply 'Not-Yet-Conscious'. The future is related to as an undecided and ongoing process. Filled emotions, for their part, intend attainable or available objects, so the future they imply is devoid of any possible novelty. Of the expectant emotions, hope particularly relates to a better future that is Not-Yet-Conscious and Not-Yet-Become. It is, for Bloch, "the most human of all mental feelings ... [that] refers to the furthest and brightest horizon." (PH1, 75)

Given that hunger extends itself, producing newer desires, it seeks to change its context when it can no longer be satisfied adequately. Hunger acquires a revolutionary interest, "[seeking] to change the situation which has caused its empty stomach, its hanging head." (PH1,

[27] In contrast to asthenic and sthenic emotions or to emotions of rejection and inclination.

75) Self-preservation becomes self-extension with revolutionary interest (PH1, 76), and this transformation grounds the wishful dreams that imagine a world without deprivation nor the oppression that deprives others from sating their hunger. Hope emerges strongly at such points, discontent with its situation and dreaming of a better life. As an emotion, hope expects an object that is distant and not yet actual. It is driven by hunger and guided by wishful dreams. Since wishful dreams inform the self-extension of hunger that is implicit to hope on Bloch's account, it is important that Bloch clarifies whether or not dreams can truly possess utopic tendencies.

iv. Daydreams and the Not-Yet-Conscious

Following Freud's interpretation of dreams, Bloch maintains that dreams fulfill wishes. Nonetheless, two major points distinguish him from classical psychoanalysis. For one, Bloch argues that Freud's interpretation of dreams is too psychologistic. Anxiety dreams provide salient cases where the causes of anxiety cannot strictly be reduced to ego functions nor the libido. On Bloch's account, socio-economic conditions cause anxiety in dreams. Therefore, dreams, whether nocturnal or diurnal, are not completely separated from the 'outer' world. Secondly, daydreams are not stepping stones to nocturnal dreams. Bloch rather views them as stepping stones to art, which produce images of a better world that has not-yet become.

The three characteristics of nocturnal dreams that allow for wish-fulfillment are that the weakened ego in sleep does not censor 'indecent' content as effectively, that a small residue of content from the ego's waking state remains loosely associated to symbols in the dream fantasy, and that the world external to the ego is blocked off in sleep (PH1, 79). Given these characteristics, the ego reverts to a child-like state during sleep, where subconscious desires can be fulfilled after they are transformed into symbols that the ego no longer recognizes and censors, via what Freud calls the 'dream work' (PH1, 80). Bloch agrees with Freud so far.

They disagree on the question of what explains anxiety dreams. In response to the anti-thesis that some dreams, especially nightmares, do not fulfill our wishes but rather cause us anxiety, Freud offers the following explanations: when dreams are broken off before wish-fulfillment occurs, the distressing drives that motivate our wishes persist, causing anxiety. In the event that a wish is fulfilled, the dreaming ego can nonetheless react strongly to the blatant satisfaction of a certain taboo desire. Anxiety is then a function of the ego to censor the wish-fulfillment that took place. Lastly, Freud explains that wishes and anxiety are not strict opposites. Anxiety originates at birth, where the child's longing for the mother is frustrated by strangers. The object towards which the child's libido is directed, its mother, is missing. Without its object, the libidinal energy (*cathexis*) turns back to the child where it discharges itself as anxiety. What follows is that all repressed wishes transform themselves into phobias in the unconscious. They cause anxiety in dreams when they resurface (PH1, 80-81).

Anxiety dreams are then attributable to functions of the ego for Freud, mostly to the libido. Bloch retorts that the outer world, in which one suffers from economic deprivation, hunger, and strife truly gives rise to anxiety in dreams (PH1, 84). Rather than repressed infantile wishes, the cause of anxiety dreams is "the axe which will cut life short in the future... the pain and horror of an objectively expected night." (PH1, 85) Maintaining the thesis concerning phobias and repressed wishes, Bloch's correction is that wherever anxiety does not merely arise in a biological sense, in parturition or in death, then anxiety arises from the *annihilated* content of our wishes for self-preservation, one that transforms itself into its opposite during anxiety dreams (i.e. dreams in which we starve or where we witness the end of the world). Bloch attributes his explanation of anxiety dreams to the body rather than the ego.

Secondly, Bloch maintains that daydreams should not be understood as stepping stones to nocturnal dreams. The little daydreams that were raised earlier provide cases where the active participation of dreamers shape and ultimately guide wishful contents, whereas we passively witness fantasies at night (PH1, 86). This counters Freud's claim in *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* that "[t]he night dream is essentially but a day dream, distorted by the nocturnal forms of psychological activity, and made available by the freedom which the night gives to instinctive impulses." (Freud 1920, 324) Nocturnal dreams, excluding anxiety dreams, are mostly roads to repressed content, but daydreams can yield anticipatory pre-appearances of a better world that *must be worked out rather than analyzed*, a world that we are not-yet-conscious of (PH1, 87).

To defend such a distinction, Bloch offers four characteristics of daydreams that reveal them to play an important role for hope. The ego in daydreams is not oppressed nor overpowered by images and ideas (PH1, 88). Nocturnal dreams play themselves out without the conscious participation of the ego, as if the ego was 'coerced' into witnessing certain wish fulfillments. Daydreamers, on the other hand, can willingly pursue certain ideas. So the daydream is characterized as having a 'clear road'. Secondly, sleep weakens the ego and actively resists stimuli from the external world by integrating them into the dream. Daydreams, however, do not weaken the ego as much. They can always be interrupted. In addition, the ego remains intact in its awaken state while experiencing daydreams. With the clarity of a woken adult ego, we attentively observe wishful images of a better life. This lends itself to a feeling of elevation, where we begin to view ourselves in an ideal state (PH1, 88-89). Childish desires and complexes may be interwoven in the daydream, but for Bloch, "[t]he bearer of daydreams is filled with the conscious ... even if variable will for the better life, and the hero of daydreams is always our own

adult personality." (PH1, 89) Where the ego at night exercises moral censorship, the ego of the daydream strives for a wishful image of what it may become (PH1, 90). The only censorship that daydreams face are real socio-economic barriers to the wishful images they entertain.

As a third characteristic, the ego in daydreams can represent others, whereas nocturnal fantasies remain narcissistic (PH1, 92). World-improving dreams, especially those that envision medical, social, or technological utopias break away from the status quo to envision a future that is better (PH1, 93). These daydreams, for Bloch at least, provide the raw material for poetic or artistic productions (PH1, 94). Daydreams are then stepping stones to art rather than to night dreams. When expressed through works of art, the images of a better world become communicable. They point the way to a better world through preappearances of ends that, sometimes, correspond to *objectively real possibilities*. Lastly, these wishes for a better world are pushed towards their conclusion in daydreams according to Bloch (PH1, 95). Daydreamers do not settle for pure fictions, unrelated to any possible tendencies or ends (PH1, 95 and 98). The dreams of grandeur that the youth have, of becoming an actress or a popular musician, provide examples of daydreams that depict the ego in an ideal state, in an ideal environment, that are not impossible *a priori*. Even long passed images of golden ages, Ancient Egypt, Athens under Pericles, and Augustinian Rome can be understood as transferred images of what is expected to come, a 'One Day' (PH1, 97-98). Great works of art particularly possess the tendency to extend the ego into a better world that has not-yet-become and that is not out of line with objectively real possibilities (PH1, 98-99). In all this, Bloch's argument remains that daydreams are the site where images of a better world can first manifest themselves before they are worked out.

Bloch's account of daydreams opposes itself to *anamnesis*. The instances of self-extending daydreams that guide hope provide examples of how consciousness forms images of

what is not-yet. Arguing against Husserl's claim in his lectures *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* that "[e]very process that constitutes its object originally is animated by protentions that emptily constitute what is coming *as* coming" (Husserl 1991, §24, 26-30), Bloch contends that our relation to the future is not merely founded on a horizon of what is re-remembered, posturing as the future. Rather, expectant emotions like hope have a rapport with what is objectively 'new', despite the fact that they intend an unreal future on the foreground (PH1, 109). We relate to the future as a *decided space*, even if our images of it remain 'illusory'. The illusory images we form of the future can, also, approximate a pre-appearance of what is to come, especially if they are informed by concrete tendencies.

Unconsciousness then has a 'double edge' according to Bloch. The threshold between consciousness and unconsciousness lies as much on the side of what is forgotten or repressed as it does for new, dawning material (PH1, 115-116). Examples where consciousness begins to uncover what is new can be drawn from youth, political times of change, and creative expression. The youth envision what they can become, charged with a premonition that something better awaits them in adulthood. Should they grow up during times of change, what they envision will be sharpened by social conditions. Bloch refers to the youth's involvement in the Russian Narodniks, who sought to overthrow tsarism, as an example, or to the German students who were involved in the *Sturm und Drang* and the *Vormärz* movements (PH1, 117-118). Creatively, "the Renaissance, just as later the genius period in Germany, excavates the developing tendencies of the epoch, places them in early morning light, new daylight. In such periods man distinctly feels that he is not an established being, but one which, together with his environment, constitutes a task and an enormous receptacle full of future." (PH1, 119)

As Bloch notes however, this 'forward dawning' does not start with a clear image of its material. The threefold movement Bloch describes involves incubation, where the subject is left to confront a socio-political contradiction, inspiration, where a novel idea takes shape in the imagination, and explication, where the idea is clarified (PH1, 122-126). Dreams can then be thought to possess truly utopic tendencies. They must, nonetheless, be mediated into a *docta spes* should they successfully deliver pre-appearances of a better world that is objectively possible.

2.3 Hope as Militant Optimism

Bloch's extensive treatment of dreams reflects the earlier, tentative title for his magnum opus, *Dreams of a Better Life*. The success of any truly utopic tendency requires that hope transform itself into a *docta spes*, with the attitude of *militant optimism*, whose function is to discover the emancipatory potential of past cultural works with dialectical materialist thought at the *Front*, the future horizon of the world process. Where the analysis of daydreams revealed how hope emerges in the subject as an expectant emotion that gives rise to wishful images of a better life, Bloch now turns his attention to a study of how thought that is informed by material process should clarify the utopic tendencies of our cultural inheritance. Bloch first sets out to explain the utopian function of hope, then he turns his attention to the ontological model in which the utopian function of hope ought to be approached from the *cold stream* of Marxism.

i. Utopian Function

The utopian function of hope can be summarized as the conscious act of making known the better life that is dawning ahead (PH1, 144). What belongs to utopian function are images of the future that extend currently existing material into its real possibilities of becoming better. Recollection and memories of the past are precisely excluded here. Likewise, utopian function does not coincide with mere wishful thinking given that it does not find its clarification from a

worm's eye view, but from close attunement to real tendencies (PH1, 145). As Bloch notes, it is transcendent without transcendence, "its Ratio is ... militant optimism. Therefore: the *act-content* of hope is, as a consciously illuminated, knowingly elucidated content, the *positive utopian function*; the *historical content* of hope, first represented in ideas, encyclopedically explored in real judgments, is *human culture referred to its concrete-utopian horizon.*" (PH1, 146)

Utopian function neither coincides with an embellishment of the current trends that stem from previous states of affairs. It dispels the 'badly existing' interests and ideologies embedded in previous cultural works (PH1, 148). Such works include the interests, for instance, of the bourgeois in maintaining their class or of capitalist profit, against which the subject of consciously known hope resists, insisting that the world 'should be so', that it must 'become so' (PH1,147). On interest, Bloch offers the example of the utopian function's encounter with Adam Smith's well-intended, yet still *latently* exploitative model of capitalism. Smith develops his model of free trade on the moral ground that capital interest meets the interest of the consumer, what should ensure a system of mutual advantage that is guided by an 'invisible' hand (PH1,151). What utopian function discovers in Smith's argument is an embellished bourgeois promise that allows the private business owner to believe that capitalistic production serves the interests of all. At its height, the embellished interest led private business owners to support the idea of human rights, including that of the *citoyen* as a moral agent. The paradox is that there is a utopian aspiration in Smith: the promise of mutual advantage for all and human rights. Bloch's contention is that this utopian promise could only be kept in socialism, so its role in Smith's theory merely embellishes the exploitation inherent to capitalism (PH1,152). Utopian function retrieves mutual advantage and human rights from Adam Smith, extending it into socialism.

With regards to ideology, utopian function must retrieve the surplus that does not merely coincide with ideas that mask and allow for exploitation. As Bloch notes:

> whenever we think of culture, does not *another side* of ideology appear which is already recognizable in the composition, so different morally as regards content, of the three phases [of ideology]? This is precisely the side which does not *fully* coincide with merely false-consciousness and with the apologetics of a mere, historically discarded class society. (PH1, 154)

Here, Bloch draws on Marx's comment from *The Holy Family* that:

> The 'idea' always disgraced itself insofar as it differed from the 'interest'. On the other hand, it is easy to understand that every 'interest' asserting itself historically goes far beyond its real limits in the 'idea' or 'imagination' when it first came on the scene and is confused with *human* interest in general. This *illusion* constitutes what *Fourier* calls the *tone* of each historical epoch. (*The Holy Family,* 109)

That illusion, for Bloch, is precisely the ideological surplus that is not merely bound to the false consciousness of a previous age. He remarks that the true consciousness of socialism is only 'true' with respect to how it apprehends the movements and tendencies of reality, rediscovering what is utopic in false consciousness (PH1, 155). As Fredric Jameson comments, invoking Paul Ricoeur, we can distinguish that Bloch proposes a hermeneutic of restoration rather than a hermeneutic of suspicion with regards to cultural productions (Jameson 1971, 119-120). Bloch must then be understood as supporting the motto expressed by Marx in his letter to Ruge:

> reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analysing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself, whether it manifests itself in a religious or a political form. It will then become evident that the world has long dreamed of possessing something of which it has only to be conscious in order to possess it in reality. It will become evident that it is not a question of drawing a great mental dividing line between past and future, but of realising the thoughts of the past. Lastly, it will become evident that mankind is not beginning a new work, but is consciously carrying into effect its old work. (Marx 2005, 144)

The work that is culturally inherited is, according to Bloch, produced by past utopian functions (PH1, 156). It is the substratum of our cultural inheritance, an objective aggregate of

what is 'coming up' (PH1, 157). As Bloch later points out in the *Principle of Hope*, the world-process must be understood as, *itself*, a utopian function, its substratum being dialectical matter, 'objectively-real possibility' (PH1, 177). To understand the world-process, which manifests itself as a 'public mystery',[28] real tendencies must be approached through an ontology of the Not-Yet.

ii. Ontology of the Not-Yet

According to Bloch's ontology, humankind, as well as nature, remains in process (PH1, 197). This process subjectively announces itself in daydreams where consciousness exceeds what has become (PH1, 195-196). The dream manifests the imagination's first correlate with what is Not-Yet. But, Bloch insists, images of what is Not-Yet would not circulate in the individual if the 'outer' material world was completely closed.[29] Our wishes could not express alterations, nor alter, the outer world if the latter remains fixed–what Bloch elsewhere calls a Fixum (PH1, 201). So reality itself must be understood in terms of process rather than a totality of facts. Process, for Bloch, refers to the multi-faceted mediation between what is unfinished in the past, the present, and the possible future (PH1, 196). As regards the substratum of this process, Bloch inherits the concept of matter from the Aristotelian Left.

To help clarify Bloch's materialism, it is useful to reconsider Aristotle's association of potentiality with matter. Aristotle's metaphysics maintains the priority of actuality (entelechy) over potentiality (dynamis) in respect of definition, time, and substance (*Metaphysics* Θ, 1049b4-1049b30). Earlier in the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle also argues for the priority of form over matter: "what we seek is the cause, i.e. the form, by reason of which the matter is some definite thing;

[28] Bloch refers to Goethe (177), presumably to the following quote that has been attributed to Goethe by Eckermann, dating October 7th 1827: "We all walk in mysteries. We are surrounded by an atmosphere of which we do not know what is stirring in it, or how it is connected with our own spirit. So much is certain,—that in particular cases we can put out the feelers of our soul beyond its bodily limits, and that a presentiment, nay, an actual insight into the immediate future, is accorded to it." (*Conversations of Goethe With Eckermann and Soret*, 18)
[29] The 'outer' material world will come to be equated with the Object (das Objekt).

and this is the substance of the thing." (*Metaphysics* Z, 1041b9) Tying both concepts of potentiality and matter together, "matter exists in a potential state, just because it may attain to its form; and when it exists actually, then it is in its form." (*Metaphysics* Θ, 1050a16) In this way, Aristotle prioritizes form, the actuality of a substance, over matter.

Inspired by the Aristotelian Left from Avicenna to Giordano Bruno, Bloch contends that:

> matter is both *conditioning everything*–"*according to what-is-considered possible*"–and, above all, *predisposed for everything*–as "*what-may-become possible*", as "*objective Possibility*"... Forms are material figural constructions, and the movement towards these constructions, through them as always, means not only that movement is an "unfinished entelechy," in Aristotle's profound phrase, but also that each distinct entelechy must be understood as itself still unfinished, as a shape in process, and therefore as a series of experimental shapes, excerpt shapes of matter. (*Avicenna and the Aristotelian Left*, 38)[30]

Bloch's materialism inverts the priority of form over matter. Matter is not merely the passive substratum of organic life, one which receives form. It possesses the active capacity of forming itself according to an 'unfinished entelechy' that it shapes as well. De-privation (to emphasize 'privation') is the condition that allows matter to move towards a higher actuality, what Bloch terms the *Novum*. The intersection between currently existing matter and the *Novum* is the *Front*, the material that hope anticipates and clarifies at the 'front' of the world process (PH1, 200).

Possibility then occupies a central role within Bloch's materialist inversion of Aristotle. Should matter shape and attain its form, it can only do so through possibility. To draw on a passage from Bloch's essay "Man as Possibility", possibility is "partial conditionality" (Bloch

[30] Bloch recasts this theory of matter again near the end of the third volume of *The Principle of Hope*: "*Matter,* this is not the mechanical lump but - in accordance with the implied meaning of the Aristotelian definition of matter - both What-Is-according-to-possibility, i.e. that which is defined in terms of conditions by what in each case is capable of appearing historically, and also What-Is-in-possibility, i.e. the real substratum of possibility in the dialectical process. Precisely as moved Being, matter is Being which has not yet been delivered; it is the soil and the substance in which our future, which is also its own future, is delivered." (PH3, 1371)

1968, 281).[31] A blossom is partially conditioned in so far as the flower bud can be impeded by external conditions such as bad weather. If cultivated in a controlled environment, its blossom is 'determinately' conditioned. Possibility is then conceived in terms of the conditions that allow matter to become 'other than' what it is, or what it tends to become.

Bloch raises four general categories of possibility, ultimately serving to distinguish formal from objectively-real possibility. Formal possibility encompasses all sensible statements that are not contradictory (PH1, 224). A pink unicorn admits being formally possible, but *factually-objectively*, we would judge it impossible. Factually-objective possibility designates what can be deemed possible inductively or deductively. It admits a lot as possible given the gap between what is certainly known and what is currently known.[32] For example, even the syllogism 'Caius is necessarily mortal because he is a man' remains 'possible' because the middle term (being a man) refers to an object in process. Given this, we cannot, strictly speaking, establish the necessary relation between men and mortality.[33]

Where the factually possible is discovered in insufficiently *known* conditions, the fact-based possible lies in insufficiently *emerged* conditions (PH1, 229). Bloch categorizes the *fact-based object-suited* possible as the partial conditions existing in matter, specifically, in the Object. Unlike that of Meinong, Bloch supposes that this form of possibility can be accessed through an Object theory that applies to reality (PH1, 230). It encompasses the actual state of partial internal and external conditions of the Object (PH1, 231-232). Internal conditions are equated with the active capability-of-doing-other, whereas external conditions are the passive

[31] The definition comes back in *The Principle of Hope* as "partially conditioned material" (PH1, 226).
[32] Inductive judgments always involve measures of uncertainty, and deductions rely on axioms that are not apodictically provable (PH1, 227-229).
[33] Bloch does concede that some objects can form necessary relationships (i.e. mathematical objects). His contention is that they only lie at the level of higher abstractions. Any syllogisms involving terms that refer to objects in process fail to establish necessary conclusions. Syllogisms that are necessary do not typically relate to objects in process.

capability-of-becoming-other, the two being interdependent. The example of the flower budding that was raised earlier provides an example of a fact-based object-suited possibility, which is derived "according to the structural genus [and] type ... of the matter. Partially conditional appears here as an openness strictly founded in the Object and thus only communicated to hypothetical or problematic cognition, an openness of a more or less structurally determined kind." (PH1, 231) Again, *fact-based object-suited* possibility admits too much as possible in so far as the objects are not grasped in their real propensities, but merely in what they structurally admit to be possible.

Against these layers of possibility, Bloch arrives at the objectively-real possible. In short, he characterizes it as a "future-laden definiteness in the real itself", for which the conditions have not yet ripened (PH1, 235). Da Vinci's sketch of an aerial screw, which was actualized in Igor Sikorsky's VS-300 model in 1939, provides a historical example. What marks da Vinci's sketch as an objectively-real possibility is that the production of a 'flying machine' facilitated the growth of international trading, military development, and news reporting, all of which served the growth of capitalism. Above presenting a vehicle for which the actual conditions could not yet give rise to, the Subject of historical tendencies following da Vinci required inventions such as the 'aerial screw'. So objectively-real possibility encompasses not only conditions of the Object, but also the anticipating Subject that extends utopian tendencies.

Bloch's category of the objectively-real possible integrates the 'ought' in dialectical materialism. Despite the current insufficiency of its conditions, the *Novum* gains objectively-real possibility when subjective anticipation of what ought to become (historical 'tendency')

coincides with what is partially conditioned in the Object.[34] The *Novum* thus distinguishes itself from mere formal possibility despite the fact that it relates to the subject as what *ought* to become in the future, though it has not-yet become. Having retrieved the ought, the ontology of the Not-Yet views history as a process in which humanity works towards its realization by negating the causes of its deprivation. So long as deprivation persists, humanity is Not-Yet complete. Nature also remains incomplete in so far as the process begins with the naturalization of humanity onto the humanization of nature (PH1, 214 and 313). In essence, 'S is not yet P', that is, humanity (S) has not yet realized its own predicate (P), a completely actualized humanity.

iii. Genuine *Carpe Diem* as Redemption

Hope is a principle in so far as it accounts for matter's ability to actualize itself through a process that negates its deprivation. As a principle, it describes the movement of the historical process itself. From infantile daydreams to adult aspirations, self-preservation to revolutionary interest, pure fantasy to works of art, science, and philosophy, hope is the emotional and cognitive medium through which historical progress is made possible. Redemption is joined to hope as a historical moment that works towards ending deprivation. The inroad to a full emancipation is first to be achieved in the concrete realization of socialism,[35] what Bloch maintains as the *Novum*.

The *Novum* distinguishes itself from mere difference to repetition (capitalism in Bloch's context) since it carries its own repetition. This repetition consists in the tendencies that resolve

[34] Object could stand for both the 'outer' world and the objectivation of the Subject. Anything that the Subject can treat as an intentional object that it can also change belongs to the Object. Bloch seems to be discussing Subject and Object within the broader context of historical dialectics.
[35] Consider the following passage: "The goal remains the naturalization of man, humanization of nature, which is inherent in developing matter. This final matter or the content of the realm of freedom first approaches in communism, its only space, has never before been present; that is beyond doubt." (PH1, 209)

themselves in the *Ultimum*, the latency of the process at the end of which nature and humanity are fully realized (PH1, 202-203). Such an *Ultimum* is not guaranteed, however. History can veer towards the complete realization of nature and humanity, the *All*, as much as it can descend into total chaos and annihilation, the *Nothing* (PH1, 313). What encourages progress towards the *Ultimum* is a hope that engages both cold and warm Marxist streams (PH1, 210). The former serves as the critique of ideology and the analysis of conditions that remain open to the realization of the *Novum*. Warmth, for its part, is associated with the attitude of militant optimism towards the realization of the *Novum*, concrete socialism, that historical injustices and deprivation incite (PH1, 206-209). Both streams of Marxism must work in tandem to liberate the *Novum* from its economic, ideological, and political barriers (PH1, 198). Viewed metaphysically, the cold stream analyses the openness of the Object, whereas the warm is the anticipation of the Subject that works to realize the Object.

Opposed to the *Novum* that can become clearer, the *Ultimum*, in which the *All* prevails, is a more distant end that we are less conscious of. Nor have its conditions sufficiently emerged, unlike those of the *Novum* that lie on the *Front* of the world process. However, Bloch is not satisfied with the claim that hope expects an unattainable end for "nothing is more repugnant to utopian conscience than utopia with unlimited travel; endless striving is vertigo, hell." (PH1, 315) What Bloch proposes, instead of a regulative ideal that presents an infinite task, is that the realization of the *Novum* participates in the *Ultimum* as one of its conditions. Thus, the militant optimism that strives to realize the *Novum* is equally one for the *Ultimum*. Though the latter remains more obscure than the *Novum*, the historical events that pave the way towards the *Ultimum* redeem the world process from an otherwise assured descent into Nothingness.

An enigmatic result occurs here. Utopia is as much in the anticipation as in its realization. The roads leading to Rome possess it themselves, to play on Bloch's claim that "Utopia works only for the sake of the present which is to be attained, and so in the end present, as the finally intended distanceless, is sprinkled into all utopian distances." (PH1, 315) Alluding to Socrates' metaphor of the philosopher as a mid-wife, the present is pregnant with the undischarged utopic goal-content of the world process. Our present involvement in the delivery of such a total goal-content consists, itself, of a participation in the realization of the *Ultimum*. What is of importance is not that the *Ultimum*, the end of human history in which the *All* prevails, comes to be realized soon; what is important is that the present works towards it realization.

Redemption for Bloch should not, then, be understood as the completed realization of the highest good (the *Ultimum* in which the *All* prevails), but in the sense of the historical moment in which the individual begins to gain sight of the highest good and begins realizing the *Novum* with militant optimism. (PH3, 1322) Bloch refers to this moment as a *carpe diem*, though he does not intend it in its usual sense. It is not a curiosity that fades the next morning nor an activity that comes to rest at night. (PH1, 293) Neither is it the act of doing what one arbitrarily wills during a given day. Bloch's understanding of a genuine *carpe diem*, what he also refers to as a *carpe aeternitatem in momento* in volume three of *The Principle of Hope*, takes on the character of Faust's 'stay a while, you are so beautiful'. It recasts the καιρός as a political pulse, a standing now, in short, genuine *carpe diem* is the 'moment'. To cite Bloch himself on what a genuine *carpe diem* entails: "[t]here is only a more genuine contact with the moment in strong experiences and in sharp turning-points of existence, either of our own existence or in the time, in so far as they are noticed by the eye that has presence of mind." (PH1, 293-294)

Though a more comprehensive account of the moment, for Bloch, will be pursued in the following chapter, it is mostly characterized by the astonishment at what Bloch calls the inconstruable question, (PH1, 294) first presented thematically in *The Spirit of Utopia* published in 1918. Bloch's own presentation of the inconstruable question in the section of *The Principle of Hope* volume one entitled "More on Astonishment as Absolute Question, in the Shape of Anxiety and of Happiness; the Directly Utopian Archetype: Highest Good" is both cryptic and fragmentary. The underlying concept is that we can, through experiences of seemingly insignificant events, phenomena, or objects have a symbolic experience of a perfected world. As much as such a moment may be characterized by anxiety about the possibility of our absolute annihilation, it can hold on to the image of the achievement of the highest good (PH1, 301).

The genuine *carpe diem* is the moment in which we are brought back to the present through the strange experience of a perfected world. As a moment of astonishment–the mystical undertones should not be ignored–we are brought to question the better life that the future has in stock for us, where we are situated with respect to such an end, and how the end might be achieved from the present. As an experience, it encourages our imagination to entertain what such a better life may be like, our reason to uncover what prevents the attainability of such a life, and our passion to engage ourselves towards its realization. In short, genuine *carpe diem* is an aesthetic experience that pulls us away from the seamless flow of our daily lives to thrust us towards a better one. It is a being towards 'natality' rather than a being-towards-death.

Again, though the topic will be further elaborated in the next chapter, genuine *carpe diem* involves the collective. The flash of utopia that stirs astonishment is not a solipsistic image of our personal life in eternity. It is an anticipation of a messianic age that reveals itself symbolically. Thus, in contrast to Kierkegaard, Bloch's concept of redemption involves the

collective political situation that finally puts an end to human deprivation, one in which humanity finally 'comes home'.

3. Revisiting Kierkegaard and Bloch's Concepts of Hope

La mince clameur de ces êtres iniques et inabsous, pleurant à la sortie du monde, ce perd dans ce royaume d'effroi et de cendres–sinistre abscission. Et la solitude du jardin de Gethsémanie en partage!... Eritis sicut dii. Saints de la pénurie! En vérité, nous sommes les Saints de la pénurie!

- Deathspell Omega, *Dearth*

3.1 Kierkegaard's Concept of Hope Revisited

Kierkegaard's concept of hope distinguishes it from unstable moods and emotions such as joy, naive optimism, and cheerfulness. Against the latter, Christian (i.e. genuine or mature) hope must be understood as grounding itself on a choice, offering it stability. From this thesis, Kierkegaard conceives of hope as the 'existential' middle term[36] for the individual's redemption from sin. Unlike the attitudes of other post-kantians, notably Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, hope is not to be dismissed as a misguided relationship to existence on Kierkegaard's account. However, it is not clear whether Kierkegaard manages to rescue hope from its critics.

To address one of its most radical critiques, Schopenhauer likens hope to a 'temptation' that reinforces the principle of individuation and impedes the negation of the will, which ultimately perpetuates suffering (*The World as Will and Representation*, 419-420). In response, Kierkegaard understands hope as a 'lure' towards eternal happiness (WL, 253). Offering a rejoinder to Schopenhauer in his notes:

> I object to the proposition that to exist is to suffer because, with this, [Christianity] vanishes, and in a manner that [Schopenhauer] perhaps does not consider. For it is precisely [Christianity] that proclaims itself to be suffering... but if existing, to be a [human] being, are simply to be understood as suffering, then [Christianity] is indeed robbed of its dialectic... Christian asceticism has as its point of departure the thought that, in and of itself, existence is not suffering—asceticism thus has meaning. But if existence itself is suffering, then asceticism easily becomes a form of eudaemonism... [If] one were to say,

[36] The 'existential', not the 'absolute'. Only God can offer salvation. Hope is an existential disposition that, within time, expectantly relates itself to the eternal. It is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for redemption.

> [“]Wealth is an evil. Now show your asceticism by giving your wealth away,[”] there is a self-contradiction in this, for if that is the case then it is not asceticism to give away one’s wealth. (NB26-30, 393-394)

Of course, Kierkegaard’s dialectic of hope *can* lead to a repetition in which temporal ends can be expected and enjoyed as they once were–does Kierkegaard promote eudaemonism himself? Suffering expresses the individual’s progress towards eternal happiness, the practice of *ascetic* resignation, that *can* be restored to joy through faith. If Kierkegaard does not commit himself to eudaemonism, it is precisely because temporal joy cannot be guaranteed anymore than redemption can: both are made possible by God. In other words, nothing is ‘guaranteed’ from the perspective of human understanding.[37] The individual’s task is to maintain the hope that God will grant us salvation. Thus, Kierkegaard endorses neither eudaemonism nor moral asceticism.

Nietzsche presents a more significant challenge in so far as it motivates a general critique of Kierkegaard. Commenting on the myth of Pandora’s box, Nietzsche argues hope to be “the worst of all evils, because it protracts the torment of men.” (*Human All Too Human*, §71) Differing from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche specifically addresses metaphysical hope. This distinction vindicates his seemingly opposing claim that “one may reasonably harbour hope only if one credits oneself and one’s kind with more power in head and heart than is possessed by the representatives of what at present exists.” (*Human All Too Human*, §443)

Metaphysical hope protracts the suffering of men by denying the value of our natural existence in favour of a supernatural existence, one that redirects the *ressentiment* of those who suffer towards themselves in the form of guilt (*On the Genealogy of Morals*, 128). Meanwhile,

[37] I agree with Bernier’s reading that “faith is a movement wherein one believes that a particular possibility will be realized, on the general grounds that all things are possible for God. However, the boy does not say to himself: all things are possible, therefore, this possibility will happen. There is no path that human understanding can draw between the ground and the realization of the particular possibility. The connection between them, then, cannot be reduced to a mere cognitive relation; rather, the connection needs to be explained through the way in which the boy appropriates the absurd as the ground for his belief.” (Bernier 2015, 193)

the real causes of suffering are occluded, and what is advanced instead is an ascetic ideal that, according to one of Nietzsche's exaggerated dictums, promotes suicide.[38]

What can be gathered from Nietzsche's critique? Kierkegaard is not as ascetic as Schopenhauer. Neither is he as pessimistic, since through faith, resigned temporal ends can become sources of joy (FT, 40). Yet Kierkegaard might still admit too much pessimism. His dialectic of hope argues that aesthetic and ethical hopes necessarily fail to redeem us. From a secular perspective, hope would actually amount to an infinite resignation because it has nowhere else to turn to, approximating Schopenhauer's negation of the will. This is an obvious flaw that secular readers will find in Kierkegaard's concept of hope: its grounding problem (sin) and solution (eternal salvation) depend on revealed doctrines.

Drawing again from Nietzsche's critique, Kierkegaard can be thought to promote the denial, that is, the *sacrifice* of temporal (natural) ends for the eternal. This might stand for the negation of life rather than its affirmation.[39] Nonetheless, Nietzsche might also recognize that the 'knight of faith' embraces the meaning and value of what is temporal. So Kierkegaard cannot easily be cast as a nihilist.[40] Rather, the question of whether Kierkegaard's concept of hope is nihilistic invites further thought about his separation between the temporal and the eternal.

Concerning the resignation of the temporal in favour of the eternal, the most obvious secular critique of Kierkegaard's concept of hope is that it seems too withdrawn and pessimistic

[38] Consider §131 of *The Gay Science*: "When Christianity came into being, the craving for suicide was immense– and Christianity turned it into a lever of its power. It allowed only two kinds of suicide, dressed them up with the highest dignity and the highest hopes, and forbade all others in a terrifying manner. Only martyrdom and the ascetic's slow destruction of his body were permitted." (*The Gay Science*, 185)

[39] Kierkegaard contrasts Zarathustra's proclamation to "no longer bury your head in the sand of heavenly things, but bear it freely instead, an earthly head that creates a meaning for the earth! ... [T]o *want* the path that human beings have traveled blindly, to pronounce it good and no longer sneak to the side of it like the sick and the dying-out." (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 21)

[40] Here, I side with J. Kellenberger's comment that Nietzsche might not have seen in Kierkegaard the passive 'voluntary beggar' of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, nor a figure who denies earthly values (Kellenberger 1997, 119-122). Certainly, however, Nietzsche would take issue with Kierkegaard's relation to faith. This is not yet to admit that Kierkegaard is guilty of promoting nihilism. The topic merits its own discussion.

about any possibility for redemption. It proposes no political program, nor the need for a critique of politics. No ethical action is required, nor any aesthetic movement. To bring the discussion to a halt, all that secular thought can consider redemptive must be resigned because of its temporal nature. This secular reading reveals Kierkegaard to be a '*Saint de la pénurie*'–from the standpoint of the eternal, we always fall short of redemption without God.

What is missing from Christian hope that concerns secular thought should have concerned Kierkegaard as well. And in a sense, it did. Kierkegaard's vehement polemic against the church, *The Corsair*, and the 'leveling' of his age reveals that he paid far more attention to temporal (i.e. historical and political) issues than his concept of hope seems to admit. A further point is to be made, however. The omission of temporal ends inherent to Kierkegaard's concept of hope gives rise to a potential tension, one that could be avoided if the absolute value of certain historical tasks were to be maintained.

i. The Moment

To state the tension from the outset: if eternal hope does not include the historical task of preserving the possibility of the moment, then redemption is not possible for future individuals. This being the case, no hope is possible at all, since to hope for oneself is to hope for others, and to despair over another is to despair over oneself. Given that the moment is the condition of possibility for the individual's relation to the eternal, the task of its preservation gains absolute value. The *leap of faith* is a temporal event that is imbued with eternal value; likewise, the events that preserve the possibility of Christianity should also be eternally valuable–the tension is that hope resigns temporal ends, including the historical task of preserving the moment.

The moment (Øjeblikket) is a concept that Kierkegaard's Johannes Climacus deploys and expounds in the *Philosophical Fragments* to describe the situation in which the Truth (of Christianity) realizes itself in time through the individual's appropriation of it (PF, 25). It coincides with the dialectical movement in which the individual attains eternal hope after resigning temporal hope. Climacus uses the moment in three senses: the moment as the historical appearance of God in time (incarnation), the moment as the individual's appropriation of the incarnation (conversion), and the moment as both the incarnation and conversion (what I, unlike Climacus, will refer to as the *unio mystica*).[41]

Setting aside the question of how the *unio mystica* sits within Kierkegaard's argument,[42] Climacus intends the incarnation and conversion as necessary, but not sufficient conditions for the *unio mystica*. For instance, he argues that "[i]f the God had not come himself... we would not have had the moment [incarnation], and we would have lost the paradox" (PF, 68). Without the paradox, faith, therefore hope, would not be possible. However, the further issue is that without our faith in the incarnation, the paradox could not reveal its complete significance (Harrison 1997, 461). They mutually depend on each other–and their union constitutes the moment.

A penetrating religious renunciation of the world and what is of the world, adhered to in daily self-denial, would be inconceivable to the youth of our day; *every second theological graduate*, however, has enough *virtuosity* to do something *far more marvelous*. He is able to found a social institution with no less a goal than to save all who are lost. (emphasis added)

-Kierkegaard, *The Present Age*

ii. The Inversion

[41] Here, I follow Victoria S. Harrison's "Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*: A Clarification". She first offers distinctions between Climacus' uses of 'the moment' on page 458.

[42] Harrison refers to the moment, in the sense of the *unio mystica*, as the sublation of the former two (Harrison 1997, 458-459). This may be controversial given Kierkegaard's general resistance to Hegel's concept of mediation.

The claims we can gather from Climacus' discussion of the moment that concerns Kierkegaard's concept of hope are that: 1) the individual must be able to confront the paradox of the incarnation, and 2) the individual must be able to appropriate the truth that revealed itself in the incarnation through passion (the truth as Christ, the *teacher* rather than the *teaching*).[43] Granted these implications, the church and leveling can be viewed as threats to their possibility.

But before considering Kierkegaard's polemic against the church and leveling, what must be admitted is that despite the semblance of a philosophical aporia that results from the tension between the value of the historical task and the resignation of temporal ends, Kierkegaard may have recourse to theological explanations, which cannot fully be explored here. To state the matter crudely, I am not defending the thesis that there is, in fact, an aporia in Kierkegaard's concept of hope. I propose that what we might gain from Kierkegaard by entertaining the tension are insights that can respond to what seems insufficient in his concept of hope.

To this day, the church continues to foster scripture while performing the institutional role of mediating the individual's relation with Christianity. The problem, as Kierkegaard saw it, was the false Christian upbringing that it propagated. Kierkegaard 'quite succinctly' makes this point in a newspaper article, "Salt", published in February of 1855:

> If the human race had risen in rebellion against God and thrown Christianity off or away, it would not have been nearly as dangerous as this skullduggery of having abolished Christianity by means of a false and untrue kind of propagation, of having gotten all to be Christians, and then of having given this activity the appearance of Christian fervor and zeal for the propagation of the doctrine, of having mocked God by thanking him for giving his blessing to Christianity's process in this manner... Christ himself has proclaimed what is to be understood by being a Christian; we are able to read it in the Gospels.–Then he left the earth, but predicted his coming again. As for his coming again, there is one prediction

[43] To cite Climacus: "Now if we assume that it is as we have supposed... that the teacher himself contributes the condition to the learner, it will follow that the object of Faith is not the *teaching* but the *Teacher*." (PF, 76-77)

> he made that goes like this: I wonder, when the Son of man comes again, will he find faith on earth? (*The Moment and Late Writings*, 42-43)

Against the false propagation of Christianity, the individual can turn to the gospel with a critical eye towards its distortion. This endeavor is only possible if the individual possesses sufficient enthusiasm for the eternal, or at least, the enthusiasm to resist the status quo.[44] Without any motivation to pursue the truth of Christianity in the face of its distortion, which already presupposes suspicion, the individual would settle as a church member, comfortable with the Christianity endorsed by the church.[45] Suspicion and enthusiasm render the individual's encounter with the truth of Christianity possible against that of the church. However, these conditions are exactly what leveling threatens to subdue for Kierkegaard.

The Present Age offers Kierkegaard's most sustained polemic against the press, the public, and reflection's sway over passion: in short, leveling. What Kierkegaard saw in his age was the rising trend of social conformity, that is, the mediation of individuality with social norms, opinions, and interests that led individuals to become identical with each other, or more precisely, with the 'public' (TA, 84 and 103-104). Leveling is historically attributable to the press according to Kierkegaard, which generated the phenomenon of the 'public', a fabricated expression of a *general will* that purports to represent the particular individual (TA, 90-94). The danger with leveling, as Kierkegaard saw it, was that individuals no longer possessed the enthusiasm to stake their lives on their own decisions. The tendency was for individuals to conform to the public, which ruptures the possibility for any genuine relation to Christianity,

[44] "Then perhaps their situation is something like this: they have become aware, or at least they have begun to think about whether the whole religious situation is in an extremely wretched condition. But, on the other hand, there is so much that makes them disinclined to devote themselves to such thoughts; they love the usual order of things, which they relinquish very reluctantly. Therefore their condition is somewhat like that of a person who walks around with a bad taste in his mouth... so the physician says to him: Take an emetic." (*The Moment and Late Writings*, 99)

[45] From Kierkegaard's articles in "The Moment", we learn that 'being Christian' in Denmark, according to him, mostly involved contributing to church offerings and assuming the title 'Christian'.

since what “the individual fears more than death is reflection’s judgment upon him, reflection’s objection to his wanting to venture something as an individual.” (TA, 85)

To become Christian within such a context is to successfully confront the *examen rigorosum* of leveling (TA, 87). Its solution is religious inwardness: “a very reflective age certainly must have its bright side, simply because considerable reflectiveness is the condition for a higher meaningfulness than that of immediate passion, is the condition for it–if enthusiasm intervenes and persuades the reflective power to make a decision... if religiousness intervenes in the individual and takes over the prerequisites [for action].” (TA, 96) Religious enthusiasm is stirred by the paradox, but the paradox has been falsely propagated by the church. The source of the enthusiasm could then only come from personal acquaintance with the gospel. What could secure, however, an interpretation of the gospel that leads the individual to Christianity? How could the potential for a misreading that might lead the individual to lose any enthusiasm for Christianity be corrected? The church and the public fail the individual on this point. But an individual’s expression of dissent can prove to be very helpful.

The historical task of preserving the possibility of the ‘moment’ cannot take the institutional form of which ‘every second’ theological graduate is able. This graduate dissertation on Kierkegaard concedes the point. An institution would reinscribe the problem of leveling–either it will come to function like the church, or it will function like the press. Only individual intervention can help. Apart from the suffering that sets itself against leveling (TA, 109), critique proves to be effective. The public use of one’s reason, to recall Kant, is precisely exhibited in Kierkegaard’s late authorship. What Kierkegaard made of it was an instrument to stir the comfort of his contemporaries, affording them the space to cultivate an enthusiasm for the eternal and to confront the paradox. This task, which goes beyond hidden inwardness, retains more qualities of

Christ than what Lutheran pietism admits. In 1843, Kierkegaard writes in one of his journals that "[t]he absolute paradox would be that the Son of God became a human being, came into the world, went around quite unrecognized, became in the strictest sense an individual human being who had a trade, got married, etc... In that case God would have been the greatest ironist, not God and Father of humankind " (EE-KK, 163). In this sense, should Christ, the *teacher*, be the truth, then what it reveals is an ideal of existence that calls for action. What we discover here is Kierkegaard's personal tension with the pietistic tendencies of Lutheranism.

What of the obvious objection to what has been argued, notably, that the belief that salvation is possible for all is maintained *by virtue of the absurd*? Well, the absurd is not just any logical contradiction, nor just any 'offense' to human understanding. The absurd is the paradox, the appearance of an eternal truth in time that the gospel proclaims. Prior to the second coming of Christ, Christian eschatology does not prophesize any form of divine intervention. From a journal entry on divine governance dated 1851, Kierkegaard expresses that "in a certain sense one can say that there simply is no governance, just as, indeed, it is also as if there were no experimenter... because he does not, after all, intervene, but simply permits the complex forces to unfold on their own... Only once has Governance intervened omnipotently: in [Christ]" (NB31-36, 349). The possibility of taking offense at the paradox then relies on whether current circumstances preserve the paradox; we also know from Kierkegaard that he thought the circumstances relied on human activity rather than governance.[46] In this sense, to believe that salvation is possible for all is to appropriate the historical task of correcting the situation that

[46] Kierkegaard also argues in *The Present Age* that leveling is not God's work, that it is our own doing (TA, 109).

causes the paradox to be missed altogether. Otherwise, the humorist who faces a situation of ethical and religious decay has no basis for believing that salvation is possible for all.[47]

Hope must then preserve the historical task of critique in order to secure the ground of its possibility (i.e. the belief that salvation is possible for everyone). Without any such task, hope amounts to an act of resigning temporal hope and expectantly relating to God's promise for *oneself*–yet the individual must also hope for others as for oneself. So it seems that hope is foreclosed as a possibility without the historical task of critique, one that polemicizes how Christianity is misconstrued and that criticizes contemporary forms of life that obstruct the possibility for the individual's offense at the paradox. Kierkegaard was very aware of the need for this historical task, as made evident throughout his authorship along with his journals, of which he expresses in one that:

> *My task* is continually to provide the existential-corrective by poetically presenting the ideals, inciting with regard to the established order, with which I have an understanding, criticizing all the false reformers and the opposition, who simply are evil–and whom only the ideals can halt.–*JP* 1 708, 1851. (*The Moment and Later Writings*, 411)

When the tension between the historical task and temporal resignation is entertained, the need for critique seems to emerge as a task that gains absolute value, alongside the task of becoming Christian. This is a result that Adorno, whose philosophical career began with a strong repudiation of Kierkegaard's existential dialectic, maintains in his 1939 essay "On Kierkegaard's Doctrine of Love": "[a]ll Kierkegaard's gloomy motives have good critical sense as soon as they are interpreted in terms of social critique. Many of his positive assertions gain the concrete

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[47] My interpretation rests partly on Gregor Malantschuk's reading that "Kierkegaard, no matter what the external challenge, had never imagined that personal ethics–that is, an ethical and religious inwardness–should remain exclusively hidden inwardness that should not have consequences in external action. When demoralization is very obviously widespread, then the single individual must rise up against it, not as an authority, but with outspoken protest, by which the single individual would risk coming to suffer." (Malantschuk 2003, 120)

significance they otherwise lack as soon as one translates them into concepts of a right society." (Adorno 1939, 423) To extend what has hitherto been said: "Kierkegaard's doctrine of hope protests against the seriousness of a mere reproduction of life which mutilates man. It protests against a world which is determined by barter and gives nothing without an equivalent." (Adorno 1939, 427)

Kierkegaard never expresses that 'his task' is a 'Christian' task, that it fundamentally belongs to the process through which one becomes Christian, nor that the Lutheran tendency to promote 'hidden inwardness' should be countered. Nonetheless, his authorship attests to the need for a critique that can rescue the possibility of the moment. The potential aporia this gives rise to for his concept of hope also seems to support the absolute value of critique. In a sense, Kierkegaard's concept of hope leads us to the position where the possibility for redemption can be approached once more, a position that has liberated itself from reification and immanence through critique. It paves the way for utopic thought, though it leaves no positive doctrine for what utopia *ought* to be like. The work of Ernst Bloch, on the other hand, tackles the issue of utopia much more directly. It begins where Kierkegaard's concept of hope ends, with the significant difference that Christianity no longer serves as its guiding principle. Nonetheless, what Kierkegaard shares with Bloch is that hope manifests itself through a moment of rupture or discontinuity with contemporary states of affairs, against which hope protests.

3.2 Bloch's Concept of Hope Revisited

Verweile doch, du bist so Schön
[Stay a while, you are so beautiful]

- Goethe, *Faust*

In his ninth thesis on the philosophy of history, Walter Benjamin offers a metaphor for historical ‘progress’ that recasts Paul Klee’s ‘Angelus Novus’. Instead of an angel who appears to be about to move away from what he contemplatively fixes, Benjamin depicts the angel of history to be looking back at a single historical catastrophe, one that is usually viewed as a chain of events. (*Illuminations*, 257) That single catastrophe, likened to an accumulating pile of debris, is kept away from the angel’s attempt to set it right; a storm blows from Paradise, constantly propelling the Angel away from it. The storm is what Benjamin calls progress, while the accumulating debris represents the spoils of history. Offering another turn on this metaphor, we might suppose that Bloch envisions the angel to be facing forwards, urged ahead by the pressure built up by utopic tendencies and slowed by what constrains their realization.

But the linear character of this image is misleading for what concerns Bloch’s understanding of history. Mistrustful of narratives of progress like Benjamin, Bloch does not entertain the thought that history directly leads to redemption, a promised land we merely have to reach. Utopia is not a social ideal, nor a technological one. It is the historical intrusion of a symbol-intention of utopia that has, in the past, allowed us to conceive of any such utopic ideal. Utopia is no state whatsoever, but a historical pulse in which we experience the short-comings of our situation, what incidentally requires our experience of a world without them. This experience gives way to hope, which bears itself against what is ‘badly-existing’ towards a better life, one that we are not yet conscious of and that has not-yet become. Inherent to the lived pulse itself, utopia exists in the moment where a turn towards a better life begins to take place.

Bloch’s program is, in a sense, a preparation for Exodus. Utopia is a return home, from which humankind has always been alienated. Had Bloch not fixated on the need to realize concrete socialism, he would have come much closer to the position of his contemporaries. He

would have also avoided obstructing the possibility of the moment had he not fixed the *Novum* as socialism. In this sense, where Kierkegaard obstructed the moment by not directly affirming the absolute value of any historical task, Bloch obstructs the moment by designating the *Novum*, our most immediate task, as the realization of concrete socialism. A turn to Bloch's concept of the moment, and the issues that his commitment to socialism presents, will now be turned to.

i. The Moment

Darkness pervades the *Now*, one that Bloch argues cannot be seen any more than the eye can see its blind spot where the optic nerve enters the retina (PH1, 290). It is only from a distance, whether in a past event or an expected one, that the *Now* can be experienced rather than merely being lived. The result is that though we live the present, we cannot experience it–this constitutes the darkness of the *Now*.

From this darkness, what 'is driving' in the lived moment stretches forward towards something, at what it is lacking (PH1, 287). The object towards which the present urges must be nearly attainable, 'within its reach', for if not, the urge would suffocate. So there is an openness, a real possibility that the *Now* grasps forward to realize. As Bloch expresses this productive relationship: "[t]he Now of the driving only has room among unclosed things to realize, to make its content increasingly manifest" (PH1, 288).

The relationship is recast by Bloch with the terms 'source' and 'outflow'. Where the darkness of the *Now* characterizes the source that seeks to realize what it lacks, the outflow corresponds to the object that is open to be realized (PH1, 288-289). The outflow can be thought as an 'adequate' openness, adequate in the sense that the conditions of the Object permit it to be realized. But given that the outflow consists in a moment leading to the final state, the *Ultimum*,

the openness intends something more, namely, 'open adequacy' (PH1, 289). Where the first refers to the object as it open to be realized at present, the latter emphasizes the open possibility of a final state (*Ultimum*) that continues to be approached by the present. These characterizations lead Bloch to his enigmatic formulation of the moment:

> open adequacy does not make itself evident in experiences of the *continuing* world-process, with experimented outflow, but in short, strange experience of an *anticipating keeping still*. The briefest *symbol-intentions of an Absolute* have always been experienced in this keeping still, subjective at first, in fact appearing to be lyrical and yet arch-philosophically founded in the matter itself, namely in a flash of utopian final state. Such experiences of a utopian final state certainly do not fix it, otherwise they would not be experiences of mere *symbol-intention* and not utopian, let alone central utopian ones. But they actually do touch upon the *core of latency*, and in fact as final question, echoing within themselves. This question cannot be construed towards any readily available answer, or be referred to any material already settled anywhere in the available world. (PH1, 289)

We need further add that for Bloch, the 'inconstruable question' does not clarify the moment, but 'alludes', or more precisely, unmistakably hints [unverwechselbarer Hinweis] at the immediate darkness of the present and its insufficiencies (PH1, 290).

Bloch's enigmatic definition opposes the experience of 'the continuing world-process' with the strange experience of an 'anticipating keeping still'. In a sense, this opposition is central to what Bloch means by the moment. The experience of continuity is, essentially, inductive and socially mediated knowledge. Experience in this sense relates to what has occurred, to history as it has unfolded and as it has been understood up to date. It is found in the adult who is settled in society, the historical gaze of the encyclopedist. The opposite experience, of an 'anticipating keeping still', does not relate to what is in the past, but to the future.

However, Bloch does not suppose that this strange experience is a *unio mystica*[48] that gains insight into destiny from an eternal standpoint: it "lies midway between memory and prophecy" (*The Spirit of Utopia*, 200). To briefly state what Bloch means here, we can be brought to imagine what the world could be like, one without the forms of deprivation that we currently face, which announces itself to be better than what, at present, exists. The act of coming before this formed image offers us the *strange* (or uncanny) experience of a world that we anticipate. Given that such a world has no historical precedence, it manifests itself symbolically. The symbol brightens up the current situation that, in its lived pulse, urges for a better day. It is in this sense that Bloch speaks of a 'flash of utopian final state'. The image, or symbol-intention, appears and we hold it still–this is essentially the experience of a 'stay a while, you are so beautiful'. By 'brightening up', Bloch does not intend that the experience clarifies the darkness of the *Now*. The metaphor suggests that, in experiencing a flash of utopian final state, we can decisively relate to the future. If this gives way to the realization of a future possibility, then metaphorically, brightening refers to the dark night that transitions into a new day.

The image is not sufficient in itself, because after all, it is but a symbol, not a vision of what is to come. The symbol can inspire questioning, a dynamic that Bloch explores in more detail throughout *The Spirit of Utopia*. There, as in *The Principle of Hope*, the moment is fundamentally an aesthetic experience for Bloch. It is characterized by amazement or enthusiasm that is stirred by largely arbitrary causes which, he supposes, do not lawfully stimulate the individual to questioning. The same stimuli might not cause the moment in different people, nor

[48] On this topic, Bloch compares his understanding of the moment with those found in literature: "[t]here is a parallel here with the experience of the fatally wounded Andrei Bolkonsky on the battlefield of Austerlitz who glimpses the starry sky as never before, and also with the experience of unity of Karenin and Vronsky at Anna's deathbed;–but also of course, this *unio mystica* with meaning, eternity, totality is again much too big and too determined, much too contrived in its theological Object to cope with the modesty of the peripheral, never formulated material." (PH1, 302)

even in the same person (*The Spirit of Utopia*, 193). What is constant for the moment is that the effect of such amazement–should it occur–quiets 'the flux' of lived experience and stimulates questioning that leads one into oneself, where the most immediate purpose for ourselves, including others, is found. Bloch lists a couple of stimuli that may trigger such amazement:

> A drop falls and there it is; a hut, the child cries, an old woman in the hut, outside wind, heath, an evening in autumn, and there it is again, exactly, the same; or we read how the dreaming Dimitri Karamazov is astonished that the peasant always says "a wee one," and we suspect that it could be found here; "Little rat, rustle as long as you like;/Oh, if there were only a crumb!" and upon hearing this small, harsh, strange line from Goethe's *Wedding Song* we sense that in this direction lies the unsayable, what the boy left lying there as he came out of the mountain, "Don't forget the best thing of all!" the old man had told him, but no one could ever have come across something so inconspicuous, deeply hidden, uncanny within the concept. (*The Spirit of Utopia*, 193)

Given that these experiences cannot be conceptualized, they cannot be explained, but expressed. Bloch's example of the proletariat adolescent's experience of the "booths at the fair where chains rattle and can be broken" (PH1, 25) lends itself to a more simple elaboration. The rattle takes place in a situation that starkly contrasts the gloomy and laborious daily routine of the proletariat. At the fair, a distinctive sound can be experienced as an echo from the livelihood of a better life that has yet to unfold. What the adolescent questions is how such a possibility, a life that is as festive and free from trouble as the booth at the fair, might not only look like but be realized. Through this questioning amazement, she or he is brought back to the present, where a consideration of what must be realized next is entertained in a way that parts with what was formerly expected according to the adolescent's experience of the 'continuing world process'.

The example of a fair booth clearly presents the 'rupture' inherent to the moment, but not the return back to the lived present. Adolescents are not usually thought to be in the most suitable positions, yet, to clearly formulate what should be done owing to their budding maturity. A joke

attributed to Kafka about a poor man's exchange with Hasidic Jews,[49] local to the same village, offers a clear example of the return. After the locals asked each other what they wished for, answers including 'money', 'a son-in-law', and 'being rid of this cough', the rabbi in the group turns to ask a rugged man seated in a corner, whom no one knew, what he would wish for. The man proceeds to express his wish to be a powerful king who reigns over a vast country. He wishes that one night, while asleep, an enemy should attack his kingdom. Given their uncompromising success in battle, he would be forced to swiftly escape his palace, having no time to dress, obliged to flee wearing the shirt he slept in. At last, he wishes the success of his escape, running across his kingdom and the wilderness to a place where he would not be recognized, finding safety on the bench upon which he sits, now. There is a pause, and the rabbi asks him what good this wish would bring. The man responds: "I would have a shirt".

From a strange experience that causes a rupture in the experience of the ongoing world process, a return to the present is also possible that clarifies what, most immediately, must be done. The poor man may or may not have been, in fact, a former king. Nonetheless, his audience was made aware of his need for a shirt. On the historical front, Bloch supposes that concrete socialism responds to the needs of present political situations that, at least in the West, have tended towards capitalism.[50] This expression of the *Novum*, however, may actually give rise to a tension in Bloch's work in so far as it can constrain, as our experience of the continuing world process constrains, our experience of the moment.

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[49] The joke is presented by Bloch (*Traces*, 72-73), but also by Benjamin in his essay on Franz Kafka (*Illuminations*, 134-135).

[50] For instance, see PH1, 17; PH3, 1357-1359 and 1372; *The Spirit of Utopia*, 246-247; Bloch 1968 283; Bloch's late 1976 essay "Dialectics and Hope", pp. 10. During his debate with Adorno on the concept of utopia in 1964, recorded in a written article entitled "Something's Missing", we find Bloch asserting very clearly that "Marxism in its entirety... is only a *condition* for a life of freedom, life in happiness." ("Something's Missing", 15) Bloch always associates socialism with the *Novum*, the most immediate task of the present that works towards the *Ultimum*. As the most immediate, it is essentially what 'the moment' grasps in every 'strange' experience.

ii. The Inversion

What has been introduced as a potential tension for Bloch has been quite clearly articulated by Adorno in his review of *Traces*:

> Bloch's conception of something suppressed forcing its way up from below, something which will put an end to the outrage, is political. About this too he tells stories, as if he were speaking about something predecided, virtually assuming the transformation of the world, unconcerned about what has become of the Revolution in the thirty years since the first edition of the Spuren and what has happened to the concept and possibility of revolution under altered technological and social conditions. The absurdity of the status quo suffices for his verdict; he does not enter into calculations about what ought to happen. (Adorno 1991, 213-214)[51]

Without wishing to pursue a complete account of Adorno's critique of Bloch, Adorno's remark seems to point to the tension between Bloch's commitment to socialism and the moment that gives rise to hope, the latter of which Adorno underhandedly replies "is no principle" (Adorno 1991, 213). The case can be stated simply: Bloch may have experienced the political contradiction of his age between the rise of fascism and the possibility of socialism. His commitment was promising at the time as an attempt to counter the historical events that lead to and followed the establishment of the Third Reich. What becomes an issue, however, is that Bloch did not commit himself to reflect over the historical failures of socialism.[52] Instead, he seems to attribute the failures to the fact that "we have no true idea of socialism," (*The Spirit of Utopia*, 247) with a repeated emphasis throughout his work on how *vulgar* Marxism holds on to a mechanistic view of history rather than a productive dialectic, a view that historically manifested cold and scientific socialist regimes. Having thus avoided the experience of the

[51] I credit Iain Macdonald for bringing my attention to this passage.
[52] Vincent Geoghegan offers a detailed account of Bloch's stance regarding the USSR and the KPD in the chapter entitled "Fascism and Marxism" of his manuscript *Ernst Bloch*, first published in 1996.

failures of historical socialism, Bloch's *Novum* continues to present an either-or: the classless society or capitalism.

Theoretically, the either-or constrains any experience of the moment. If militant optimism is espoused, then there is no repose from such a position that could allow itself to experience new contradictions. Additionally, any 'explanation' of the moment (to recall Bloch's structure of incubation, inspiration, and explanation) would only be formulated according to the either-or. This is problematic given that new political issues have emerged that Bloch was not sensitive to. The threat posed by the rapid development of technology is a particular issue that slips experience if it is constrained by the choice between socialism or capitalism.

To provide a further example, unlike Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, or Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Bloch is far less suspicious of the development of technology. In the context of the second volume of *The Principle of Hope*, he argues that "[t]echnology, in so far as it represents a technology of the means of existence and not the means of death, is itself cum grano salis already socialist; it therefore needs less future planning than society." (PH2, 659) Bloch then considers technology to be a fundamentally neutral means of production, which is a position that Hans Jonas takes issue with because it is insensitive to the dangers that the development of technology has caused and continues to pose to the ecology. Against Bloch, who supposes that socialism can put technology to good use, for one, and that the classless society, as opposed to capitalist markets, will reduce productive surpluses (*Le principe de responsabilité*, 246), Jonas points to the fact that the classless society would, just like capitalist societies, still exhaust natural resources to a point where they may overstep nature's vulnerability (*Le principe de responsabilité*, 251-256). For leisure to prevail, servitude to labour requires technological innovations that could provide for

our basic nutritional, medical, and infrastructural needs (*Le principe de responsabilité*, 217). For Jonas, this would only perpetuate the exhaustion of natural resources that ultimately test nature's tolerance, threatening to extinguish it.

Jonas' total rejection of utopianism may be an 'unwarranted intransigence' towards Bloch's utopianism.[53] Nonetheless, his polemic against Bloch in particular and Marxist utopianism in general further substantiates Adorno's argument that Bloch 'does not enter into calculations about what ought to happen' because he remained fixed on a former historical contradiction. The inversion I propose is one between the *Novum* and the *Ultimum*. For Bloch to preserve the moment, the anticipative experience of what may become that allows us to reorient history towards redemption—the *Novum*—cannot be fixed. Granted such an inversion, the *Novum* becomes similar to the *Ultimum*, despite the fact that the latter is thought to be more a distant goal than the former.

3.3 Conclusion

Between a Christian existential interpretation of hope and a speculative materialist one, we gain the notion that an important feature of hope is its ability to break with current tendencies. Such a rupture opens the possibility for a critical reconsideration of where redemption may be found, while also encouraging the imagination to stretch beyond what exists at present. To adopt metaphysical terminology, hope opens the possibility for transcendence.[54] In addition, a constitutive feature of hope is that it involves a committed decision to expect the

[53] This is argued by Arno Münster in his *Principe Responsabilité ou principe Espérance?*, pages 49-50. Munster argues that Bloch, despite Jonas' observation that technological developments are beginning to exhaust natural resources at increasing rates, still attempted to establish the necessary alliance between humanity and nature within his principle of hope. That is, there may not be sufficient grounds for Jonas to argue that Bloch would be completely insensitive to technology's exploitation of natural resources. In the context of this dissertation, the point is that Bloch does not pursue a full evaluation of the issues associated with technology given the priority he attributes to the realization of the classless society. Jonas provides an extreme critique that clarifies this lack of sensitivity.

[54] Although transcendence for Kierkegaard is a theological category, the 'inversion' of his work suggests that there is also an *immanent* socio-political transcendence at work in Kierkegaard, as there is for Bloch.

good. The volitional character of hope, so conceived, supports the thesis that there is a practical relation between hoping and acting, as opposed to the relation between expecting and waiting.

The positive thesis that can be redeemed from Kierkegaard is that hope grounds itself on a choice, a stable resolution to expect the good. Hope loses its most defining character when it is categorized alongside transient human inclinations that ultimately cannot live up to the realization of any redemption. What is insufficient in his concept, however, is the lack of a clear plan of action, despite the fact that through an interpretation of Kierkegaard which restores the absolute value of certain temporal ends, critique can be considered a task of hope. Resolution proves its worth where it concerns the need for action, but reflection must clarify its objective if hope is to realize temporal, *or even eternal*, redemption.

Bloch offers the positive thesis that utopia, as the object of hope, is not fixed but remains sensitive to different socio-historical situations. This grants hope a certain flexibility without which it would obstinately drive towards a fixed end, closing itself off from the experience of different issues or forms of deprivation that might emerge historically. Incidentally, Bloch's own insistence that the *Novum* calls for socialism reintroduces the very insufficiency that his interpretation of utopia responds to. An additional thesis that Bloch introduces is that daydreams are not reducible to ego drives nor the libido. The emotional aspect of hope that stimulates the imagination can be thought to actually relate to new, future objects rather than being reduced to the experience of sublimated infantile desires that become rationalized after they are clarified cognitively. His critique of psychoanalysis remains relevant on this point.

For what concerns the two, Bloch agrees with Kierkegaard's concept of the moment on a few points. Most clearly, the moment is characterized as a rupture with existing tendencies. The

knight of faith experiences a rupture with worldly existence. Likewise, Bloch's subject experiences a flash of utopia that hints at the insufficiencies inherent to current historical situations. Secondly, there is the appearance of what could be different and better. Eternal salvation opens itself to the converted. Utopia to the subject. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the moment is triggered by a phenomenon that is external, or rather, 'other' than the individual or subject. The miracle of the paradox incites religious enthusiasm that collides with the contemporary world. For Bloch, it is an aesthetic experience of mostly insignificant or peripheral phenomena–dreams, a turn of phrase, a novel, a painting, even the chains adorning a fair kiosk–that incite astonishment at the inconstruable question. Rupture, alternative, and alterity neatly summarize the common points between Kierkegaard and Bloch's concepts of the moment.

There are nonetheless significant differences between the two. Kierkegaard's paradox is consistent: it is the same historical event that reveals the same eternal truth. Utopia, on the other hand, responds to the needs of current social circumstances. The 'alterity' that incites utopic enthusiasm is not one and the same phenomenon. Metonymically, utopia can present itself from anywhere or anything, but the incarnation of God belongs to the gospel. Divinity neither explicitly belongs to Bloch's understanding of utopia. At least, what cannot be said about Bloch's concept is that God manifests Himself in the moment.[55]

[55] For one, Bloch's principle of hope is messianic. Humanity is to deliver itself of its own deprivation by negating political and social imperfections over time, what should eventually yield a Messianic Age, the accomplished 'final state'. On the topic of hope's drive towards perfection, Adorno comments that he seems to be 'strangely close' to an ontological proof of God during their recorded debate ("Something's Missing", 16-17). Bloch concedes that hope's attempt to eliminate imperfection requires that it aspires towards perfection, and in this sense, his principle is similar to an ontological argument. However, he retorts that Anselm's perfect being is fixed and that it possesses the property of existing in reality, which is a concept that Bloch explicitly rejects. There is no revelation for Bloch.

Lastly, a similar problem is shared by Kierkegaard and Bloch. Throughout the course of Bloch's explanation of the inconstruable question in *The Spirit of Utopia*, he shows a remarkable affinity with Kierkegaard's emphasis on interiority:

> [O]nly one thing is ultimately left for precise, ontic discussion: to grasp the question about us, purely as question and not as the construed indication of an available solution, *the stated but unconstrued question existing in itself*, in order to grasp its pure statement in itself as the first answer to oneself, as the most faithful, undiverted fixation of the *We-problem*... One man above all here left behind the merely external, thinks his way into what concerns us. *Kierkegaard* alone left what is ultimately alien behind, is the Hume born to us, who awakens far differently, more significantly, from dogmatic slumber. We are: that alone is the concern where what is truly fundamental is involved; one looks out the window onto the street, but in the silvered glass, in the mirror alone does one see oneself. Only in the cloudy, shimmering aspect of being-there [*da-sein*], which feels and wants to become aware [*innerwerden*] of itself, is one together with the truly infinite, the immediate, out of which alone the truth looks towards us: it is moral, is character, "but the sea," says Kierkegaard, "has no character and the sand has none and abstract intelligence has none either, for character is precisely interiority."... Only that cognition, Kierkegaard teaches, which relates essentially to our existence, is essential cognition, existential pathos, in contrast to which all alienated, dispassionately systematic procedure represents nothing but a cheap, mendacious way to process oneself out of the immediacy from which the truth regards us utterly. (*The Spirit of Utopia*, 198)

Despite the translator's note that "Bloch's source is unknown" (*The Spirit of Utopia*, 290), Bloch is citing from Kierkegaard's "The Present Age".[56] The affinity between Kierkegaard and Bloch here is that they suppose that hope must be cultivated from our self-experience. That is, we must relate ourselves to an object of hope that we come to see as promising redemption in light of our encounter with who we are, at the moment. Attempts to systematize or to objectively demonstrate the object of hope fail because they do not, of themselves, procure the passion that is required for the realization of redemption. Why is this significant? For Kierkegaard, we would be lost to the leveling of our time without the enthusiasm that can pull us away from it. For

[56] "Morality is character; character is something engraved (χαρασσο), but the sea has no character, nor does sand, nor abstract common sense, either, for character is inwardness." (TA , pp. 77-78, VIII 73)

Bloch, we would continue to be under the sway of current ideologies and beliefs without the astonishment that affords us a new experience of what is currently insufficient. Interiority is where passion can be excited, and passion affords us the possibility of parting ways with the status quo. This is of critical importance given that the perpetuation of the status quo is precisely what incentivizes hope: that something in current states of affairs seems wrong or seems to be leading towards an end that could be wrong.

On the importance attributed to interiority, Hans Jonas takes issue with how it potentially undermines our respect for the ecology by promoting a form of anthropocentrism. The fact that Kierkegaard and Bloch largely focused on human issues certainly would appear problematic from our contemporary perspective. But this is not the fundamental problem inherent to Kierkegaard and Bloch, nor is their emphasis on interiority, in itself. The problem can be further explored through two questions: did Kierkegaard and Bloch come to experience other issues as obstacles to redemption? Are their concepts of hope therefore limited? To the first, the answer is a regrettable: no. The achievement of eternal salvation remained Kierkegaard's permanent object of hope, as did the realization of socialism for Bloch.

As for the second question, it remains debatable. What is limited in Kierkegaard's concept is that the gospel, or the paradox of the incarnation, is the condition for the moment. Other than this point, should the historical task of critique be considered an essential part of Christianity, any issue that threatens to permanently sever the temporal from the eternal must be addressed, including economic, ecological, and cultural issues. What is limited in Bloch's concept is the notion that socialism is the first priority (the *Novum*) of redemption. Apart from this limitation, there is no theoretical reason Bloch offers for why other historical issues should

be overlooked. S is not yet P–when it is, subject and object will be reconciled, humanity and nature as well. A multiplicity of issues theoretically *could* be subject to experience for Bloch.

Nonetheless, the problem remains that hope must be open to new experiences, ones that could become sensitive to issues that were not formerly made explicit. Historically, both Kierkegaard and Bloch seem to have been too rigid, too theoretically set on a particular vision of redemption to have experienced 'the moment' once again. Their rigidity seems to suggest, for any concept of hope, that the experience of the moment underlying hope must be renewable and flexible enough to become sensitive to emerging issues. Without these two conditions, hope becomes pejoratively 'obstinate'. In other words, interiority becomes an issue when it freezes itself, when it is no longer susceptible to change, treating the issues that it discovers as absolute. The picture of Dorian Grey changes as does the world around it. The lack of emphasis on renewed and renewable experience in Kierkegaard and Bloch's concepts of hope becomes their fundamental issue. Hope may begin with the resolute anticipation of a particular object. If it is not to become insensible, however, it must be willing to change the object it anticipates in relation to the conditions of the present age.

For *strictly* mnemonic purposes, to summarize some of the larger theses that were presented, we can assert that Kierkegaard's concept of hope is truly *historic*, while Bloch was just an *experience* away from utopia. They are *sympathized* in the claim that to set the table for the future, we ought to commit ourselves to rethink the possibility of redemption in the moment. I leave my readers with this *confined* expression of *humour*.

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