



Transforming Vision: Imagination and Will in Kierkegaardian Faith

M. Jamie Ferreira

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The metaphor of a "leap of faith" is probably the element most widely recognized as a distinctive characteristic of a "Kierkegaardian" account of the transition to religious faith. Both in popular and scholarly circles this "leap" has usually been understood in terms of an act of will-power. Challenging such a volitionalist view, as well as some current alternatives to it which see instead only an ineffable "miracle" of grace, Ferreira argues that Kierkegaard's striking appreciation of a variety of roles of imagination supports a reconceptualization of the "leap" or "decision" in terms of a reorienting shift in perspective, an imaginative revisioning. Exploring the relation between passion and paradox in several of Kierkegaard's accounts of selfhood, and developing an account of transitional choice in which imagination is a constitutive element, Ferreira elaborates an understanding of the faith-transition in terms of such imaginative activities as "suspension," "synthesis," and "engagement." The analysis of imaginative activity in these ethical and religious transitions has, moreover, implications which go beyond Kierkegaard scholarship, for it bears importantly not only on other "conversion" accounts, but also on the question of transitions to alternative or incommensurable conceptual frameworks in general.

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