

SØREN KIERKEGAARD

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Philosophy Program

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The response to the expanded version of the Kierkegaard Newsletter has been encouraging. We've received numerous letters and calls, stating a desire for an organ dedicated to Kierkegaard scholarship. Hence, we've gone ahead and solicited reviews on some of the latest work in Kierkegaardiana. In this issue Andrew Burgess reviews John Elrod's latest work, KIERKEGAARD AND CHRISTENDOM, and David Patterson reviews Mark Taylor's JOURNEYS TO SELFHOOD. Robert C. Roberts takes a look at a new edition of David Swenson's SOMETHING ABOUT KIERKEGAARD. Alastair McKinnon offers a brief review of A KEY TO KIERKEGAARD'S ABBREVIATIONS AND SPELLING by Julia Watkin. We have also included an abstract of David J. Gouwens' paper, "Kierkegaard's Understanding of Doctrine," to be read at the Kierkegaard Consultation meeting at the American Academy of Religion meeting in Chicago next December. Besides a few announcements we have included a copy of the International Kierkegaard Newsletter, edited from Copenhagen by Julia Watkin.

Alastair McKinnon wrote to say that a translation of Barth's lecture on Kierkegaard by H. Martin Rumscheidt appeared as "A Thank You and a Bow: Kierkegaard's Reveille" in the Canadian Journal of Theology, vol. XI (1965), 3-7, and that McKinnon's reply, "Barth's Relation to Kierkegaard: Some Further Light," was published in the same journal, vol. XIII (1967), 31-41. We are grateful for this news and hope to reprint McKinnon's article in a later issue of the Newsletter.

Please keep us informed of newsworthy items in the Kierkegaard Community and feel free to offer suggestions and criticisms of what we are doing. We may eventually have to ask you for a small subscription fee to keep this work afloat.

Next August I shall be moving to the University of Mississippi. All correspondence after August 1 should be sent to me c/o Philosophy Department, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677.

Other News

The Program for the Kierkegaard Consultation Group under the direction of Sylvia Walsh has been finalized. The meeting will take place during the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Chicago, December 8-11, 1984. The program is as follows:

- I. Prof. Niels Thulstrup, University of Copenhagen, will read a paper on Kierkegaard's concepts of the absurd, paradox and nonsense.
- II. Prof. David Gouwens, Brite Divinity School, will read a paper on "Kierkegaard's Understanding of Doctrine" (abstract included in the Newsletter).
- III. Ivan Khan, Trent University, will review Stephen Evans' book, KIERKEGAARD'S FRAGMENTS AND POSTSCRIPT, and John Donnelly, University of San Diego, will review Louis Pojman's book, THE LOGIC OF SUBJECTIVITY. Prof. Robert Perkins, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Stetson University, will make a presentation on recent work on the Climacus writings.

The IKC TWO AGES, ed. Robert Perkins, has just been published by Mercer University Press. It will be reviewed in the next edition of this letter.

Other News

John Elrod writes that the 1984 Søren Kierkegaard Society Program for the Eastern APA meeting has been finalized. Here is the program:

I. John Donnelly, University of San Diego - "Self-Knowledge and the Mirror of the Word"

Commentator: Ronald L. Hall, Francis Marion College

II. C. Stephen Evans, St. Olaf College - "Kierkegaard's View of Humor"

Commentator: Robert C. Roberts, Western Kentucky University

We hope to have abstracts of these papers in the next Newsletter.

St. Olaf College has announced that it will provide free room and board for scholars doing research in the Kierkegaard Library from June 10 through August 15. Those interested should write to Prof. Howard Hong, Holland Hall, St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057.

Florida State University Press announces the beginning of a series entitled KIERKEGAARD AND POSTMODERNISM under the general editorship of Mark Taylor. In this series authors from a variety of disciplines and perspectives will explore Kierkegaard's relationship to the complex issues that preoccupy the postmodern imagination. Inquiries should be sent to Prof. Mark Taylor, Department of Religious Studies, Williams College, Williamstown, MA 01267.

Elrod, John W. Kierkegaard and Christendom. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981. xxiv and 320 pp.

Elrod's book is a companion to his Being and Existence in Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Works (1975). Just as that book introduced the early Kierkegaard writings, so this new volume lays out the philosophical categories in the "second literature" (an expression Elrod borrows from Robert Perkins to describe Kierkegaard's writings after Concluding Unscientific Postscript).

Elrod's proposal here, to approach the second literature in terms of its social critique, breaks important new ground. Several other major studies have recently appeared, pointing out Kierkegaard's contributions to social and political theory, and one hopes that these efforts have at last dispelled the once common caricature of Kierkegaard as the ideologue of the isolated self. Other investigations during the past few years have greatly deepened our understanding of particular works or themes from the late period. Elrod goes beyond all this, however, by considering the second literature as a whole and as a continuation and completion of the philosophical structure in the pseudonymous writings. In his view, Kierkegaard's early challenge to the individual to exist concretely has been sharpened in the second literature to challenge the Christian individual to exist concretely before God and with one's neighbor.

The book divides roughly into three parts. In the first two chapters Elrod describes the socio-political situation in mid-nineteenth century Denmark and Kierkegaard's reaction to it. The 1813 economic crash and the 1849 establishment of a constitutional monarchy frame a period of tangled political alliances, from which Denmark emerged with all the blessings and curses of a modernized nation. Kierkegaard's ironic needling, in journal entries, of the inflated hopes of democratic liberalism has sometimes embarrassed his twentieth-century interpreters, but his critique is based solidly in his anthropology: the new democracy, by abstracting individuals from an historical community, has "leveled" them and turned them into an anonymous and ahistorical "crowd."

The central chapters, three through five, outline Kierkegaard's analysis of the social self in its aesthetic, ethical, and general religious aspects. On this topic the second literature, particularly Works of Love, corrects the pseudonymous writings on two points: (a) the lack of stress on the relation to the other person; and (b) the slighting of the material (economic and political) conditions constituting the human self. According to Kierkegaard, social relations are grounded in a universal desire for "self-love" (self-respect), but that desire may be perverted. The aesthete and the new laissez-faire economics twist this basic human need for self-esteem to justify one individual's dominating over others and (shades of Kark Marx!) one class's dominating over another. The Christian tradition also begins from the natural desire for self-love, but it conceptually ties that self-love together with a duty to love the neighbor "as yourself." Elrod's philosophical reconstruction of Kierkegaard's ethics at this level has a decidedly Kantian ring, qualified by the fact that ultimately that kind of ethics is bound to fail, driving the individual to stand in repentance before God.

Elrod's final chapters, six through eight, vindicate his thesis about the second literature by showing how the implications of Kierkegaard's social analysis become increasingly explicit from Training in Christianity to the final Attack. At the end Kierkegaard's gloves are off, and, perhaps unfortunately, the maieutic method is abandoned, but at least the issues are clear. The individual's inner transformation, fostered in the early writings, is here tied firmly to the external transformation of society, hinted at for years in the journals. The attempt of men like Grundtvig and Mynster to surround exploitative bourgeois liberalism with a pale religious glow is discredited, and in its place comes an uncompromising call for transforming the Christian community according to the New Testament model.

As I read this brilliant, pathbreaking study, I wondered how far it could lead. Could this be the book that would open up the late writings, so that they would become as familiar to philosophers as the early works have become? That project looks impossible. As Elrod himself insists, Kierkegaard does not work out any positive social program in the second literature, and his negative critique is largely piecemeal and directed at specific currents in mid-nineteenth century Denmark. Many of the sources for such a study are

not easily accessible to the philosopher who does not specialize in Kierkegaard, especially since that person is not likely to know Danish. Even key secondary resources, such as Robert Horn's 1969 dissertation on Martensen, which Elrod cites extensively, have never been published. Moreover, even if one should, by some miracle, succeed in recreating the social setting for Kierkegaard's social critique so that it would become a living reality for the average philosopher today, that would still not make his critique appropriate for the twentieth century. Small wonder, then, that philosophers stick mainly to the early writings, which have some canonical pages in the history of philosophy after the chapter on Hegel.

Yet, after reading Elrod, I am not as pessimistic as before. After all, Kierkegaard himself never promised that his Hegel critique contained more than scrapings and parings of the System, and very Danish scrapings at that. If Kierkegaard's early writings contain valuable critique, despite their parochial focus on the Danish philosophical scene, then surely his later writings, also very parochial, merit a second look from philosophers. Indeed, much of the work has already been done, with Elrod's book as well as many other studies. Elrod's volume has advanced the state of investigation of the second literature, and it remains to be seen how far others can and will travel along this path.

Andrew J. Burgess
University of New Mexico

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF SELFHOOD: A REVIEW
OF MARK C. TAYLOR'S JOURNEYS TO SELFHOOD

Taylor, Mark C. Journeys to Selfhood--Hegel and Kierkegaard.
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980. 298 pp.

Mark C. Taylor's Journeys to Selfhood sheds some welcome light on the similarities and differences between two of the nineteenth century's most profound thinkers. Focusing on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit and Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings, Taylor plots the courses devised by each for the journey to selfhood. In his own words, his thesis is that "Hegel and Kierkegaard develop phenomenologies of spirit that are designed to lead the reader from inauthentic to authentic or fully realized selfhood" (p. 13). It is a thesis for which he offers thorough support, short on neither analysis nor description. But, as I shall argue, Taylor's ultimate position has its problems.

I

Pointing out that both Hegel and Kierkegaard respond to a spiritual problem, Taylor begins by explaining how they perceive the "Spiritlessness of the Age." Both philosophers take the disease to be rooted in the relation between society and the individual. But, as Taylor points

out, the similarity ends there: "In contrast with Hegel, for whom 'madness is simply the complete separation of the individual from the race,' Kierkegaard regards the insanity of spiritlessness as grounded in the dissipation of the individual in the race" (p. 60). This is not only a point of difference between Hegel and Kierkegaard; it is the focal point for the development of their journeys to selfhood.

Having established the problem which the two figures address, Taylor then examines the "Aesthetic Education," or the pedagogical methods they employ in response to the malady; indeed, he astutely observes that "Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit and Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings appear to be Bildungsromane" (p. 77). Offering a narrative account of the drama of human consciousness, Hegel believes that the spectacle--and speculation on it--"will provide an aesthetic education that is cathartic" (p. 84); his point, Taylor explains, is that "the stages through which spirit passes in moving toward its full realization form a necessary progression in which beginning and end are implicitly one" (p. 88). In order for the spectator to become a participant in the drama and thus part of the necessary progression, he must recollect the past in which the drama has its origins. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, does not draw his reader into the flow of necessity but "creates poeticized possibilities that confront the sojourner along life's way with decisive alternatives" (p. 93). Because the individual must become decisive rather than reflective, he must engage in repetition rather than recollection; in order to move through the stages on life's way, he cannot immerse himself in a necessary progression but must will and will again. On Kierkegaard's view, nothing is ever settled in the life of the spirit; the beginning harbors no guarantee of the end. Or better: everything begins, and nothing ends.

Kierkegaard and Hegel agree that only by following the Way can the traveler achieve selfhood, and they agree that Christ is the Way; but here, too, there are serious differences between them, as Taylor demonstrates in the third chapter, "Christianity and Selfhood." According to Hegel, the "fullness of time" which necessitates the Incarnation comes when spiritlessness is most severe, when the self is pitted against God, the world, others, and itself. This fragmentation becomes union through Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection, which "affirm the full humanity of divinity and the full divinity of humanity" (p. 118). The distance that isolates the self from itself is always distance from God; as Mediator, Christ closes this gap and brings about union with God and with one another. And achieving this union comes with the philosophical comprehension of it. Taylor notes, however, that on Kierkegaard's view, "God does not necessarily become incarnate when time is fulfilled; rather, when God freely 'chooses to become an individual man,' the fullness of time arrives" (p. 130). God is subject neither to the necessities of history nor to the categories of comprehension. Says Taylor, "In place of Hegel's notion of the Mediator who reunites opposites in an inherently rational manner, Kierkegaard posits the God-Man as an absolutely paradoxical coincidence of opposites which resists all religious, historical, and philosophical mediation" (p. 130).

Because Hegel and Kierkegaard view spirit in terms of a relation within a structure, Taylor next considers their "Structures of Spirit." Proceeding from the concept of a Mediator of opposites, Hegel sees the relation which remedies spiritlessness as a "both-and" relation; insisting on the Absolute Paradox as a coincidence of opposites, Kierkegaard sees it as an "either-or" relation. Taylor cautions us to remember that "for Hegel, the dialectical relation between identity and difference results in neither the absorption of difference in identity nor the dissolution of identity in difference" (p. 147); then he explains that Hegel views the structure of spirit as "identity-within-difference" (p. 154). Authentic selfhood rests on the self's relation with its other; says Taylor, "The relational character of identity establishes the sociality of spirit and the intersubjectivity of selfhood" (p. 160). Convinced that Hegel sees the self as this relation, Kierkegaard argues that "the self is not the relation, but that the relation relates itself to its own self" (p. 169). That is, the self is the process of relating, the process of synthesis, rather than mediation; the difference in the structure of spirit is that synthesis introduces a "positive third," namely the movement of relating the self to itself in the light of future possibilities. On Kierkegaard's view, synthesis is thus associated with possibility, whereas mediation is characterized by necessity. "Rather than viewing present and future as the result of the past," Taylor tells us, "Kierkegaard claims that present and past are posited by the future. Futurity is the decisive mode of temporality" (p. 177).

"Wayfaring" (Taylor's last chapter), then, places different demands on the individual, depending on whether the structure of spirit is regarded in Hegelian or Kierkegaardian terms. From the both-and perspective, wayfaring is a matter of overcoming differentiation between self and other; on the either-or view, it is a matter of sustaining that differentiation. Since necessity is Hegel's watchword, he looks upon the movement along the stations of life's way as a transition generated by comprehension; because Kierkegaard focuses on possibility, he renders the movement from one stage to the next as a leap born of decision. Taylor points out that for both thinkers, the journey is divided into natural, ethical, and religious phases; the difference lies in the nature of the progression. Taylor observes, "In Hegel's pedagogy, knowledge is salvific....Rational knowledge cures spiritlessness and restores the unity of man" (p. 228). In contrast to Hegel's accent on knowledge, "Kierkegaard's phenomenology of spirit culminates in the paradoxical coincidentia oppositorum, created and sustained by the faithful individual's absolute decision" (p. 250). As Kierkegaard sees it, passion is more needful than intellect. While knowledge can be recollected, passion must be repeated. Knowledge promises an end, a resolution of the problem, but passion means that "the self's spiritual birth is the labor of a lifetime" (p. 259), with no guarantee of resolution.

II

In presenting the differences between Hegel and Kierkegaard, Taylor strives to establish a certain identity-within-difference, a unification of beginning and end. "Hegel begins where he thinks

Kierkegaard ends," Taylor remarks, "and Kierkegaard begins where he thinks Hegel ends" (p. 182). Indeed, Taylor couches his end within his beginning, identity within difference, by dubbing his introduction a "Concluding Preface" and his last word a "Prefatory Conclusion." This is a Hegelian aspect of Taylor's work, so it should not be surprising to find that he finally comes down on the side of Hegel, declaring, "Hegel's dialectical vision offers a more satisfactory perspective from which to comprehend the nature of the self and the dynamics of personal and corporate history" (p. 272).

Here, I think, lies the problem mentioned above. To be sure, Hegel may offer more satisfaction when the interest is in comprehension or knowledge, but he falls short when the concern is for passion or faith. If the self is spirit, then selfhood is a spiritual or religious issue; and, as Taylor demonstrates, Hegel and Kierkegaard agree on this point. The question that Taylor fails to address is whether a spiritual malady can find its cure in a speculative method; is rational knowledge or passionate faith the more needful response to the sickness unto death?

It seems to me that Kierkegaard's emphasis on faith carries us farther along the journey to selfhood than Hegel's emphasis on knowledge, if selfhood is indeed a spiritual or religious concern. While Hegel is concerned with history, Kierkegaard is attuned to eternity; while Hegel looks for an ascent from ignorance, Kierkegaard seeks a resurrection from sin. Hegel appears to think that eating ~~from the Tree of Knowledge~~ elevates us to become as the gods, whereas Kierkegaard believes, with the Scriptures, that this results in the Fall; in the story of the Fall, Hegel sees God as the deceiver, whereas Kierkegaard takes the serpent to be the deceiver.¹ If we follow Hegel's path to selfhood, then it must be explained why speculation does a better job of showing us the way than scriptural revelation. This Taylor does not do.

Taylor repeatedly brings up Abraham in his examination of the two philosophers, and a significant point of contention between them does indeed lie in their approaches to Abraham. Yet, Taylor evokes Abraham only to make Hegel's a "more satisfactory perspective from which to comprehend"; he cites Hegel's explanation of Abraham but fails to mention Kierkegaard's insistence that Abraham cannot be explained or understood.² Taylor seems to agree with Hegel's portrayal of Abraham as a wanderer isolated from man and God, one who "never returns from Moriah" (p. 265), and of whom it may be said, "Love alone was beyond his power" (p. 39). For Hegel, as for Taylor, Abraham is a lonely sojourner, "the unhappiest man," who is unable "to appropriate the reconciliation implicit in the God-Man" (p. 265). Hegel, however, forgets that when the God-Man's hour was at hand, he, too, was a solitary wanderer, for "all the disciples forsook him and fled" (St. Matthew 26:56).

If Jesus is viewed as Mediator, as Taylor and Hegel view him, then he bears no such similarity to Abraham; viewed as Absolute Paradox, he has much in common with Abraham, and the Akedah or the

Binding of Isaac may be regarded as an event which prefigures the Crucifixion and Resurrection. This approach leads Kierkegaard to consider Abraham in terms of paradox, of love, of faith; in short, it leads him to consider Abraham in religious rather than speculative terms. As a Hegelian, Taylor makes little mention of Kierkegaard's treatment of Abraham. He fails to point out that Kierkegaard does not leave Abraham at Moriah, isolated from men; Kierkegaard is interested not only in Abraham's isolation but in what Abraham's faith does for his relation to others after he descends from Moriah. In Fear and Trembling, for example, he has Abraham in mind when he says, "In marching home from Mount Moriah thou hadst no need of a panegyric which might console thee for thy loss; for thou didst gain all and didst retain Isaac" (p. 37). And: "To live joyfully and happily every instant by virtue of the absurd, every instant to see the sword hanging over the head of the beloved, and yet not to find repose in the pain of resignation, but joy by virtue of the absurd--this is marvellous. He who does it is great, the only great man" (p. 61). Taylor also omits Kierkegaard's view on Abraham's ability to love. Again, in Fear and Trembling Kierkegaard writes, "When God requires Isaac, he [Abraham] must love him if possible even more dearly, and only on this condition can he sacrifice him" (p. 84).

Viewed in terms of paradox--and therefore as a progenitor of the Absolute Paradox--Abraham is not alone on Moriah, nor is love beyond his power. On Moriah--and after Moriah--he is closer than ever to Isaac and thus to God, as I have argued elsewhere.³ In a curious way, Kierkegaard embraces both Abraham and the Absolute Paradox, while Hegel looks upon either Abraham or the Mediator and chooses the latter. Taylor's omission of these important features of Kierkegaard's approach to Abraham makes it easier for him to conclude in Hegelian fashion that "Kierkegaard's interpretation of authentic selfhood negates itself in the very effort to affirm itself, and necessarily passes over into its opposite--Hegelian spirit" (p. 272). But it is the knight of knowledge, not of faith, who deems this passage over to Hegelian spirit a necessary one.

Perhaps Taylor chooses Hegel over Kierkegaard because it is more comfortable, "more satisfactory," to follow the signposts of knowledge than to set out along the narrow path of faith, like Abraham, without knowing where to go. If knowledge is salvific, then the individual has little to fear beyond developing a wrinkled brow; if faith is salvific, then he must work for salvation in fear and trembling. For faith all things--all things--are possible, from Eden to Auschwitz; for knowledge, there is only necessity, and since you cannot compete with necessity, it is pointless to attempt to run the good race, if that means running against the grain of rationality. Knowledge offers comfort; faith, collision. Knowledge opens up the firm ground; faith, the abyss. Knowledge promises an end to the journey; faith, only the journey itself. And only in the latter instance does the journey become an existential concern. If the end is the necessary outcome of the beginning, then authentic selfhood is guaranteed; the wayfarer does not have to hammer out his existence--necessity does it for him. But if all we have is the journey itself, if we can get no farther than

our decisiveness will take us, if the possibility of failure is equal to or greater than the possibility of success--then turning away from faith and extending the hand to the Tree of Knowledge becomes tempting indeed.

This is not to suggest that Taylor should have chosen Kierkegaard over Hegel; instead of opting for one path to selfhood over another, he might have synthesized the two in an effort to come up with a third. Hegel, for example, does have something to teach us about human interrelation. He can help us to see that love of man is love of God, that all are responsible for all, and that the kingdom of heaven is within us as well as in our midst. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, can teach us something about decisiveness and the passion of faith. He can help us to see that the journey to selfhood carries us along the edge of the abyss, that the Last Judgment is forever at hand, and that when we look upon situations like Dachau, it is better to sustain than to dismiss the questions we collide with. Taylor's insights into these two complex thinkers can set us on the way to a wisdom that entails the best of both world views. Taylor, however, leaves that task in the journey to selfhood to his reader.

NOTES

¹Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Anxiety, edited and translated by Reidar Thomte in collaboration with Albert B. Anderson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 48.

²~~Søren Kierkegaard~~, Fear and Trembling, translated by Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 122-123.

³David Patterson, "Abraham and Kierkegaard: A New Approach to the Father of Faith," Journal of Religious Studies 8 (Spring 1980):19.

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Swenson, David F. Something About Kierkegaard, edited by Lillian Marvin Swenson (Reprinted Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983). pp. xxiv + 259.

My overall impression is of how little the scholarship in Something About Kierkegaard has been improved on in the 43 years since it was published. A shadow has been cast on Kierkegaard's books by the high pile of trash coming out these days--by the scholarly things straining for produndity and endeavoring an advance on previous work, as well as the popular summaries. Swenson does not try to get behind Kierkegaard by psychoanalysis or to go beyond him by reading him through existentialist eyes, much less to emasculate him by showing that he was one-sided by comparison with Hegel. He reads him as the Christian author that he understood himself to be: "[Christianity] was the cause for which he unremittingly gave all the powers of his life, and he himself believed that he had succeeded in the task he had set for himself: to clothe the Christian religion in the garb of philosophical

reflection, complete and entire, without modification or distortion" (26). Repeatedly, in these essays Swenson tells us what that "philosophical reflection" consisted in: "If I were to compress into a single word the intellectual significance of the Kierkegaardian literature, I would say that it consisted in mapping out the sphere of the inner life, the subjective life of the emotions, with constant reference to the ideal [i.e., ethics, natural religiousness, Christianity]" (69). Kierkegaard is depicted not as a subjectivist or an irrationalist, but as a man who thought the life of the emotions had a "logic" of its own, eminently worth exploring: "[Kierkegaard's] attitude was on the whole too objective and analytic for him to be classified as a romanticist" (80). When Kierkegaard calls Christianity paradoxical, Swenson tells us, the standard by which it appears so-- "reason"--is not logic but "the systematized common sense of the personality in its fundamental self-confidence and self-assertiveness" (176).

For someone who has read lots of Kierkegaard, the long summary essays at the beginning of the book will frequently belabor the obvious. And for the newcomer, Swenson might have clarified Kierkegaard more by sticking a little less closely, in his summarizing explanations, to Kierkegaard's own peculiar language. However, I can imagine the book's being useful as an introduction that students might read, say, in the first week of a seminar on Kierkegaard's writings. In my opinion, the most substantial of the essays are "Three Stages on the Way of Life" and "A Danish Thinker's Estimate of Journalism."

At the end of the book are printed some letters that Swenson wrote to Walter Lowrie, most of which have to do with translation, and that largely of Philosophical Fragments. The letters reflect the enormous meticulousness, sensitivity and seriousness that Swenson brought to the task of translating and help us to understand why, despite an "error" here and there, his Fragments is a masterpiece of translation.

Robert C. Roberts
University of Western Kentucky

Watkin, Julia. A Key to Kierkegaard's Abbreviations and Spelling.
Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1981; Montreal: Inter Editions.
100 pp. bibliog. \$9.00. ISBN 0-919401-01-5.

As the author states in her Introduction, "(T)his book is intended to help all those reading Søren Kierkegaard's Works and Papers in the original language." Briefly, it does this by listing and explaining approximately 3,000 standard and private abbreviations used in these works and by providing a spelling key designed to help the student to make use of modern Danish dictionaries and Danish/other language word books. The Appendix contains references to some related material.

The thoroughness of this work is indicated by the fact that it shows ten distinct abbreviations for rigsdaler, ten different meanings

for H, and eight for H.. At the same time, this labour of love is intended as the basis of a cooperative scholarly project and has been produced in workbook format to encourage the user to add any items which may still be missing. The author welcomes any such additions.

A. McKinnon
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Abstract: "Kierkegaard's Understanding of Doctrine"

Because of his polemic against "objectivity" in the religious sphere and the abuses of doctrine, Kierkegaard is often erroneously held to be an opponent of doctrinal theology, considering it to be objective and hence essentially irrelevant to the passionate subjectivity of Christian faith.

Kierkegaard does not, however, dismiss doctrine. He accepts traditional dogmatic theological concepts and even holds to a strong concept of revelation as the basis and origin of doctrine.

This paper examines Kierkegaard's understanding of the functions and logical status of Christian doctrines, using the doctrine of Christ as the Absolute Paradox as a test-case for discriminating between what doctrines can and cannot do.

~~First, Kierkegaard polemicized against several contemporary understandings of doctrine, all of which held a common assumption, viz., that doctrines provide (or are) the focus of an objective mediation of the divine and the human. Kierkegaard's analysis of Christ as the Absolute Paradox involves him in a polemic against three notions of doctrine: a) doctrines are expressions of Christian self-consciousness (Schleiermacher); b) doctrines are religiously meaningful as pictorial representations (Vorstellungen) (Martensen); and c) doctrines are unmediated Vorstellungen that must be translated into pure concepts (Begriffe) (D. F. Strauss).~~

Kierkegaard's concept of the doctrine of Christ as Absolute Paradox entails a denial of each of these notions, and for the same reason: despite their differences, they all hold that doctrine can give a direct comprehension of the divine, either by way of a) feeling, b) imagination, or c) reason. The doctrine of the Absolute Paradox destroys all attempts to see doctrines as able in themselves, as forms of thought or language, to mediate between the divine and the human. Doctrines for Kierkegaard are not, then, expressions of Christian self-consciousness; nor are they translatable into pure concepts cleansed of historical or pictorial terms; nor are they understandable as direct imaginative statements. All of these are instances of human possibility, which the Absolute Paradox cancels.

Positively, the Absolute Paradox does not mean the death of doctrine, but, on the contrary, specifies how doctrines function in

the Christian sphere. The Absolute Paradox shifts attention from doctrine as a form of language or consciousness to the functions of doctrine as an indicator of a) the subjective qualifications needed in apprehending (not comprehending) the divine, but also b) the "higher" objectivity, given only in revelation, that the paradox points to. Doctrines indicate at once the "how" of appropriation (not by the immediacy of reason, understanding, or imagination, but by the inwardness of faith), and yet the "objective" quality of Christian belief, entailing a God who transcends the self's possibilities and through grace alone transforms one's self-understanding.

The Absolute Paradox is not the sole model for Kierkegaard's understanding of Christian doctrines, but it is the central one. For him Doctrines are revealed concepts (often including a pictorial and even historical dimension) and functioning not as objects of faith but as rules for the language of faith, at once being objectively stateable, indicating the transcendence of the object of faith, and yet at the same time making clear the necessity of the training of the believer's subjectivity.

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