

Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter



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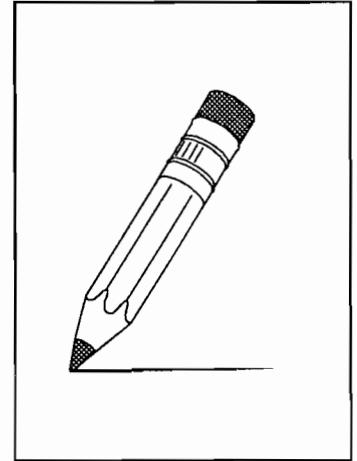
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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue contains yet another reply from Arne Grøn to the article by Marilyn Piety published in November, 1991, dealing with the decision by Kierkegardiana to no longer publish articles in Danish. I have now been informed by Professor Grøn that his original Danish reply was not meant for publication, and I apologize for printing it. I

had been led to believe that he did, and assumed that he had confirmed this when he did not respond to a letter I wrote. But I am very sorry for this misunderstanding, and hereby try to make amends by publishing his new response.

NEWS YOU SHOULD NOTE



NEWS FROM THE KIERKEGAARD SOCIETY

The Executive Committee of the Society will offer several proposals for amending the Constitution of the Society soon. These will be discussed at the meetings of the Society at the AAR Annual Meeting and the APA Eastern Division Meeting (see below), and then voted on by mail ballot after these meetings. The proposals are to eliminate the specification of the amount of dues within the constitution, to eliminate the impracticable suggestion that the election ballot be published in this Newsletter, to make the term of Secretary-Treasurer four years and renewable, to make the terms of the President and Vice-President two years each, with these positions being filled in a year different from that of the Secretary-Treasurer, and to give the AAR and APA representatives to the Executive Committee staggered terms, with their terms being either two or perhaps three years.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

AAR Annual Meeting in San Francisco

The Kierkegaard Society will meet twice in conjunction with the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting in San Francisco in November. The two meetings will be Friday, November 20, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., and Saturday, November 21, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The theme of the first meeting will be "Kierkegaard's Upbuilding Discourses and For Self-Examination." M. Jamie Ferreira, of the University of Virginia, will preside. This session includes three papers: Wanda Warren Berry, Colgate University, "Wresting and Jest: A Feminist Dialogue with For Self-Examination"; Stephen N. Dunning, University of Pennsylvania, "Love is Not Enough: On Being Born Again, Kierkegaard Style"; Edward F. Mooney, Sonoma State University, "Kierkegaard's Job and Evil: the Upbuilding Discourses".

The theme of the second session will be "Kierkegaard's Early Polemical Writings." This session will be chaired by Robert L. Perkins of Stetson University. Three papers will be read: Julia Watkin, University of Copenhagen, "Serious Jest: Kierkegaard as Young Polemicist"; Johan De Mylius, Hans Christian Andersen Center, University of Odense, "At the Intersection of Modernity and Tradition: Kierkegaard's Critique of Hans Christian Andersen"; Katherine Lilleør, University of Copenhagen, "Life is a Fairy Tale: Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales Examined in the Context of Existential Theological Thoughts of Kierkegaard." Bruce Kimmse of Connecticut College will serve as a respondent.

APA Eastern Division Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The Kierkegaard Society will also meet in conjunction with the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association, Monday, December 28, 1992, at 7:30 p.m. in Washington, D.C. The session will be chaired by Merold Westphal of Fordham University. The papers are as follows: Vanessa Rumble, Boston College, "Sublimity and Irony: Kantian and Kierkegaardian Paradigms for Self-Transcendence"; Marilyn Piety, McGill University, "Kierkegaard on the Nature of Religious Knowledge"; Robert L. Perkins, Stetson University, "Kierkegaard's First Brush with the Press."

Kierkegaard Consultation at AAR/SE Meeting in Charleston

The Southeastern regional meeting of the American Academy of Religion, which will be held at the Sheraton Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina, March 19-21, 1993, will contain a "Kierkegaard Consultation." The exact time of the meeting

is not yet known; Ronald L. Hall, of Francis Marion University, will preside. The papers are as follows: Charles Creegan, North Carolina Wesleyan College, "Kierkegaard: Eithers and Ors"; Norman Lillegard, University of Tennessee at Martin, "Judge William in the Dock"; James McLachlan, Western Carolina University, "Kierkegaard in Russian Existentialism"; Patricia Lewis Poteat, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Jefferson's Shadow: The Dream of America and the Death of Spirit in Brother to Dragons."

PUBLICATION NEWS

Kierkegaard's Writings

Concluding Unscientific Postscript has now been released in two volumes. The first volume contains the complete text; the second volume contains the historical introduction, selected entries from Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers, and the endnotes.

International Kierkegaard Commentary News

IKC Fear and Trembling and Repetition will be combined and published in one volume. This volume is now at the publisher and is due out in June of 1993. (Those who are impatient to see this volume should recognize that the editor can not control the publisher's schedule.) Philosophical Fragments is basically complete (except for an article or two that must be rewritten), and should be delivered to the publisher by the end of 1992. Articles for Either/Or I and II are due January 1, 1993. This the first volume of IKC where contributors will be expected to make references to Postscript conform to the new edition. Articles on Early Polemical Writings are invited by July 1, 1993.

Some News from Alastair McKinnon

Alastair McKinnon wishes to announce that he has acquired the few remaining copies of the four volumes of The Kierkegaard Indices and can supply these at \$7.00 for Vol. I and \$100 for each of Vols. II, III, and IV, including postage. For further information or details contact him at 3005 Barat Road, Montreal, Canada H3Y 2H4. Telephone: 514-937-6500. E-mail: INA7@MUSICB.MCGILL.CA. He also wishes to mention that the computer text of Papirer A (Dagbøger) will be available shortly in both KEDIT and Wordperfect format. Details and prices from the same source.

NEWS FROM THE HONG KIERKEGAARD LIBRARY

Translation of Poul Martin Møller's Work on Immortality

Reidar Thomte has completed a translation of the work of Kierkegaard's teacher, Poul Martin Møller, Thoughts on the Possibility of Proofs of the Immortality of Human Beings with Reference to the Most Recent Literature on the Subject. Though the translation is currently not available in published form (any suggestions for possible publishers?), a copy has been deposited in the Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf and is there available for scholars.

Summer Fellowship Reminder

Just a reminder that the Hong Kierkegaard Library offers summer fellowships to a few scholars each summer. The fellowships include free lodging at St. Olaf and a modest stipend of \$250 per month for food, for up to eight weeks of study between June 15 and August 15. To apply send a letter describing your proposed project and the time period you wish to be in residence to C. Stephen Evans. Include a vitae or description of your qualifications. Applications should be received by April 1.

Appeal for Cataloging Funds

Inasmuch as this Newsletter receives a generous subsidy from St. Olaf, I thought it would not be inappropriate to mention a pressing need of the Kierkegaard Library. For several years with the help of an NEH grant, the Kierkegaard Library has been undergoing a complete cataloging, using the Library of Congress system, and ensuring that all of our holdings are present in the OCLC computerized on-line system. Once the cataloging is done, we plan to publish a catalog in hard copy format as well. Due to some computer glitches and also the slow nature of much of the cataloging (many of the books are foreign language titles and a great number involve original cataloging since they have never been LC cataloged), the project was not completed during the grant period. A few more months of work from the experienced catalogers currently working on the project would finish the job. This summer I sent out an appeal to various friends and Kierkegaard scholars, and the response has been very gratifying. If you would be interested in making a tax-deductible donation towards this project, please write to C. Stephen Evans, Kierkegaard Library, St. Olaf College 55057. We need to raise several thousand more dollars, so gifts large and small would be appreciated. Checks should be made out to St. Olaf College.

REVIEWS

Knights of Faith and Resignation: Reading Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*. By Edward F. Mooney. Albany, State University of New York Press, 1991. Pp.xviii, 187. Reviewed by Robert C. Roberts, Wheaton College (IL).

Kierkegaard wrote *Fear and Trembling* in the conviction that the virtue of faith was not well understood by his contemporaries. Hegel had promoted the idea that faith was a sort of preliminary or immature version of the philosophical knowledge of which his System provided the final recension. The clergy tended to detach faith from the pathos of love and sacrifice, consistency of self-identity, realism about earthly prospects, and the difficulties of communication. They tended to miss the incompatibility between faith and a wholehearted commitment to the life of conventional morality. Or, with a deeper but still deficient understanding, they identified faith as something like a Socratic or Romantic equanimity achieved through eternalization of one's consciousness. The concept of faith that Kierkegaard seeks to clarify in *Fear and Trembling* is a religious attitude involving crucial reference to God, but it is not Christian faith in the fullest sense, of which belief in the incarnate Son of God is a crucial ingredient. This latter kind of faith, or aspect of faith, is explored most centrally in Philosophical Fragments.

Kierkegaard calls *Fear and Trembling* a "dialectical lyric." It is conceptual analysis of faith, and thus assumes that faith has a dialectic, a logic, a grammar; it is a concept, of which the boundaries or rules are articulable by someone with philosophical skills. To understand the concept is, in part, the ability to distinguish it from neighboring concepts having different dialectical features. But Kierkegaard's interest in clarifying the concept is not academic or polemical only; he is not just "making a point" against Hegelian theologians and errant clergymen. Indeed, if the point of delineating a concept's logic is to promote understanding of the concept, something more than the barest logic, even if executed with the utmost competence, will be needed to clarify the concept of faith. The reason is that faith, like other concepts such as love, hope, courage, perseverance, and contrition, is a matter of the greatest personal importance to everyone (even philosophers); the concept is "existential," and the understanding of it must be existential too. Existential concepts are best

conveyed in the language of story, of personal confession (even if the confession is by a pseudonym), of the concrete individual in his experience of life. This is a language that makes inescapable the impression that these concepts apply to living "subjects" like you and to me. Concepts like faith are not only defined by logical requirements; they also demand an appropriate lyric or rhetoric, a "poetry" that enables the distinctions to speak to the heart. Kierkegaard is perhaps the greatest of all the writers who have understood that existential concepts have a grammar and a lyric, and *Fear and Trembling* is a wonderful example of his ability to bring both skills into play in the interest of religious communication.

Mooney's commentary explores Johannes de Silentio's exploration of the dialectic of faith through a series of "ordeals" or tests, that by testing the knight, delineate the concept: ordeals of meaning (how must the knight think?), love (how must he relate to the object, the love of which constitutes the core of his identity?), reason (how does the knight relate to public standards of explanation of his behavior?), and silence (what sets the limits of communication with his fellows, and what are those limits?). The upshot of these explorations, it seems to me, are the following six marks of the concept of faith, stated absolutely unlyrically:

1. Faith presupposes a love or attachment to something earthly that is so deep and pervasive of the individual's personality as to be identity-determining (e.g. Abraham's love for Isaac).
2. The person of faith is committed, without qualifier, to obeying God.
3. In view of the commitment to God, the faithful one has "resigned" the earthly object of attachment--that is, he acknowledges with full consciousness and equanimity that whether his love is to be satisfied is in God's hands.
4. He trusts God that his earthly love will be satisfied.

5. Because of the potential collisions between the individual's commitment to God and his earthly love, and the need to bring these together in his personality, faith requires a high degree of the virtues of honesty and courage--that is, the ability not to be derailed by anguish, distress, and fear.

6. Since our understanding of one another's actions depends on shared concepts, and an important class of such concepts comes from conventional morality ("the universal"), and the individual's commitment to God overrides his allegiance to conventional morality, the actions that issue most directly from a person's faith are not likely to be understood by his contemporaries.

These marks of faith serve as the dialectical loom upon which Johannes de Silentio weaves a colorful, engaging, poetical tapestry of characters who are like, and yet, in one way or another that is determined by this dialectic, also unlike, the knight of faith. Most obvious are of course the types that Johannes calls the knight of resignation, whose most salient mark is that he does not trust that his earthly love will be satisfied, and the tragic hero, whose contemporaries can perfectly well understand him, shudderingly, in the terms of conventional morality. There are the four failed Abrahams of "Attunement" and, as Mooney points out, another dozen variant Abrahams that put in brief appearances.

Mooney's sensitivity to both the dialectic and the lyric of Fear and Trembling is acute and balanced. His interpretation delivers us from the conventional foolishness that would make of Kierkegaard an "irrationalist," and by bringing the text into conversation with contemporary writings in moral psychology and ethics (especially the ethics of virtue), he shows how Kierkegaard can be an important ally in the pursuit of those enterprises. This excellent commentary (the only one currently available on Fear and Trembling) is keyed to Alastair Hannay's happy translation, published in the Penguin Classics.

The editor calls this "a very disagreeable collection of articles." It is indeed a collection of articles about The Corsair Affair, Volume XIII of Kierkegaard's Writings, the new Princeton translations. But it is neither a disagreeable collection nor a collection of disagreeable articles. What the editor means is that there are some very sharp disagreements internal to the volume, two in particular.

The first is between the editor himself and Roger Poole, who presents an exceptionally vicious and vindictive Kierkegaard accompanied by a speculative interpretation of his motives. He adopts the view, expressed later by Goldschmidt in his autobiography, that by linking Paul Møller to The Corsair Kierkegaard spoiled the latter's hopes for an academic career. Thus, "Kierkegaard ruined a man" (144), "It was a death sentence, and Kierkegaard knew it was" (149), and "Then Kierkegaard destroyed Møller's career" (161).

The motive, according to Poole, was a double envy, literary and sexual. On the one hand, Kierkegaard viewed Møller as a literary rival. On the other hand, Møller had been the model for Johannes the Seducer, and in this respect he was "a kind of positive model . . . everything Kierkegaard himself longed to be" (153).

As to the first, we are asked to believe that as late as 1845-46 Kierkegaard believed that he and Møller were engaged in literary projects that were sufficiently similar that one might see the other as a rival. As to the second, we are asked to believe that because Kierkegaard wrote, "Oh, but particularly in my early youth what would I not have given to be a man for half a year . . . Had I been a man, the danger for me would certainly have been another, to have given myself all too much to women, and I might possibly have become a seducer" (154, quoted from Dru), his model for Johannes the Seducer was "everything [he] himself longed to be."

Perhaps it is because he finds these requests so extravagant that Perkins focuses his attention, not on the question of motivation but on the prior question whether Kierkegaard actually ruined Møller. He offers three arguments against this supposition. First he calls attention to the evidence in the Hongs' introduction to The Corsair Affair that Møller's connection with The Corsair was already a matter of public record, having

been revealed in February of 1843 by none other than Møller himself.

Second, with respect to the immediate question of appointing a successor to Oehlenschläger's chair in aesthetics, Perkins points out that Carsten Hauch, who was appointed to the chair in 1851 had such superior credentials to Møller that only in the latter's imagination could he be a serious rival for the position. Finally, he points to the fact that Møller left Copenhagen in 1847 and was not on the scene at the crucial time. This latter fact by itself is compatible with the hypothesis that Kierkegaard ruined him (and that he left town, knowing this), but the first two considerations make that claim as unsupported by the evidence as the alleged motives to the alleged deed.

This is not to say that Kierkegaard comes out of the Corsair affair smelling like a rose. No reader of The Corsair Affair is likely to wish to nominate any of the main characters for sainthood. But Perkins makes a strong case that in Poole's account at the biographical level fancy wins out over fact.

The other major disagreement is between Steven Best and Douglas Kellner on the one hand and James Marsh on the other over the social and political import of Kierkegaard's work. Best/Kellner acknowledge the presence of social critique in Kierkegaard (in spite of his religious interests, as they see it). They credit him with being one of the first critics of modernity, especially of its mass culture and mass society (24, 41). They even point to parallels between him and Marx and Gramsci (28, 36-39) and claim that "he was among the first to emphasize the repressive role of rationalist ideology" (49, their italics). But they continue, along with Lukács and Adorno, among others, to categorize Kierkegaard as irrationalist and individualist in ways seriously detrimental to social critique. Their focus is on Two Ages, whose close linkage to the Corsair affair they rightly emphasize.

On the question of individualism they point to a Nietzsche-like nostalgia for the "eminent individual" who was possible in antiquity before the leveling forces of modernity stepped in (32). In doing so they make it clear that Kierkegaard's individualism is not that of the liberalism that played midwife at the birth of modern democratic capitalism. But it does not follow, as they seem to suggest, that he shares with Nietzsche an elitist

contempt for the masses (37, 43). They quote themselves the passage in which the egalitarianism of his individualism is most explicit. "The bleakness of antiquity was that the man of distinction was what others could not be; the inspiring aspect [of the modern era] will be that the person who has gained himself religiously is only what all can be" (42, quoting TA, 92; Kierkegaard's italics).

This view is not, as Best/Kellner suggest, in tension with the critique of leveling. For it is clear that the religious individualism Kierkegaard here praises is not the social individualism of modernity, which has nothing to do with gaining oneself religiously, that is, with inwardness. His view is rather that by sweeping aside social hierarchies, modernity, while actually falling into a herd mentality, has actually opened the door for an egalitarian spiritual individualism which is the only possible foundation for going beyond the dilemma posed by seeing ancient communalism and modern liberalism as the only alternatives.

Best/Kellner see Kierkegaard's promising social critique dead ending in religiously individualistic answers. Thus, "social action is blocked by definition" and "Without argument, he explicitly rejects any social form" (45). It would be more correct to say that Kierkegaard has no faith in any social action undertaken by the herd and that he views all social forms as being incapable of being either the guarantee of authentic selfhood and intersubjectivity or the absolute barrier thereto. The brief but powerful essay by Kirmmse with which the present volume concludes is especially helpful in pointing out the limited and relative importance, both positive and negative, that Kierkegaard gives to social forms. Thus, when Best/Kellner say that Kierkegaard "rejects all sociohistorical determinations of an authentic individual existence while denying as well the significance of contemporary historical events and processes" (57), qualifications are needed. What Kierkegaard denies is the sufficiency of sociohistorical determinations to generate (or destroy) authentic existence and the ultimate or absolute significance of contemporary history.

Best/Kellner are more nearly correct when they say that for Kierkegaard, "Community, therefore, would be the end result of the self-transformative process of serial individuals and not, as with Marx, a means to individual or social change itself" (46). Kierkegaard clearly thinks that authentic human community presupposes transactions that take place between individuals and God. But what reason is there to say that

such community is possible only "in the eternal afterlife" (46). If that were the case there would be little point in the critique of the present age and of Christendom.

Equally puzzling, in view of the fact that Best/Kellner do not like Kierkegaard's theory of community as goal rather than means, is their claim that he "lacks a positive notion of intersubjectivity" (59). Such writings as Fear and Trembling and Sickness Unto Death develop in detail an intersubjective concept of the self's constitution in relation to the Divine Other, while writings such as Two Ages and Works of Love extend this to relations with human Others.

What Kierkegaard lacks is not a positive notion of intersubjectivity, but a secular, materialistic account of intersubjectivity. Whether this is an advantage or a liability is a question deserving serious discussion. But the important debate between Kierkegaard's account of intersubjectivity and alternative views is simply avoided when it is denied that he has such an account. No serious advance is made by defining alternatives to one's own views out of existence. Fortunately, Best/Kellner do not do this most of the time.

Space does not permit analysis of their briefer critique of Kierkegaard as an irrationalist, but insofar as it is an invitation to compare his theory of reason with the attempt of the Frankfurt school "to mediate between extreme versions of irrationalism and rationalism and to develop a more differentiated theory of critical rationality" it is a welcome call to an important task. Their own conclusion is that it is "highly misleading to compare Kierkegaard's critique of modernity to the 'ideology critique' of the Frankfurt school insofar as class and class domination are central aspects of the latter critique" (60). If 'to compare' means 'to identify' this claim could hardly be challenged. But if these two critiques of modernity have much in common, as Best/Kellner themselves point out, while differing sharply on points crucial to each, comparison could be instructive to those with basic sympathies in either direction.

That is the view taken by Jim Marsh in an essay that focuses "primarily on the similarities and allow[s] the differences to emerge as they will" (64). True to his word, he devotes most of his essay to the confluences of Marxist and neo-Marxist critiques of modernity with Kierkegaard's. Only at the very end does he turn to differences, there to suggest that the religious foundation of Kierkegaard's critique makes a difference, not only to

diagnosis, but also at the level of the praxis of resistance.

The essays by Andrew Burgess and Lee Barrett, on the nature of the comic in Kierkegaard's understanding, are by themselves worth the price of the book. No subsequent discussion of the topic, and thus no discussion of the theory of the stages in the Postscript, can afford to ignore their perceptive and complementary analyses.

The remaining essays in this volume are an overview by Nerina Jansen of Kierkegaard's view of the daily press in relation to his concerns for existential communication, and a report by Alastair McKinnon on computerized studies that he believes show decisively that Kierkegaard could not have written "Literary Quicksilver."

M. Holmes Hartshorne, Kierkegaard, Godly Deceiver: The Nature and Meaning of His Pseudonymous Writings (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. xxx + 112. Reviewed by Michael Strawser, Department of Philosophy, Florida State University.

"A Godly Deceiver"--the oxymoronic title itself would make Descartes shiver and the author of the equally oxymoronic Philosophical Fragments smile. M. Holmes Hartshorne (1910-1988) has hit upon a title that is sufficiently attention-getting, and he manages to keep the reader's attention throughout this relatively slim work. Despite his brevity, Hartshorne develops a comprehensive interpretation of the pseudonymous writings as well as a consideration of two of the religious works, Works of Love and The Sickness unto Death. He also exhibits a knowledgeable acquaintance with Kierkegaard's journals.

Is there anything in Kierkegaard's pseudonymous literature that can be ostensibly ascribed to Kierkegaard? Anything at all? This is the question with which this study concerns itself, and Hartshorne's answer is a resounding "No!" His thesis is straightforward: to take literally Kierkegaard's statement in "A First and Last Explanation" (the final appendix to Concluding Unscientific Postscript) that "in the pseudonymous books there is not a single word by me" (KW XII 1, [626]). It is an interesting idea to take a single statement by Kierkegaard absolutely literally, which is perhaps why not a few scholars have--implicitly or explicitly--read the irony behind it.

The good news is that Hartshorne rightly emphasizes "the pervasiveness of irony in Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings" (p. 6). The bad news is that he offers an all too terse look at Kierkegaard's magisterial dissertation, On the Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates, which would certainly help in unpacking the loaded concept of irony which, as I see it, runs throughout the entire Kierkegaardian corpus. This is even more surprising when considering that in an appendix devoted largely to criticizing the most well-known interpretations of the pseudonymous writings (pp. 85-94), Hartshorne chides Mark C. Taylor for virtually ignoring Kierkegaard's concept of irony in his study Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship. Thus we are still lacking a work which, first, sets forth the conceptual methodology of irony found in Kierkegaard's dissertation of 1841, and then, second, explores the usage of this methodology throughout Kierkegaard's writings. Readers may agree, as I do, that "the key to understanding Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship is his use of

irony" (p. 74), but they are still left at least partially in the dark with regard to the conditions, conceptions, and ends irony entails--ones which would ultimately bring it into close association with edification and change Socrates into a Christian (cf. SV XIII, 1st ed., 541-42).

Hartshorne does have an ear for the echoes of irony, but it is a wonder that all of the ringing did not obstruct his writing. He presents an interesting illustration of the use of irony in Fear and Trembling (Chapter One, pp. 7-12), a work which is held to be "ironic to the core." The interpretation is controversial for it would prevent readers from labelling such famous notions as "the absurd," "infinite resignation," "the leap of faith," "the teleological suspension of the ethical," and others, as Kierkegaardian. These are, strictly speaking, the "absurd, if not blasphemous views" of Johannes de Silentio. According to Hartshorne, Kierkegaard, by contrast,

...is ironically showing the ultimate absurdity of attempting to reach faith by a mighty effort. Good Lutheran that he was, he believed that faith is a matter of grace, not of spiritual heroics. It is a gift to be accepted, not a task to be performed by spiritual gymnastics. The biblical witness is clear: God spoke to Abraham, and Abraham believed. The miracle of faith does not yield to intellectual dissection that would lay bare its human movements. The grace of God in Christ is received by faith, not achieved by spiritual movements (p. 11).

Here we have the emergence of an "old fashioned orthodoxy in its rightful severity," which is what Kierkegaard, excuse me Climacus, sought to express (cf. KW XII 1, 275). Blind faith without reflection may be an acceptable substitution for "the miracle of faith" that "does not yield to intellectual dissection." Still, whose thesis is it that faith cannot be penetrated? Doesn't it belong to Johannes de Silentio--he who, ultimately, could not understand Abraham's faith--and not to Kierkegaard? In which case Kierkegaard might ironically be saying that faith is not blind, but far-sighted, and that reflection can lay bare some general human movements with regard to faith. But when, then, would these look like if they do not resemble the notions of Johannes de Silentio?

In Chapter Two Hartshorne turns his attention to Either/Or. Initially, however, he mentions that the necessary starting point for any study of Kierkegaard is essentially the claim made in The Point of View that Kierkegaard was a religious author from start to finish. At one time, be it noted, Kierkegaard considered publishing this work under the pseudonym Johannes de Silentio (Pap. X 1 A 78). Instead of doing this, however, he chose not to publish it at all. Furthermore, recent critics like Christopher Norris and Joakim Garff¹ have argued that The Point of View does not contain the ultimate point of view for reading Kierkegaard. Thus, Either/Or may be read apart from The Point of View.

Kierkegaard's purpose in writing Either/Or was to force the "Philistines" of his day to take notice of their lives and, ultimately, to show them that "there is only one escape from philistine existence, only one true salvation" (p. 270, i.e., to become a Christian through the grace of God.) It is perhaps not without irony that a thoroughly indirect communication yields such a simple, direct message when given a secondhand report. Kierkegaard had no thought of actually "nudging" readers to become Christians, however. That was beyond his ability. Nor did he construct a theory of the stages by which he conceived "of individuals as passing through the aesthetic stage to the ethical and then on to the religious" (p. 22). Hartshorne points out that "A" and "B" are both abstractions from existence, as no one's life is either wholly aesthetic or entirely ethical. On these last two points I think Hartshorne has found something important to say, although, in general, as I have been suggesting, his overall interpretation is not without some serious problems.

Chapter Three presents an undoubtedly original reading of Philosophical Fragments and Concluding "Unscholarly" Postscript (to use Hartshorne's justifiable preference in translation). In short, he argues that: Johannes Climacus's philosophical view is not that of Søren Kierkegaard's. Given this thesis, a regrettable omission is found in Hartshorne's not accounting for Kierkegaard's name as editor of these two works. If Kierkegaard wanted to completely divorce himself from Climacus's views, why did he include his name as editor? Moreover, both an original draft and the final copy of Fragments had "S. Kierkegaard" as author, and the three-part question on the title page was originally written in the first person (Cf. KW VII xvi, 176-77). Hartshorne, however, views these writings as aesthetic works on a par with the earlier ones (thus he makes no mention of Kierkegaard's direct discussion of the nature

of the turning-point in his authorship) and agrees with Josiah Thompson that all the pseudonymous writings "ring false to the core" (p. 33).

That Fragments and Postscript are both ironic communications is true enough, but the dialectic of irony does not seem to have been fully grasped by Hartshorne. His logic seems to run: if a work is ironic, then it is altogether false (i.e., Kierkegaard does not personally believe what is written); Fragments is ironic, hence, Fragments is false. This logic runs the other way as well. For Hartshorne The Sickness unto Death contains no irony (and was written by the pseudonym Anti-Climacus!) and is, therefore, a true work, i.e., a work in which what is written is what Kierkegaard himself believes. The confusion revolves around the nature of ironic communication. Hartshorne believes that if irony is present then there cannot be seriousness, and he cites the Fragments in his defense: "an author of pieces such as I [Johannes Climacus]...has no seriousness of purpose" (p. 35). This is later explained dialectically, however, by Climacus in a lengthy footnote in the Postscript. (And I would dare say that Kierkegaard agrees with Climacus on this note.)

The presence of irony does not necessarily mean that the earnestness is excluded. Only assistant professors assume that. ... [T]hey make an exception of irony; they are unable to mediate that (KW XII 1, 277).

The point, then, is to see both the irony and the seriousness present in the pseudonymous writings, for if we take Kierkegaard's emphatic remark--that not a single word in the pseudonymous writings is his own--as an absolute hermeneutical postulate, then it does not seem at all likely that we could form any idea of his "purpose" in such a writing (assuming we are interested in the search for purposes). The best one who accepts Hartshorne's argument could say is: "This work is by Johannes Climacus. I have no idea how Kierkegaard reads it or what he might mean by it."

Of course, interpreting Kierkegaard is less complicated when one has a fundamental axiom that can be taken didactically. We seem to forget that "Kierkegaard," in this context, is a metonym for "Kierkegaard's writings," i.e., the texts. These are all we should really be concerned with if our intentions are personal or philosophical and not biographical. That Kierkegaard personally held a view is of little importance to someone interested in the truth value of the view, and we would surely be deceiving ourselves to accept

something solely on Kierkegaard's authority. C. Stephen Evans has made this point in his book, Kierkegaard's "Fragments" and "Postscript" (pp. 8-9). It is odd that Evans's view is given a brief, slightly more congenial appraisal by Hartshorne in his appendix (pp. 91-2).

Hartshorne's problem seems to be that certain well-known, generally-taken-to-be-Kierkegaardian views found in the pseudonymous writings on his close inspection turn out to be idolatrous and do not "properly" account for the miraculous grace of God. Therefore he wants to save Kierkegaard by arguing that he did not mean a single word of the pseudonymous works. For example, "truth as subjectivity," according to Hartshorne, "is the essence of all fanaticism and idolatry" (p. 42). Faith is not solely a subjective matter of "the passion of inwardness intensified to the utmost degree." It is rather a matter of the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus Hartshorne takes a bold step in writing: Truth as objectivity and truth as subjectivity are equally removed from Christian truth--from the miracle of grace that is received through faith in Christ (p. 43). If it were Kierkegaard's hope to deceive readers into taking notice of the (Christian) truth, then he can hardly be considered wise or a genius when one acknowledges that most readers have been deceived into an error.

Chapters Four and Five present a less problematic defense of Hartshorne's thesis. There one finds a critical contrast between two religious writings and Either/Or which is intended to show that although Kierkegaard uses language similar to the aesthete and Judge Wilhelm, the words do not share a common meaning for the contexts have changed. In Works of Love and The Sickness unto Death "one moves in an atmosphere entirely different from that of the pseudonymous works. The irony of the pseudonyms is absent" (p. 46). If the "irony of the pseudonyms" is absent this does not entail that any other sort of irony is absent. (Personally, I would like to carry Hartshorne's argument further to say that irony is pervasive throughout the Kierkegaardian corpus.² But so too is earnestness. Together they form "a dialectical knot" [Cf. KW XX 133] which may not be untied. Whether, however, the different manifestations of irony share a common meaning and goal--as perhaps set forth in The Concept of Irony--remains an open question.) But Hartshorne is on sound ground when he demonstrates that the concept of love in Works of Love is different from that encountered in both Volume 1 and Volume 2 of Either/Or. There can be little doubt that Johannes the Seducer's love is self-centered, but it is also crucial to

see that Judge Wilhelm's love is in like manner based on self-interest. Hartshorne expresses the difference between eros and agape clearly:

Marriage is a commitment made by husband and wife in the interests of giving permanence to their romantic love. There is no "Thou shalt," because the commandment is irrelevant where interest dictates the moral act. And there is no need for commandment because, in the world of Judge William, there is no sin. ...[I]n the last analysis both views are aesthetic: both appeal to the self-interest of those concerned. Neighbor love has no place in either (p. 61).

Chapter Five contrasts the discussion of despair in The Sickness Unto Death--a book which expresses Kierkegaard's deepest Christian convictions, although he refrained from signing his own name out of "a decent humility" (p. 66)--with Judge Wilhelm's writing on the subject. This involves the two key concept of the self and sin, and Hartshorne succeeds in showing the difference between Wilhelm's and Anti-Climacus's, i.e., Kierkegaard's, views. Wilhelm's atheism posits the self as an absolute that is responsible for the creation of good and evil, and not aware of the reality of sin. According to Hartshorne this is an elaboration of Kant's position, which shares no kinship with the Christian faith of Anti-Climacus. Anti-Climacus does not argue for his position, however; it is rather a "confessional statement" (p. 68) that asserts that the self is posited by an-Other and can in no ways eradicate its despair on its own. "There is but one possibility by which despair can be eradicated--the Possibility that is God, for whom all things are possible" (p. 70). Thus, Judge Wilhelm's discussion of "choosing oneself in one's eternal validity" leads, for Hartshorne, down the road of atheism which was taken by both Sartre and Camus. It seems that this presents the deeper explanation for why Hartshorne wants to argue that Kierkegaard is not Judge Wilhelm.

In the final chapter Hartshorne returns to question his basic premise by arguing that The Point of View is indeed correct and should be accepted as the authoritative reading of Kierkegaard's authorship. This thesis has come under serious attack in recent years, and I shall not get into an explication of the criticism here. I should rather like to speak of a general confusion underlying Hartshorne's interpretative strategy. Rather than simply wanting to find which views are worthy of Kierkegaard, qua Christian, Hartshorne harbors a biographical interest in wanting to uncover what Kierkegaard really believed personally. Thus, confusion

arises when he belatedly brings up the broken engagement with Regine Olsen and wants to read it back into Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works--works which purportedly do not contain a single word by Kierkegaard. It seems contradictory to argue that Fear and Trembling is ironic to the core and does not contain a single view of Kierkegaard, and then to speak of it as "implicitly addressed to Regine" and concerned with "Kierkegaard's problem in breaking the engagement"(p. 75). It seems contradictory to say that Either/Or does not contain a single word by Kierkegaard, and then to write that "his [Kierkegaard's] dilemma is also set forth in Either/Or." Or, moreover, to quote part of the first diapsalmata and then add: "That Kierkegaard was speaking of his own life is obvious" (p. 76). These few examples highlight the problems involved in psychologizing an author and show that ultimately any biographical/psychological reading of Kierkegaard is subject to confusion and contradiction. We had better stick to philosophical readings.

In closing, while I can recommend this work as an interesting attempt to construct a comprehensive hermeneutical hypothesis, it fails in its implicit intent to develop a straightforward method for interpreting Kierkegaard, and thus a sufficiently cogent reading of the first productivity is not forthcoming.³

Notes

1. For Garff's intriguing reading see "The Eyes of Argus: The Point of View and Points of View with Respect to Kierkegaard's 'Activity as an Author'," Kierkegaardiana 15, trans. Bruce Kirmmse (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1991), pp. 29-54.

For Norris on Kierkegaard see "Fictions of authority: narrative and viewpoint in Kierkegaard's writing," The Deconstructive Turn: essays in the rhetoric of philosophy (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 85-106, and his article "De Man Unfair to Kierkegaard? an allegory of (non)-reading," Kierkegaard--Poet of Existence (Kierkegaard Conferences I), ed. Birgit Bertung (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1989), p. 89 ff. Norris's reading of Kierkegaard is not entirely without its problems, however.

2. Consider when Kierkegaard writes about "works of love" which "essentially cannot be described" (cf. the "Foreword") and note the etymology of the Danish word for describe, beskrive: the root skrive means "to write" and the prefix be makes the verb transitive. Thus, Kierkegaard is essentially writing about that which cannot be written about.

More obvious, perhaps, is that the scriptural language

Kierkegaard quotes and writes about is highly ironic and indirect. Consider his first biblical quotation:

For each tree is known by its own fruit. for
figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are
grapes picked from a bramble bush. (Luke 6:44)

Quite clearly, what is said is not what is meant, which is a basic characteristic of all ironic speech. Since for Kierkegaard "everything Christian is ambiguous, redoubling" (Pap. XI 2 A 37), ironic speech is undoubtedly also pervasive in Kierkegaard's religious writings.

3. My thanks to P. Eddy Wilson for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of this review.

ARTICLES

READING KIERKEGAARD IN DANISH - ANOTHER REPLY - IN ENGLISH

By Arne Grøn, Department of Søren Kierkegaard Research
University of Copenhagen

The letter by me published in Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter, November 1991, was a reply to a letter entitled: "Intellectual Entropy," which Marilyn Piety had sent to the editors of Kierkegaardiana. As can be seen from that reply, it was directed to Marilyn Piety, and it was not meant for publication. In fact I was about to write a reply to her revised article when I discovered that my original letter had been published. The error is partly mine, since I had hesitated concerning a reply to Stephen Evans' friendly request.

I hesitated about my reply because I found that Marilyn Piety's article confused things. And since I had verbally mentioned the possibility of publishing a reply in Danish, it was because I found it a trifle comic to discuss in English how dreadful it was that one could not read Kierkegaard in Danish. However, I would like to reply - again on behalf of the editors of Kierkegaardiana - in English.

Let us be quite clear what it is we are discussing. The question at issue is not whether it is important to read Kierkegaard in Danish. As I wrote in my previous reply in Danish now in English: It is important - and in some contexts vital - to be able to read Danish in order to read Kierkegaard. The question is another, namely: in which language can we speak and write about Kierkegaard? In which language can we seriously discuss Kierkegaard? The answer is that of course it makes sense to discuss Kierkegaard in English, German or French. Thus, there have been conferences about Kierkegaard in, e.g., English in England and French in France. Several conferences have also been arranged in Denmark where Kierkegaard was discussed in English or German.

That it is important - and in some cases vital - to read Kierkegaard in Danish thus does not exclude the activity of interpreting and discussing Kierkegaard in other languages. Now there are many possibilities for getting articles and essays on Kierkegaard published in Danish. In fact much is published on Kierkegaard in Danish that is never translated into other languages, even though it deserves translation. The purpose of Kierkegaardiana is not to give yet another possibility for publishing material in Danish, but is, as far as possible,

to provide a forum for the study of Kierkegaard in an international context. And here it is our wish to reach not only the Kierkegaard scholars who already master Danish, but also to place the discussion of Kierkegaard in a broader philosophical and theological context. We are convinced that Kierkegaard has more to say in current philosophical and theological discussion than it would seem.

I thus do not disagree with Marilyn Piety that it is important to be able to read Kierkegaard in Danish. But I am not very happy that a line has to be drawn between serious and non-serious Kierkegaard researchers on the basis of whether they can read Kierkegaard in Danish. That is, one makes a decision before one has seen what scholars actually write or say. So I am not very happy about this, not least in the light of how Kierkegaard has in fact become known in the philosophy and theology of the 20th century.

Marilyn Piety says that one of the two main reasons for the editors of Kierkegaardiana deciding present editorial policy regarding language has to do with fund-raising. This reason became known to me when I read Marilyn Piety's letter to us. But she is apparently better informed than I am about the motives for our decision.

Marilyn Piety is correct to think that Danes are proud of their cultural heritage. I am grateful that she thinks that we are deservedly so. And I am sorry to hear that our decision viewed from a broader perspective can be seen as a contribution to the death of the Danish language.

I will therefore conclude by repeating what I originally wrote in Danish: with Kierkegaardiana we also want to reach scholars who perhaps do not master Danish, of course with the secret hope that one day they may come to do so. Instead of creating hindrances, we want to invite them inside. We thus hope that Kierkegaard scholars will feel at home in Copenhagen. In any case, it is the Kierkegaard Department's intention to intensify the help given to its guests, including help in reading Kierkegaard in Danish.

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