

Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter



A Publication of the Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library

St. Olaf College

Northfield, Minnesota

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NUMBER 44
September, 2002

NEWS FROM THE HONG KIERKEGAARD LIBRARY

Submitted by Cynthia Wales Lund, Assistant Curator. Email: lundc@stolaf.edu. Tel. 507-646-3846, Fax 507-646-3858.

THE KIERKEGAARD LIBRARY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, 2002

Summer fellowships for research in residence are offered to scholars for use of the collection between June 1 and November 15. The awards include campus housing and a \$250.00 per month stipend. Scholarships are also available at other times of the year.

To apply for a fellowship, send a letter outlining your proposed research project and reasons for wanting to use the collection, along with a vitae or other description of qualifications. Two academic letters of recommendation are also requested. The application deadline for next summer is March 15, 2003. To apply, send materials and letter to:

Gordon Marino, Curator
Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library
St. Olaf College
1510 St. Olaf Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057-1097

Summer Fellows for 2002 have been: Tony Aumann, Brian Barlau, Matthew Bissell, Joseph Brown, Manuel Caraza, Irina Dergaus, Patrick Frierson, Eric Froom, Luis Guerrero, Gina Helfrich, Mime Ikeda, Nicholae Irina, Mihaela Irina, Eric Lindland, Jason Mahn, Marcia Morgan, Sean Nye, Onur Ozdemir, Myron Penner, Simon Podmore, Leo Stan, Patrick Stokes, John Varughese.

The Jonathan Stenseth Memorial Fellow for 2002 is Nicolae Irina from the University of Bucharest in Romania.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Friends of the Kierkegaard Library gathered for their spring meeting on Saturday, May 4, 2002. Chairperson Jamie Lorentzen led the meeting.

The Library offered a course in Danish for Kierkegaard scholars during the month of July 2002. Sinead Ladegaard Knox from Copenhagen was instructor for the class of 14 Kierkegaard scholars: Tony Aumann, Irina Dergaus, Eric Froom, Leticia Guerrero, Eric Lindland, Jason Mahn, Leo Stan, William Banks, Mark Stapp, Christopher Simpson, Tyler DeArmand, Ian Duckles, Tamara-Monet Marks, and Matthew Palomba.

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Approximately 150 new titles were acquired since February 2002.

We would like to thank the following scholars for their contributions to the Library: Hans Aaen, Narum family, Henri Nicolay Levinspuhl, Sophia Scopetea, Leo Stan, Donald Fox, Ian Duckles, Eliseo Perez Alvarez, Luis Guerrero, Marco de la Torre, Louis Pojman, Gordon Marino.

The Hong Kierkegaard Library strongly encourages the donation of books and articles on Kierkegaard and related thinkers to add to its collections and to share with other libraries and scholars. Gift books are so indicated with a special donor bookplate.

PUBLICATIONS

The Library sponsors the undergraduate journal of existentialist thought, *The Reed*. This journal, which is now entering its fourth year of publication, includes scholarly essays, short stories, and poetry. Those interested in either submitting to this journal or in receiving a copy should contact Gordon Marino.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Arnold B. Come, 1918-2002

Dr. Arnold B. Come died on May 26, 2002 at age 84 from cancer. His memorial service was held on June 11, 2002 in San Anselmo, California. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. Come became the Stuart Professor of Systematic Theology at San Francisco Theological Seminary in 1953 and the sixth president of the Seminary from 1967-1982. He also made many contributions to local, national, and international church affairs.

Arnold Come authored 7 books, the last 3 on the thought of Søren Kierkegaard. (*Trendelenburg's Influence on Kierkegaard's Modal Categories* (1991); *Kierkegaard as Humanist: Discovering My Self* (1995); *Kierkegaard as Theologian: Recovering My Self* (1997)). We will miss Dr. Come's presence among us and are grateful for his joining us during the 1997 International Kierkegaard Conference.

For more complete information and a photograph, please see May, 2002 News Archives section of the San Francisco Theological Seminary website. (www.sfts.edu)

News From The Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre in Copenhagen

Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* in the New Danish Edition

Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter, vol. 7 and K7, *Afsluttende videnskabelige Efterskrift*.

On June 20th, 2002 the *Afsluttende videnskabelige Efterskrift* was published as a part of the new complete edition of Kierkegaard's works *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*. As usual, this text is accompanied by a volume of commentaries.

According to Kierkegaard's own self-understanding, the *Afsluttende videnskabelige Efterskrift* constituted the turning-point in his authorship. It appeared in 1846 and formed simultaneously the end of numerous pseudonymous works, which appeared from 1843-45, and the beginning of the works which followed in 1847-51.

With the publication of the *Afsluttende videnskabelige Efterskrift*, a turning-point has also been reached in *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, for now all the published works, as well as the journals and notebooks from the first half of the authorship, i.e. 1833-46 have appeared in this new edition.

All of the works in this edition can be ordered directly from G.E.C. Gads Publishing House in Copenhagen at www.gads-forlag.dk.

News From *International Kierkegaard Commentary* Editor

International Kierkegaard Commentary

Call for Papers

Papers for *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* are due 1 September 2003. Prospective authors should e-mail the editor, Robert L. Perkins, at rperkins6@clf.rr.com about their interest. Commit yourself to submit an article for this volume now so that you have the whole year to mull, think and write.

Other Volumes in Progress

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'For Self-Examination' and 'Judge for Yourself!' is at the bindery and should be in the Mercer University Press display at the American Academy of Religion in Toronto in November.

The papers for International Kierkegaard Commentary: Practice in Christianity are due 1 September. Several have already arrived.

Direct all communication to:

Robert L. Perkins
Editor, International Kierkegaard Commentary
225 South Boundary Avenue
DeLand, FL 32720-5103

rperkins6@cfl.rr.com 386-734-6457

Kierkegaard Cabinet in Budapest

In March 2001, the Kierkegaard Cabinet opened at Budapest University Eotvos Lorand, hosted by the Institute of Aesthetics. This resource center functions as an independent foundation, with the mandate to support Kierkegaard scholarship in Hungary and the Central Eastern European region and to assist in the translation of Kierkegaard's works into Hungarian. The "heart" of the Cabinet is a special library and an electronic database which provides contacts with other resource and research centers in the world. The Cabinet welcomes scholars, students, and researchers from Central and Eastern Europe.

The founder of the Kierkegaard Cabinet Foundation is Peter Nadas. Members of the Board include Chairperson, András Nagy; Bela Bacso, head of the Institute of Aesthetics; and Thomas Berntsen, director of the Danish Cultural Institute in Hungary. Sponsors of the Cabinet include The Royal Danish Embassy, The Danish Cultural Institute, The Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre (Copenhagen) and the Hong Kierkegaard Library.

Address: Kierkegaard Cabinet
c/o ELTE Muveszettudományi Intézet
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Email: cabinet@emc.elte.hu
Website: <http://kierkegaard.elte.hu/>

Hours: Wednesday and Thursday during the academic year, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

(Appointments possible for other times with advance notice.)

To request information about the Kierkegaard Cabinet or to offer books, articles, databases, etc. for scholars, students, and translators in the region, please contact András Nagy at andrasnagy@mail.matav.hu.

Change in Website Address

Please note that the Kierkegaard Library website has slightly changed:
www.stolaf.edu/collections/kierkegaard

Additional Format for Newsletter

We are in the process of putting the newsletter on this website. If you are interested in receiving the newsletter electronically rather than a mailed printed copy, please let us know. Contact Cleo at: grannema@stolaf.edu to provide your email address.

Kierkegaard Listserv Ending

Due to the uncontrollable increase in junk mail and our lack of staff to operate a moderated list, the Kierkegaard discussion list on the Internet sponsored by the Kierkegaard Library ended September 6th. Other discussion lists related to Kierkegaard have been established which will hopefully provide an online forum for those interested. Thanks to all those participating over the past years, especially to those experienced Kierkegaard scholars who repeatedly offered their time and expertise to answer questions and give opinions.

Conference Announcement

Søren Kierkegaard Society of the United Kingdom will hold its annual conference on Friday 27th of June 2003. The conference will take place at King College, London. The topic will be 'Kierkegaard and the Stages'. C. Stephen Evans will be the featured speaker.

Enquiries should be directed to: murray.rae@kcl.ac.uk.

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Kierkegaard's Cure for Divorce

Ronald F. Marshall
Pastor of First Lutheran Church of West Seattle
Seattle, WA

In Gilbert Meilaender's sermon for his daughter Hannah's wedding, he sets out in part to show the relevance of Søren Kierkegaard's book, *Works of Love*, for Christian marriage.¹ This is because he thinks Kierkegaard helps explain the worthy thought that true "love never ends" (1 Corinthians 13:8).

This sermon also provides an alternative to all the sentimental slogans heard at Christian weddings.² Kierkegaard is well suited for this since he is harsh and philosophizes "with a hammer."³ That trait gives him power to purge the drivel from wedding sermons. This power is Kierkegaard's relevance for weddings. So just because he broke off his engagement with the young Regine Olsen and never married after that⁴ does not disqualify him in matters marital.⁵ The preacher still should be able to fall "in love with Søren"⁶ and use him confidently at weddings.

I want to present the gist of Meilaender's sermon in order to augment it with further material from *Works of Love* and then assess its overall commendability.

I. Patience in Marriage

Meilaender rightly sees that Kierkegaard in *Works of Love* elaborates the theme of patience or what he calls "waiting for the beloved." Patience in marriage stops one from running off for a divorce at the first sight of trouble.⁷ Patience enables one to wait for better times. Meilaender says that by being patient marital love reflects the "steadfastness and faithfulness" of God's love which is what "joins Father, Son and Spirit." By waiting, the husband or wife is able to "exercise just a little of God's own creative power – to determine...that it will be a future together." In that way they act like God. This makes the struggle to persevere in marriage noble.

Meilaender sees this point about patience in Kierkegaard's image of the broken hyphenated or compound word. That compound word is husband-wife or lover-beloved.⁸ It depicts an intact, marital relationship. So if the wife leaves, she "cannot take the hyphen" with her. In this way the husband can still abide in his love for his upset wife – regardless of her behavior. He can wait with open arms. In fact what others might call "a break" is only "a relationship that has not yet been finished." This is because the husband cannot say he knows for sure "that nothing more is coming" (WL 306). Even after years elapse he still "continually emancipates" himself from the

past sad years and waits "for the future" when her love for him may once again bloom (WL 307). So his love abides even though hers does not. He does not need her love to motivate himself to love her. He waits on his own because of his love for her. By so doing his love abides even when hers wanes.⁹ On this account the break between them is only apparent.

The other image from *Works of Love* that Meilaender uses is that of the dancer who remains on the floor even after her husband leaves in a huff.¹⁰ Just because he runs off does not mean she must do so too. So "if the other remains standing in the position that expresses bowing toward the one who is not seen, and if you know nothing about the past, you will say, 'The dance will surely begin just as soon as the other one, who is awaited, comes'" (WL 307).

So love abides in the waiting wife on the dance floor. Meilaender astutely observes that this bowing posture could be "rather awkward.... One could get...lots of cramps. A stiff neck. One could tire," he says. But this failure to abide because of pain and impatience is warded off by the fact that "God gives us time, gives us marriage: that we may not tire, but, on the contrary, gain joy by abiding." So the time allotted in marriage is not only for enjoyment but also for putting the pieces of broken love back together.

II. Self-Hatred in Marriage

This ends Meilaender's fine sermon. But he could have gone on. Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* has more to say. He could have said what Kierkegaard thought should be done with the time God graciously gives for the restoration of marriage.¹¹ In addition to having time to reconcile, an estranged couple also needs to learn how to fix their broken love. They should not use their time to sulk or play the blame game. That would be to misuse God's gift of time. They instead need to learn how to deal with their cramps and pain, disappointment and anger, stiff necks and fatigue.

Picking up where Meilaender leaves off in *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard makes this crucial, additional point:

But perhaps the girl actually loved herself. She desired the union with the beloved for her own sake; it was her only desire, her soul was as one in this desire. In gratitude for this fulfillment, she

would do everything possible to make her husband's life as beautiful as possible. Yes, this is true, but yet, yet it was for her own sake that she desired the union. If this is so, she is sure to become weary, she becomes attentive to the past, to the length of time – now she no longer sits at the window; she expresses that the break exists... (WL 307).

According to Kierkegaard much more than time is needed to ward off fatigue, impatience and divorce. One also needs to use that time properly – specifically in three ways. First one must quit loving oneself. Second one must not want the marriage restored for one's own sake. And finally one must not look for fulfillment in marriage.

Well, it surely goes without saying that these are all highly contestable points – especially in our time when love has become "a consumptive item." In such a time "the only way to move one's spouse is to threaten to remove the object of his or her gratification – oneself. In this way...divorce permeates marriage." So "all talk of happiness in marriage seems to be linked to a threat: Make me happy or I'll leave.... If the goal is the happiness of the individual partner, then the therapeutic love contract, or marriage, is inherently temporary."¹² No wonder, then, that *The New Yorker* published a cartoon that has the pastor telling the newly weds: "O. K., then. You may kiss, shake hands, and come out married."¹³ Marriage looks like a boxing match today because threats and the specter of divorce permeate it.

Against this prevailing consumptive view of love and marriage Kierkegaard's point is particularly relevant – even if contested. Marriage is not about self-fulfillment and self-love.¹⁴ But saying this does not make it so. Kierkegaard, however, does not leave it at that.

Earlier in *Works of Love* he argues that it is "foolish...to love others for...one's own advantage" (WL 258). If one therefore sets aside one's own advantage, love will "never give up" (WL 254). That is indeed the noble goal of marriage, viz., to never give up loving. But how does one quit pursuing one's own advantage so that one may endure? How can we make love abide?

Kierkegaard's answer is simple. We give up pursuing our own advantage in marriage by hating ourselves. Love that truly abides must be purged of all self-love and selfishness if it is to endure what Martin Luther called the "thorns and thistles in marriage."¹⁵ Such love is "self-denial's love" that "drives out all...self-love" (WL 55). Indeed one must hate "one's own life" in order for love to abide (WL 109). Self-hatred has the power to enrich marriage. By hating oneself in marriage we no longer yearn to be at the center of our marriage. We fight against being selfish and thinking that marriage is for our "own sake" (WL 307).

Surely we would prefer not hearing such tough words amidst all the finery and festivity of a church wedding. Having three children myself I can imagine wishing for something better. But Kierkegaard warns against making love something "sentimental" (WL 376). The Christian goal after all is not an "easy and...sociable" life (WL 124). Luther was right that Christian living rightly brings with it "danger and difficulty."¹⁶

Because of the bitterness and despondency self-hatred can bring, its value is less than clear. In order to combat these pitfalls, Kierkegaard steers clear of inappropriate self-hatred. Self-hatred is wrong if it is wasteful, foolish, depressing or violent (WL 23). Properly construed self-hatred "removes from love everything that is inflamed, everything that is momentary, everything that is giddy" (WL 188). This alone is the value of self-hatred. With it love can truly reach out to the beloved and abide.¹⁷ When both husband and wife practice self-hatred a marriage lasts. This is because they are able to help each other battle back selfishness.

So the indelible mark of love is that it diminishes and devalues reciprocity. Marital love does not live because it is returned – that would be selfish. Self-hatred enables one to let go of a dependence on reciprocity in marriage. All Christians should hear this point shouted from the rooftops at weddings. It is wrong to love only if we are loved in return. If love is returned, it is sweet – but that does not control whether or not we ourselves love. In this sense love is free of the burdens of reciprocity. That is what it means to devalue and diminish it. According to Kierkegaard, love is selfish and false when it "aspires to...repayment" – even in the form of "reciprocal love" (WL 349). Reciprocity is defanged when it no longer controls whether or not we love. When allowed to roam unchecked, reciprocity destroys true, unselfish love.

This, however does not turn husbands and wives into automatons. They must still rejoice in being "loved" (WL 39) whenever it happens.¹⁸ For whether or not we are loved is not "a matter of indifference" (WL 27). Abandonment hurts. Devaluing reciprocity does not eliminate that pain nor the desire to be loved. But neither will withdrawal, rejection or attack sway us from loving.¹⁹ This determination surfaces only after reciprocity has been devalued. According to Kierkegaard, this makes love wild and "dangerous" (WL 198, 277). It will show itself when the prudent have given up. Looking around we know how people can display "animal bloodthirstiness and savagery" (WL 169). But we are to be ready for that and not be surprised when it happens – even when it appears in its softer forms of carping and sulking. In the face of this we are to abide even if it makes us look foolish and a bit "mad" (WL 108, 132, 185, 203, 238, 287, 290, 321). So in some sense you have to be a little crazy to stay married and hold onto your wedding

vows.²⁰ The church, Kierkegaard is saying, should push for such craziness in marriage. Going the extra mile has its place in marriage.

One way to promote this teaching on self-hatred and disregard for reciprocity in wedding sermons would be to base them on Ephesians 5:21-33²¹ rather than on 1 Corinthians 13:8. This classic marriage text from Ephesians is about "sacrifice."²² It says husbands and wives should mutually subject themselves to each other out of reverence for Christ. Within that rubric of sacrifice Kierkegaard's criticism of reciprocity fits nicely. So a wedding sermon based on Ephesians 5 could wonderfully reflect Kierkegaard's point that self-hatred is what makes marriage last. It is what wards off divorce.

Another verse would be John 12:25. Even though this verse is not explicitly about marriage it also can help. It says that if we hate ourselves we will be saved from hell. Now if we were to extend that thought into the realm of marriage, we could say that self-hatred also saves us from divorce – what many know to be a living, earthly hell, any way. So if self-hatred can save us from going to hell it surely can save us from getting divorced. Conquering hell after all is much more difficult than conquering divorce. Seeing that pivotal role for self-hatred in marriage is precisely Kierkegaard's cure for divorce.

III. Confession in Marriage

Criticisms of this cure are many and intense. But far be it from Kierkegaard to make a proposal that would be anything less than contentious.

So there are questions. How, for instance, can it be that a loving husband should wait indefinitely for his errant wife to return? And is it always wrong to cut the ties that bind and look for another spouse? Or how can it be that a battered wife should keep loving her abusive husband without regard for her own safety? Should she not leave in order to protect herself? And how can it be that a husband should stay with his wife when he gets absolutely nothing out of the marriage? And is it always wrong to expect fulfillment in marriage?²³

How would Kierkegaard respond to these questions? I think he would say we need to learn how to live under the weight of the ideal of this "higher" (WL 45) form of love and marriage.²⁴

Kierkegaard knows that up against this exalted ideal of love we look "shabby" indeed (WL 284). Our efforts at approximating it are "superficial" (WL 364). These failures render us "unworthy servants" (WL 365) of the God who calls us to this exalted life of suffering love.

In the face of these failures our temptation is to settle for some "medium grade" of love (WL 45) that is less

demanding. With it we could master love and erase our guilt for failing to live up to this more exalted ideal. No longer would we have to appear in "an unfavorable light" (WL 370). But Kierkegaard resists this temptation. That medium grade of love must be "thrust down," he says (WL 45). We must not "slacken" the higher form of love (WL 50). We cannot expect to "spinelessly whimper" our way into righteousness (WL 379).

Watering down the higher form of love is not the way to go. We instead must continue to aspire to this exalted ideal while admitting that we have not reached it. And we must say that we are "always only...on the way" (WL 48). Even though we may never arrive we must always hope we will.

Kierkegaard explains this dialectical relation to the exalted ideal of Christianity in his book *Judge For Yourself!* In the face of the "difficult and complex" problems foisted on us by this ideal, the faithful Christian should with "a purity like that of a virgin and a blushing modesty like that of an adolescent," refuse to act "sagaciously" (JFY 103). We should dump "flabby sensibleness" and the "despicable thralldom in probability" (JFY 102).

His reason for this is that those maneuvers constitute a "mean slandering of all...the martyrs" in the past who died for true, rigorous Christianity (JFY 101). Their deaths for all times show that Christianity is "sheer agony" and that Christians are nothing but "worms." Backing off from this severe judgment only defames the centrality of martyrdom in Christianity.

So we should let the ideal "stand firm" and declare that the "only way to be exempted" from the rigors of the ideal is by "humbling oneself and making an admission" (JFY 102). We must humbly admit that we are afraid to live by the ideal because it is too hard for us. Miraculously this confession does not exclude us from God. When we confess our failure and our hope for doing better, we are "eternally saved" (JFY 207). Then we "come...to...grace" (JFY 142). God grants us forgiveness and the hope of living righteously through him.

This confession is monumental. It shows that our weak faith, straining under the weight of these lofty ideals, is really not "Christianity at all" (JFY 142). True Christianity is too high for us. It would leave us unfulfilled, battered and alone. But that is "treason against us!" (JFY 141). We cannot sacrifice "everything for Christianity" (JFY 134). We are too weak for that. So we live with less. We live with a "mitigation" of true Christianity (JFY 142). The only faithfulness we have left is to refuse to "establish the error" as the true, redefined Christian faith (JFY 102). To do so would be to turn Christianity into something else. Here Kierkegaard stands with Luther. "This entire life," Luther wrote, "is a time of willing to be righteous, but

never achieving it, for this happens only in the future life." This admission humbles us. With it we know we are too weak to live the pure Christian life and must depend on God to carry us along.

With this confession we develop "some respect for Christianity" (JFY 209). We refuse to water it down in order to make it easily achievable. We know we would like to change Christianity – but we refuse to do it.

"Moreover, just as suspicious characters must register with the police," so we will report to God on the "dubiousness" of our Christian identity – knowing full well that God is "sheer love and grace and compassion" and will welcome us while still expecting us to "be honest in the relationship" with him (JFY 207).

Once we have learned to live under the weight of this ideal, Christian love will remain as extreme as ever. The picture of love in *Works of Love* will be allowed to stand in all of its fierce boldness. It will stand even though we will not be able to live up to much of it. We will not be able to sacrifice the way it wants us to. But we will be able to lament our failure. We will not explain it away. We will continue to let the pressure of this ideal bear down upon us – pushing us to greater faithfulness. With our sadness, however, we will also have hope. With our sorrow there will be rejoicing (2 Corinthians 6:10). For through God's abiding mercy we will be saved while we are yet sinners: "For our sake God made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

³ Emmanuel Levinas, *Proper Names*, trans. Michael B. Smith, (Stanford: Stanford University, 1996) 76. See also the aptly titled *Provocations: Spiritual Writings of Kierkegaard*, Compiled and edited by Charles E. Moore, (Farmington, PA: Plough, 1999), especially section V, "Christian Collisions."

⁴ See Susan Leigh Anderson, *On Kierkegaard*, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2000) 5-11.

⁵ See Carolyn Kizer's poem, "The Erotic Philosophers," in *The Best American Poetry 1999*, ed. Robert Bly (New York: Scribner, 1999). Kizer accuses Kierkegaard of supposing that what was "truly terrible" for him was "to be consoled by the love of another" because if one is to "suffer to love God,... he must tear himself away from earthly love" (102, 103).

⁶ Dorothee Soelle, *The Window of Vulnerability*, trans. Linda M. Maloney, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 117).

⁷ So we read in Pamela Paul's distressing new book, *The Starter Marriage and the Future of Matrimony* (NY: Villard, 2002), "You're young and crazy and you just sort of go for it... We never really talked about long-term goals." On this book see Mark D. Fefer, "The Young and Deluded: First-Marriage Survivors Tell All," *Seattle Weekly*, March 7, 2002. Acceptable reasons for divorce in the Church have been "adultery, ...political treason, planning of murder, disappearance for five years or more, unjustified accusation of adultery and ...monastic vows of one of the partners" [John Meyendorff, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective* (Crestwood, NY: Sts. Vladimir's Seminary, 1975) 56].

⁸ *Kierkegaard's Works*, eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, in 26 volumes, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1978-2000), Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* [1847; KW 16 (1995)] 306. All further citations to this book are in the text parenthetically with the abbreviation WL.

⁹ This is no small matter if it is true that divorce by "mutual-consent... is rare," being that "over 80 percent of divorces are now...unilateral" [Maggie Gallagher, *The Abolition of Marriage: How We Destroy Lasting Love*, (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1996) 144]. That statistic alone holds out the hope that many broken marriages could be restored simply by the persistence of the husband or of the wife.

¹⁰ Meilaender says this passage along with the one above on the broken, hyphenated word are "two of the most unforgettable and powerful... I have ever read."

¹¹ In personal correspondence dated March 16, 2002, Dr. Meilaender says this additional point is "problematic" and so he excluded it. In his book *Friendship: A Study in Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1981) he gives a reason for this. Any efforts, he writes, "to deny our neediness is to try to live a lie, and it must inevitably deny important features of our common nature" (45). But Kierkegaard is not guilty of this sin. He does not deny our neediness. All he does is prevent it from putting an end to love.

¹ Gilbert Meilaender, "Love Abides," *Christian Century* 117 (October 11, 2000) 990-991. he makes a similar point in his essay "The Task of Lutheran Ethics," *Lutheran Forum* 34 (Winter 2000) 17-22, 20-21.

² See, for instance, *Best Wedding Meditations: An Anthology*, Revised Edition, (Lima, OH: CSS 1972, 1997), "Let there be spaces in your togetherness" (38, 53) and "Celebrate the staying power of love – so bright a flame nothing can put it out" (47). Note also *Wedding Readings: Centuries of Writing and Rituals on Love and Marriage* ed. Eleanor Munro, (NY: Penguin, 1989), "You can transmute love, ignore it, muddle it, but you can never pull it out of you [because] love is eternal" (25) and marriage "is like a dance... Now arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back – it does not matter which. Because they know they are partners moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together, and being invisibly nourished by it" (75). May Kierkegaard's thought save us from such "amatory banalities" as these [*The Book of Marriage: The Wisest Answers to the Toughest Questions*, eds. Mack & Blankenhorn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 184].

He does not allow the tail (of need) to wag the dog (of marriage).

¹² Maggie Gallagher, *The Abolition of Marriage*, 231.

¹³ *The New Yorker*, March 15, 1999, 50.

¹⁴ For a confirmation of this point see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Revised Edition, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999), "After the fall, marriage helps to overcome self-absorption, egoism, pursuit of one's own pleasure, and to open oneself to the other, to mutual aid and to self-giving" (B1609). This confirmation is an example of how "extremely close to Catholicism" Kierkegaard actually is [H. Roos, *Søren Kierkegaard and Catholicism*, trans. Richard M. Brackett, (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1954) 19].

¹⁵ Martin Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapter 26-30 (1545), *Luther's Works*, 55 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955-1986) 5: 195-196.

¹⁶ Martin Luther, Lectures on Genesis, Chapter 26-30 (1545), *Luther's Works* 24:162.

¹⁷ I have explored this thesis in "News From the Graveyard: Kierkegaard's Analysis of Christian Self-Hatred," *Pro Ecclesia* 9 (Winter 2000) 19-42.

¹⁸ So "to rebuild marriage, we must recognize that grimly hanging in there 'for the sake of the children' will not work, that it has never been enough." Sober, self-sufficient endurance by one of the parties will not restore a marriage. For marriage is "the incarnation of eros, the body of love. It is the psalms and the Song of Songs and it is the Crucifixion, or at least it is our aspiration to all of these things" (Gallagher, *The Abolition of Marriage*, 263-264). Endurance can lead to restoration but is too grim to amount to restoration itself.

¹⁹ This would be an extension of the teaching that we should lend money "expecting nothing in return" (Luke 6:35), and an appeal to the hope of being "repaid at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14).

²⁰ Researchers have now mounted sizable scientific evidence against keeping one's marital vows. They try to show that just as "infants have their infancy," so adults naturally have their adultery [David P. Barash and Judith Eve Lipton, *The Myth of Monogamy: Fidelity and Infidelity in Animals and People*, (NY: W. H. Freeman, 2001) 2].

²¹ Meilaender explores Ephesians 5 in *Things That Count: Essays Moral and Theological*, (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2000), 44-57. The importance of sacrifice in marriage however is missing from his account. Elizabeth Achtemeier has a better understanding of Ephesians 5 as the call to husbands and wives to imitate "Christ's faithfulness and yearning and sacrifice" [*The Committed Marriage* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) 86].

²² See *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, ed. Mark J. Edwards, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*, vol. 7 (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity, 1999) 195.

²³ For a helpful discussion of these questions see "Appendix: Hard Questions" in Kalbach & Kopp, *Because I Said Forever: Embracing Hope in a Not-So-Perfect Marriage* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2001) 235-246.

²⁴ M. Jamie Ferreira has a different solution. She uses the "category of responsiveness" to balance out Kierkegaard's account. This in turn eliminates the "extreme" elements in Kierkegaard's view of Christian love [*Love's Grateful Striving: A Commentary on Kierkegaard's Works of Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 226, 224]. I prefer a less creative solution which stays closer to Kierkegaard's actual textual formulations.

REVIEWS

Kierkegaard: A Biography

By Alastair Hannay
510 Pages, \$28.00, ISBN 0521560772
Cambridge University Press

Reviewed by
Gordon Marino

There is no better conversation partner for thinking about faith than the lyrical Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55). Kierkegaard, of course, has earned his place in Woody Allen's scripts and in *New Yorker* cartoons as the epitome of hard-to-fathom profundity. He is not for those who demand their epiphanies in tear-off calendar format. So when you decide to make friends with Kierkegaard's writings, do not be ashamed to consult a guide or three. Bring Gregor Malantschuk's *Kierkegaard's Thought*, Bruce Kimmse's, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, and Alastair Hannay's new biography, *Kierkegaard*.

Hannay has been walking with the Dane for decades. He is not only one of the most penetrating and prolific Kierkegaard scholars in the world, but also a philosopher of great acuity and breadth himself. A master of both the analytic and continental traditions, he has written on problems as diverse of artificial intelligence and Aquinas's view of despair. As if that were not enough, he is a gifted and experienced translator, and his knowledge of both Kierkegaard's Danish and his milieu reverberates throughout this monumental study.

Kierkegaard, unlike that other Galileo of the inner world, Freud, did not leave much of a trail of his personal life. Still, by all accounts, he was a strange bird who came from a strange and (by yesterday's no less than today's account) a dysfunctional family. While Hannay's study is rightly advertised as an "intellectual biography," no biographer of Kierkegaard could legitimately ignore the familial loam out of which Kierkegaard's thought grew.

Hannay's short story of Kierkegaard's early life works very well. Most important, he offers a compelling account of Kierkegaard's petulant relationship with his father, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard (1756-1838). In his posthumously published intellectual autobiography (*From the Point of View of My Work as an Author*), Kierkegaard observed that his father ruined his chances for worldly happiness but prepared him well for the only thing that was important, namely, the task of faith. Kierkegaard's father died while Kierkegaard was still

rebelling against him. Twenty-five at the time, he had been dawdling while taking a degree in theology. After the death of the old man, Kierkegaard set frenetically to work. By 1841, he had written and defended his famous dissertation, *On the Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates*. There can be no doubt that Kierkegaard's father was a father to him in more ways than one. Once a poor shepherd boy from Jutland, but later an enormously successful business man in Copenhagen, Kierkegaard's father was a theological conservative in a world that was increasingly coming to see faith in Hegelian terms, that is, as a kind of "philosophy made simple." On Hannay's insightful reading, Kierkegaard's work was an indirect defense of his father's faith against the sneering attitudes of the Danish intelligentsia. Ultimately this defense was transmogrified into a virulent attack on the Danish State Lutheran Church.

The other person who held constant court in Kierkegaard's consciousness was Regine Olsen (1822-1904). Kierkegaard had ambitions that would take him out of the ordinary gyres of life but he fell in love just as lesser mortals do. He met Regine at one of the open houses hosted by her parents in 1837. A few years and encounters later, Kierkegaard shocked Regine by proposing to her. Swept off her feet, Regine accepted but almost immediately Kierkegaard's doubts began to trickle. Kierkegaard scandalized everyone when after a short time he sought to break off the engagement. Regine fought fiercely to keep him, but in August 1841 she relented and returned her engagement ring. Though some scholars have called his reasoning lame, in his journals Kierkegaard explained that he did not want to bring Regine into the crushing melancholy that seemed to afflict his family. Though Regine ended up marrying a former suitor, she may as well have been right down the hall. Kierkegaard was always thinking of the woman he jilted. As Hannay documents, in a letter containing his last wishes, Kierkegaard proclaimed:

It is, of course, my will that my former fiancée, Mrs. Regine Schlegel, inherit unconditionally whatever

little I can leave behind... What I want to express in this way is that to me an engagement was and is just as binding as a marriage.

A Freudian would say that it was no mistake that Kierkegaard's muse arrived just as Regine was going out the door. In the early 1840s, books began to cascade from his pen, one philosophical-spiritual classic after another. Hannay makes it clear that the Danes did not know what to do with the flaneur who seemed to suddenly morph into a genius. While I think Hannay has given short shrift to what the secular world deems Kierkegaard's minor, straight-forwardly Christian works, he provides astute commentary on the required texts of any Kierkegaard reading list, such as *Either/Or*, *Philosophical Fragments*, *Stages on Life's Way*, and *Works of Love*. Hannay's guide-wire readings offer support to those new to Kierkegaard while his interpretations are rich enough to challenge people who have been squinting over Kierkegaard's manuscripts for decades.

Hegel is often understood to be the bull's eye of Kierkegaard polemical writings. Although it is true that

Kierkegaard, no less than Schopenhauer, was highly critical of the German speculative philosopher, Hannay does the English-speaking world the great service of showing that Kierkegaard's antagonists were more often than not other Danes. At last, Kierkegaard is presented on his true cultural stage as Hannay introduces Hans Lassen Martensen, Johan Ludvig Heiberg, Bishop Jakob Mynster, and other Copenhagen addresses of Kierkegaard's works.

This is the first full-scale biography of Kierkegaard in English to appear in decades, and it concludes with a sparkling chapter on Kierkegaard's second life as a world historical thinker. Hannay sketches Kierkegaard's ongoing lively reception as well as his acknowledged influence on Heidegger, Sartre, and other existential luminaries. The book's coda consists of a revealing reflection on Georg Lukacs's reading and rereading of Kierkegaard. Like its subject, this book does not make difficult matters easy, but Hannay's readers will find the door to Kierkegaard's texts easier to open, and therein lies no small spiritual treasure.

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The Politics of Exodus. Kierkegaard's Ethics of Responsibility
278 Pages, \$40.00, ISBN 0823221245
New York, Fordham University Press
By Mark Dooley

Reviewed by
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The title of Mark Dooley's book incorporates a strong allusion to Derrida's mention of "the politics of the exodus, of the émigré" (quoted by Dooley on p. 217) and Dooley is clear from the first page of the Introduction that he is in fact setting out to read Kierkegaard "from a specifically Derridean perspective" (p. xiii). In doing so, he insists that he is not doing violence to Kierkegaard's text but is reading according to the spirit, not the letter. He admits, somewhat disarmingly, that "it is true that I have taken certain liberties in my reading of Kierkegaard, and that I do on occasion push him in a direction he himself might not have favored" (p. xv), but he nevertheless believes that if we are to keep the spirit of a thinker alive we have to "attempt to suggest what [the] thinker might have said if he or she had the benefit of foresight" (p. xvi). In this case the foresight concerns

"the use to which Kierkegaard would have put his irony and religious sensitivities had he come after deconstruction" (p. xvi). More specifically (and as the title has already intimated) he wants to develop this connection in terms of its application to social, political and ethical issues. Acknowledging that he is not the first to attempt to rescue these elements from the over-individualistic, over-Lutheran portrait of Kierkegaard that has dominated much commentary, Dooley claims that it will be the specific originality of his work to bring these dimensions into fruitful dialogue with deconstruction. To pre-empt suspicions that he might be over-enthusiastically conflating two distinct intellectual undertakings or trying to Christianize Derrida in an inappropriate way he gives notice on the second page of the Introduction that he has no intention of covering over

the simple fact that Kierkegaard wrote from a Christian standpoint and Derrida does not. But, in the avowed company of John D. Caputo, Dooley insists that there are still close and fruitful analogies to be drawn. It is only much later, in the hundred-page final chapter, that Dooley dwells on the differences between his own approach and that of such Derridianizing Kierkegaardians (or Kierkegaardianizing Derridians) as Mark C. Taylor. These differences not only have to do with Dooley's political interest but also (as he rather quietly hints, and as any reader will by then have discovered) with the fact that Dooley clearly does not believe that reading Derrida with enthusiasm means that one becomes incapable of writing clear and agreeable English prose. Indeed, Dooley's own writing is a pleasure to read –vigorous, clear, concise, full of light and shade, and with many a well-turned phrase (as I hope some of my citations will demonstrate); nor is he afraid to say "I" when that is what he means.¹ Based on sound learning and long reflection, this is a passionate and personal book - as writing on Kierkegaard should be, and the case it makes is, largely, convincing. None of which is to say that I agree with everything he says. I might begin by questioning the very idea that one can appeal to the "spirit" of a thinker (or, at the very least, that if we are going to appeal to the spirit of Kierkegaard then we may also appeal to the spirit of Hegel, for example, with very different results from those Dooley comes up with in his treatment of the great professor, but more of that below).

Dooley's first chapter deals with *Two Ages*, where he finds clear evidence that Kierkegaard always thought of the individual as situated in a concrete, social and relational context, rather than in some acosmic solipsistic vacuum. Indeed, he traces the recent upsurge in interest in Kierkegaard's social and political thought to the 1984 International Kierkegaard Commentary on this text. But Kierkegaard's interest in society and in the political is not limited to asserting the general view that thought is always already contextualized. It is rather to advocate a very definite "line" vis-à-vis the questions of social and political existence. Kierkegaard's God, Dooley states boldly, is the God of liberation theology and, for that matter of the Jesus seminar, the God-Man whose Kingdom is "in" though not "of" the world.

Chapter Two turns to Hegel, the villain of the piece. Here we are introduced to Kierkegaard's rejection of "the Hegelian assumption that to be ethical and responsible demands merely fulfilling one's civic obligations as presented by the established order or the state" (p. 25). Nevertheless, Hegel importantly prepared the ground for Kierkegaard insofar as he pioneered a view of the self as "structured dynamically and dialectically" (p. 31). Their ways part, though, when Hegel insists on "the laws and powers of the ethical order" as constituting "an absolute authority and power infinitely more firmly established than the being of nature." (p. 32) Hegel's criticism of

conscience, of irony and of Socrates foreshadows precisely what Kierkegaard will "champion".

As we move into Chapter Three Dooley identifies this Hegelian position with what Kierkegaard calls "human knowledge", so that human knowledge is not simply identifiable with the knowledge that it is possible for human beings to have but a particular form of such knowledge, namely, "a type of world-historical knowledge that sees no reason to cast a hermeneutically suspicious eye on the dominant codes governing reality" (p. 47) and that "has no real 'interest' in questions of truth" (p. 48). It is the sort of knowledge espoused by the established order, "a body of subjects who communicate with one another at the level of pure externality only" (p. 48). Opposed to this is the path of those, like Socrates, who are prepared to risk responsibility by becoming self-reflective and questioning their own "take" on the world as a critical precondition of accepting any "established" viewpoint.

It is at this point that Dooley offers his revisionist account of *Fear and Trembling's* Abraham. Kierkegaard's (Johannes de silentio's) eulogizing of Abraham is "not a call for murder on Moriah" (p. 115), as Dooley will put it later, nor an open-door to terrorists who justify their actions by appealing to the will of God but a metaphor for "the relinquishing of the objective human mentality, or of disinterested reflection" (p. 64) and thus exemplifying the kind of self-critical stance of the individual who risks responsibility by breaking with the established order.

But what is it in the nature of human beings that makes them capable of such self-criticism? To address this question Dooley now digs deeper and turns to the concept of repetition as highlighting the fundamental structure of the self that makes both radical self-criticism and radical responsibility possible. Identifying repetition with the rebirth of which Johannes Climacus speaks in *Philosophical Fragments* Dooley sees in it the idea that personal truth is not and cannot be immediate or immanent, but must be acquired in and as self-transcendence, as Spirit. Here we run into the apparent inconsistency that whereas Climacus insists on the absence of necessity in history, Anti-Climacus speaks of a necessary pole in the human synthesis. What Dooley makes of this is that, with Anti-Climacus, we must acknowledge the necessity of the existing human being's relatedness to a given historical and social context, but with Climacus, deny that context any absolute necessity in itself (for otherwise we would be back with deifying the established order). Dooley doesn't say, though he might have, that (as Sartre put it) we are "condemned to freedom". The risk-taking responsible ethicist à la Kierkegaard, then, is one who, starting from where he is, is ready "to allow the possibility of imagining otherwise ..." (p. 107)

Isn't this all rather humanistic? Hasn't Dooley lost sight of the religious – the Christian – dimension of Kierkegaard he promised to keep in view? Not at all, for now, in the fifth chapter, he turns to the role of "The God-Man as Unconditioned Ethical Prototype". Superseding Socrates and Abraham as exemplary ethical models "is a radically Christian God who seeks perpetually to undermine the established order in favor of those whose voices are never heard in a universal sense" (p. 115). But (and Dooley skirts lightly over the submerged reefs which theologians like to spend much of their time examining) this does not mean submission to a heteronomous Other. A key point here is language, for the fact that we are linguistic beings means that we have no immediate access to reality, only to possibility, and our relation to reality, divine or human, can only be established on the basis of a free reflection on possibility. A spiritual creation, which is what we are through rebirth, cannot but be marked by freedom and responsibility since the capacity for these is what being as Spirit is! Taking the God-Man as the object of faith (and, crucially, of imitation) is therefore to relate oneself freely to a supreme exemplar, with whose aid one "comes to learn that being responsible and earnest rather than merely conflating dutiful observance to the law with genuine ethical behavior demands that there be a teleological suspension of the established ethical order" (p. 126). To have faith in the incarnate one, is in this way "a process of disclosing reason's true vocation as a power that turns on novelty, dissent and originality" (p. 132).

Dooley's final chapter (which, as already stated, runs to a hundred pages and constitutes nearly half the book) brings us to how the reading of Kierkegaard developed in the previous chapters can be aligned with Derrida and, especially, what we have come to learn about Derrida through the 90s and beyond. Against Sylvia Walsh's view (itself reacting to Mark C. Taylor's version of Derrida), Derrida cannot be dismissed as exemplifying the kind of aesthetic irony Kierkegaard attacks. In broad alliance with John D. Caputo Dooley argues that Derrida too exemplifies an "ethics of responsibility". Areas of convergence with Kierkegaard include the role of repetition, the critique of Hegelian identity, the question of death and the need to understand God not just as "absolutely" Other (as does Lévinas), but as wholly other in a sense that also allows for relationship, supremely the relationship of love. The idea of love worked out in Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* is, Dooley suggests, profoundly similar to the *Gelassenheit* that Derrida recommends, i.e. letting the other be the impossibly other they are. In the course of his comparison between the two thinkers, Dooley inevitably raises the question of writing. Kierkegaard, like Derrida, emerges as a protagonist of writing against the book, a point Dooley makes by a delightful meditation on the character of

Hilarious [sic] Bookbinder, as he Anglicizes the name of the publisher of *Stages on Life's Way*.

Where we get to, then, is the "notion of a community of neighbors, one founded on self-sacrificing love", challenging "the inhospitable 'perfect community' (*communio*) in which individuals, in loving the other, seek only their own" (p. 246).

I indicated that I don't go all the way with Dooley. Where, then, do I want to voice doubts? Perhaps the key issues are those of Abraham and the Incarnation. Here it's not so much that I think Dooley is wrong in what he does say, but in what he doesn't say or what he denies. The trouble is, if all Abraham is doing is what Dooley says, then Kierkegaard has chosen a very infelicitous example. Abraham doesn't merely step into a space of uncertainty, openness or radical questioning – he really does prepare himself to do what society sees as murder, and not just the boring old bourgeois society we're all so critical of.

We can metaphorize this into something weaker than Kierkegaard seems to make of it, but then we are not going all the way with Kierkegaard (or with Johannes *de silentio* - who may not be entirely reliable). Here are some alternative strategies at this most difficult of points. One would be to go with Iris Murdoch into the utter weirdness of moral decision-making and to say that what Abraham shows is what Murdoch meant when she spoke of our only being able to be good 'for nothing', i.e. that in the moment of moral decision we can never know whether our action is or isn't morally justifiable *on any version of morality*. In other words, acting morally means giving up wanting to be right, or wanting to know that we are right. But maybe an ethics of responsibility, even if it doesn't claim the kudos of universality, is still trying a little too hard to make a good showing? Maybe, all we can do, having exhausted all reflection and reached an impasse, is hope for the best? Who knows which action in any given situation is really a work of love, and who really know enough about themselves to be sure of their own motivation? Or we might demand that *Fear and Trembling* should only be read if it is read alongside the three upbuilding discourses published on the same day. At least those two that deal with love offer a very different take on things from Johannes and provide a standpoint for far-reaching questioning of his position. If, in response, one insists on the autonomy of *Fear and Trembling*, couldn't that be just to go back into the laager of the book and to turn our backs on the flood of Kierkegaardian writing that isn't tied to any one book or genre?

The same points are, essentially, "repeated" in relation to the Incarnation. Doesn't the whole (dare I say) "Spirit" of Kierkegaard's writing on this subject suggest that he is not wanting just to talk about a different kind of reason but about something that really is a "scandal" to any possible human understanding and not just to the

bourgeois mind? With regard to both Abraham and the Incarnation, then, isn't Dooley in danger of "soft-peddling" the raging scandal with which – if only in the mode of possibility – Kierkegaard confronts his readers? Or else of ignoring other resources in Kierkegaard's own writing that importantly qualify the picture drawn by the pseudonyms.

And there are other questions, of varying levels of importance.

One, quite important, question is this. Isn't Dooley's Hegel ultimately a caricature, and a pretty gross one at that? Can we really imagine Hegel (or the "Spirit" of Hegel) approving a society whose citizens were all mindless conformists sustaining only the emptiest and most external relations with each other? Isn't the *theoretical* difference between Kierkegaard and Hegel at this point much less than Dooley makes it seem? That there are differences is not to be denied, but perhaps they have as much to do with the respective authors' judgements in particular situations as with general principles. After all, it's fairly clear that Kierkegaard's critique of "the public" was taken more or less lock-stock-and-barrel from the Hegelian J. L. Heiberg. The difference is that Heiberg thought society was reformable. Kierkegaard didn't. In this connection Hegel's view of Socrates is much more nuanced than it is allowed to appear here. At least as far as the *History of Philosophy* lectures are concerned, Hegel presents a picture of Socrates that is in many ways very positive, and a clear prototype for Kierkegaard's treatment in *On the Concept of Irony*. Hegel was not simply out to rubbish Socrates. The point is whether a particular orientation is or isn't justifiable in a concrete situation. It is unfortunate that by presenting Hegel in the way he does, Dooley limits in advance what he can get out of Kierkegaard. After all, we scarcely needed a Kierkegaard to rectify the utter conformism that Dooley's Hegel represents.

I'd also like to register a note of caution regarding linking Kierkegaard too closely with the very tendentious Jesus seminar. Crossan *et al* have their own agenda in

downgrading the eschatological prophet of the gospels in favour of a non-eschatological simple wise man. This may currently seem to win Jesus for an anti-establishment politics, but it only takes a twist or turn or two of history for the wise man to get entrenched in the corridors of power and for us to need an other-worldly eschatological prophet to get rid of him (democratically, of course). Remember Pasolini's Jesus: they don't come more radically eschatological than that, but where do we find a more powerful protest against the establishment than there? The point is simply that historical enquiry has its own imperatives, and that we don't seem any cleverer than the nineteenth century in painting Jesus in our own image.

Dooley's final paragraph in which he bears witness to the hope of a community of neighbors can be read as a prophetic word to Kierkegaard's own Denmark today: since moving here at the start of the year, I have not been able to open the newspaper without reading article after article, letter after letter, about the crisis in Danish society and identity provoked by recent immigration (usually identified *tout court* with Islam). It is perhaps to offer a final gesture of solidarity with Dooley to note that Kierkegaard's first book was a review of a novel that had at its very centre the relationship between a wandering, cosmopolitan Jew and the Danish "Christian". It was a powerful implication of Kierkegaard's fairly relentless criticism of the novel that it was a mere projection of (the) Christian's own weakness to lay the guilt of nihilism and the decay of values at the door of the Jew, the other. Only by taking responsibility for ourselves could we really go forward to meet the other in openness, friendship and the acknowledgement of real differences. So, yes, I think Dooley reads the "Spirit" of Kierkegaard well, even if he takes liberties with the texts.

¹ The banning of the "I" from academic writing is something I think we are happily now recovering from, as the insistence on third person passive discourse not only forces students into clumsy formulations but is an obstruction to just the kind of moral and ethical reflection that much contemporary philosophy is trying to be about.

Kierkegaard's Living Room
by David E. Mercer
256 Pages, \$65.00, ISBN 0773521011
Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001

by Michael Lotti
Trinity School at River Ridge

In Chapter 1 of his book, David E. Mercer claims that

[t]he relation between faith and history is the issue that students of Kierkegaard fail to address directly. Most seem to realize there is a problem, but avoid talking about it. This is the "elephant in the living room." (16)

Mercer further claims that when the topic of faith and history has been broached in the secondary literature on Kierkegaard, there has been a lack of clarity in the treatment. It is Mercer's aim to provide such clarity and thereby usher the elephant out, which will in turn allow one to move about freely in "Kierkegaard's living room." Specifically, Mercer thinks that such freedom helps one to see Kierkegaard as an Incarnationally-centered (and thus "conservative") Christian thinker.

Mercer begins his analysis of Kierkegaard by discussing *Either/Or*, which for him establishes and explains Kierkegaard's understanding of the human person as a being who can grasp the eternal by choosing himself ethically in the present. The result of such choice is a concrete consciousness in history which, as a result of the choice, gains a history. Any other approach to life, according to Mercer's Kierkegaard, is unreflective and inauthentic like Don Juan, Johannes Seducer, or any form of artistic expression that is not literary. Mercer then moves to *Philosophical Fragments*, where he basically expounds and comments on the text on a chapter-by-chapter basis. According to Mercer's reading, *Philosophical Fragments* presents the Incarnation, in the form of the absolute paradox, as a salvific answer to the historically situated human being. In addition, the absolute paradox, because it is the absolute paradox, establishes transcendence and divine grace as realities. Most importantly, the absolute paradox, as both eternal and historical, establishes a new framework for viewing history; more specifically, it establishes "sacred history" over and against secular history. Mercer wraps up his book by looking at *Practice in Christianity* as a natural development of the sacred history posited in *Philosophical Fragments*, and then he briefly discusses Kierkegaard's "place in the current debate" on faith and history.

Mercer's work has some value. The connection between the Incarnation (as described in *Philosophical Fragments*) and sacred history (as discussed in *Practice in Christianity*) is certainly there, and Mercer does his reader a service by pointing it out and providing some justification for the claim. Mercer is also right to say that the Incarnation, as an event that is both historical (and thus appropriated by reason) and eternal (and thus appropriated by faith), serves to undermine the Kantian and Hegelian limitations on transcendence and freedom while also affirming the importance of the historical nature of all human beings. Mercer also does well to claim, along with C. Stephen Evans, Robert Roberts, and Merold Westphal, that Kierkegaard's understanding of the Incarnation, if right, serves as a stumbling block to theologians who want to do away with either a transcendent God or the concrete, historical, and free human being whose concrete historicity and freedom are important and meaningful.

Mercer's book also has its problems. In flat contradiction to Kierkegaard's own words in *The Point of View*, Mercer claims that Kierkegaard had the entire pseudonymous authorship planned before he began to write any of it. The pseudonyms, according to Mercer, are no more than a means of keeping Kierkegaard anonymous, enabling his readers to make their own choice about the material – a point that is at odds with Kierkegaard's own "First and Last Explanation" of his pseudonymity. Unsurprisingly, the result is often a jumble of citations and quotes from *Either/Or*, *The Concept of Anxiety*, *Philosophical Fragments*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, *Practice in Christianity*, and the *Journals and Papers*, all being indiscriminately used to speak for Kierkegaard. Mercer also cites *Philosophical Fragments* in places but, in the endnote, actually quotes the excerpts from *Journals and Papers* at the back of the Hongs' edition. At one point, he even refers to the "Supplement" of the Hongs' edition of *Philosophical Fragments* as if it were Kierkegaard's own supplement!

As noted, at the heart of Mercer's book is his discussion of the "paradox" of the eternal becoming historical. His reading of Kierkegaard on this point is, to my mind, essentially correct. What he does not do is expand the discussion much beyond Kierkegaard's texts. For example, he does not tackle the problem that Climacus avoids in *Philosophical Fragments* (and, for that matter, in

the *Postscript* too): given that the absolute paradox is only paradoxical by being eternal and historical, does this not in some way make the quest for historical accuracy vitally important – especially if one is to have “faith”? If such a need for historical accuracy is important, can the faith that is tied to it still be “faith” in Climacus’ use of the term? Mercer briefly concedes that the work of the historian is important, but presumably leaves it to another study to take up such questions. The second piece of unexplored territory concerns faith, doubt, and certainty. Mercer notes that faith is a passion for Kierkegaard, but then proceeds to discuss it as, essentially, a form of substitute knowledge. In other words, faith, for Mercer, steps in to make the “leap” where knowledge necessarily falls short. Yet how is it possible, one wonders, for faith to give certainty where certainty is seemingly impossible? What, in other words, is this move of “faith”? Mercer

never explains, and does not even discuss Climacus’ comparison between faith in the absolute paradox and the passion of lovers and of devotees of “the god” like Socrates.

I will not, in conclusion, recommend this book or un-recommend it. Whether the book is worth reading depends very much on what a reader is looking for. If a reader wants a discussion of a significant theme found in Kierkegaard’s corpus, then the book is worth reading. If a reader wants a more critical analysis of Kierkegaard’s texts and thought, then another book would probably be better. In Kierkegaardian fashion, I will leave the decision to the reader.

After Anti-Irrationalism
Kierkegaard After MacIntyre: Essays on Freedom, Narrative, and Virtue
ed. John Davenport and Anthony Rudd
Chicago: Open Court, 2001
416 Pages, \$26.00, ISBN 0812694392

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In our increasingly pricey marketplace of ideas, where academic presses struggle to break even on \$26.95 paperbacks, the most enthralling jacket copy all too often adorns the dreariest of merchandise. Happily, in the case of *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre: Essays on Freedom, Narrative, and Virtue* (Open Court, 2001), the reverse holds: a collection advertised as offering a “consensus [that] is strongly anti-irrationalist” turns out to be a marvelous book.

An anti-irrationalist, it emerges, is not a rationalist with a chip on his shoulder but is a particular brand of Kierkegaard scholar, one who holds Kierkegaard innocent of “irrationalism,” the charge Alasdair MacIntyre levels in *After Virtue* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1981). For MacIntyre, the layered pseudonymity of *Either-Or*, where Kierkegaard identifies himself neither with Part I’s aesthetic writer, nor with Part II’s ethical Judge, nor even with the editor who will not choose between them, indicates Kierkegaard’s view that “the principles which depict the ethical way of life are to be adopted for no reason, but for a choice that lies beyond reasons, just because it is the choice of what is to count for us as a reason” (AV 42). Kierkegaard is an irrationalist, in other words, insofar as he holds that the choice to adopt the basic principles of ethical life can be, at most, a criterionless choice.

It is important to notice that the structure of MacIntyre’s accusation is nothing new. The notion of being called to a choice but denied any help from the understanding is, in fact, a well-worn theme in the authorship, common to both Johannes de Silentio’s and Johannes Climacus’s descriptions of how authentic religious commitment appears from the outside. It comes as no surprise when a critic who sees these pseudonyms as articulating Kierkegaard’s own views indicts Kierkegaard of holding, with Tertullian in *De carne Christi*, an irrationalist understanding of faith. Karen Carr’s contribution to the volume, “After Paganism: Kierkegaard, Socrates, and the Christian Tradition,” offers an intriguing, comprehensive look at the critical and historical contexts of just such an indictment.

What I find so striking about MacIntyre’s charge is that, while he does take Kierkegaard to be articulating irrationalism about faith, he understands that position as the narrower, post-1842 revision of a broader view expressed in *Either/Or*, where, by his authorial hide-and-go-seek, Kierkegaard supposedly expressed irrationalism about all things ethical. A little later in *Philosophiske Smuler in 1845* Kierkegaard invokes this crucial new idea of radical and ultimate choice to explain how one becomes a Christian and by that time his

characterization of the ethical has changed radically too. That had become already abundantly clear even in 1843 in *Frygt og Bæven*. But in 1842 he still stands in the most ambiguous of relationships to his new idea—simultaneously being its author and disowning its authorship. (AV 40) In 1842, on this account, Kierkegaard saw criterionless choice in the transition to the ethical in general; only afterward did he come to understand criterionless choice as restricted to the transition to the religious.

Is this a plausible story? In his contribution, "The Place of Reason in Kierkegaard's Ethics," Gordon Marino deftly demonstrates that this 1842/post-1842 split is at best a stretch, both thematically and historically (KAM 115, 125n). In "The Perils of Polarity," meanwhile, Edward Mooney sketches a convincing alternative reading of the texts in question, according to which Kierkegaard, unlike MacIntyre, differentiated consistently between the transition to the ethical and the transition to the religious (KAM 239, 242-3).

It thus turns out that the term "anti-irrationalist" has an outrageously narrow meaning: to be one is to be committed to the view that Kierkegaard, in publishing *Either/Or*, did not express an irrationalist view of ethics. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that practically all those who think Kierkegaard remains interesting for contemporary moral philosophy—let alone those who contributed essays on "Kierkegaard after MacIntyre"—discover that they count as anti-irrationalists as well. Marilyn Gaye Piety's excellent piece, "Kierkegaard on Rationality," is motivated by just such a realization; in her view, Kierkegaard has much to teach present-day moral theorists, who stubbornly assume that, where passion goes, reason flees.

As a vehicle for advancing the anti-irrationalist enterprise, the book is difficult to judge either a success or a failure. On the one hand, five contributors (John Davenport, Marino, Mooney, Anthony Rudd, and Jeffrey Turner) carefully undermine and supplant MacIntyre's reading of *Either/Or*. MacIntyre, on the other hand, does his best to unseat each critique in turn, in a remarkable reply entitled "Once More on Kierkegaard." Although he does revoke, in a bow to Mooney, his conflation of the transition to the ethical with the transition to the religious, MacIntyre nonetheless declares that the thrust of his reading of *Either/Or* still stands unrefuted. "May the conversation continue!" he concludes (KAM 355).

This may sound disappointing. It is the conversation itself, however, that I find so delightful—especially the exchange between Rudd and Davenport, on the one hand, and MacIntyre, on the other—and particularly the turn the conversation takes after the battle-lines of anti-irrationalism are drawn. Once the three have established how they disagree on interpreting *Either/Or*, each

confronts the question of why this disagreement exists, and, in MacIntyre's case, why it persists.

Davenport thinks that MacIntyre sees irrationalism in *Either/Or* because he does not recognize the teleological force of Judge William's argument. In his ambitious "Toward an Existential Virtue Ethics: Kierkegaard and MacIntyre," his second contribution to the volume, Davenport claims that Part II of *Either/Or* "grounds the necessity" or "existential indispensability" of ethical life "in an account of the human telos" (KAM 291). MacIntyre fails to recognize Kierkegaard's underlying teleology, Davenport suggests, because it is so much less elaborate than the eudaimonistic teleology that *After Virtue* is in the business of defending. Kierkegaard's telos "is no longer *eudaimonia* or happiness in the holistic sense, but rather the existential meaningfulness of her life to the agent" (KAM 291).

Rudd's fascinating contribution, "Reason in Ethics: MacIntyre and Kierkegaard," takes this line a crucial step further. The postulation of a universal need to find "coherence and meaning" in our lives is in fact characteristic, notes Rudd, of both Kierkegaard's and MacIntyre's respective calls to commitment (KAM 139). According to Rudd, *Either/Or* sets forth the possibility that A's discovery, in boredom and despair, that his life lacks meaning can lead him to explore the ethical life-view "imaginatively," possibly prompting him to conclude that "it is rational for [him] to choose an ethical over a purely aesthetic life ... to abandon [his] present attitude to life and adopt the other one" (KAM 143). MacIntyre, Rudd observes, presents a suspiciously similar argument: the teleology he endorses is supposed to have, as its sole alternative, a potentially unlivable morass of meaninglessness (AV 217).

In his reply, MacIntyre happily takes Davenport's and Rudd's bait, granting that their disagreement about *Either/Or* does derive from his failure to recognize a teleology of meaningfulness at work in the book. But this is because, writes MacIntyre, such a "minimal" teleology is simply not there to be found: It is not meaning *as such* nor coherence *as such* that we have to achieve, but that very specific type of meaning and coherence which belongs to the lives of those to whom it is given to stand before God and acknowledge that they are in the wrong. ... Someone who finds point and purpose absent from his or her activities or from her or his life as a whole ... is not someone who has thereby already found a worthwhile goal, but someone who is acknowledging their lack of any such goal. (KAM 345, my emphasis) The reference to *Either/Or*'s edifying "Last Word" is clear: while MacIntyre is willing to acknowledge a thick Christian teleology at work in grounding Kierkegaard's account of the transition to religiousness, he remains unconvinced by Rudd, Davenport, or anyone else—that some "minimal" teleology aiming toward

meaningfulness per se is at work in grounding any account of the transition from the aesthetic to the ethical in *Either/Or*.

This may *still* sound disappointing, but consider the implications: MacIntyre and his interlocutors have traced the anti-irrationalism debate—a disagreement about how to read *Either/Or*—back to a matter of urgent philosophical importance. Must those who hold teleology to be constitutive of human being agree that the pursuit of meaning per se is a compelling issue for each self? Rudd and Davenport think so; MacIntyre flatly disagrees.

All of the remaining essays touch on this riddle; I find Bruce Kirmmse's "Kierkegaard and MacIntyre: Possibilities for Dialogue," and Norman Lillegard's

"Thinking with Kierkegaard and MacIntyre about the Aesthetic, Virtue, and Narrative," especially insightful. Philip Quinn's reply on behalf of diversity of selfhood sharpens the question by casting it in skepticism's shadow. Richard Johnson, in a Derridean vein, charges that MacIntyre's standards for teleology are too closely tied to "his meritocracy of proportional desert" to answer the demands of subjectivity central to Kierkegaard's (and Nietzsche's) concerns (KAM, 167-70).

Though *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre* does not put MacIntyre's objections to rest, its contributors do succeed, on the whole, in transforming a feud ("anti-irrationalists" castigating "irrationalists") into a promising dialogue. The new conversation is barely begun, and is well worth pursuing.

Anthropology and Authority. Essays on Søren Kierkegaard
ed. Poul Houe, Gordon D. Marino and Sven Haakon Rossel
Rodopi - Amsterdam: GA 2000
\$34.00, ISBN 9042006404

reviewed by Finn Hauberg Mortensen
translated by Merle Denker and David Possen

Outside Denmark, Danish literature was for a time characterized by the paradigm cultivated in North America: Andersen, Kierkegaard, and Blixen, with a retrospective nod to the sagas—in short, a narrow approach. More recently, however, there have been signs of a wider view developing. In the future, those three figures will not be the only ones, like Ibsen and Strindberg, to merit international conferences and in panels.

While Danish literary studies has, since the seventies, pursued textual criticism at the expense of problems of period, genre, literary production, and reception by literary institutions, the individualistic present has a deep interest in the author as individual and in biography, both scientifically based and semi-fictional. One of the most notable of the first type of biography is Joakim Garff's *SAK. Søren Aabye Kierkegaard. En biografi* (2000). At the same time—and in step with the researchers of the 1968 generation, who turned away from the mass university to cultivate their chosen, specialized fields—literary societies have been established, such as those for Romanticism or Enlightenment studies, or for the study of individual authors. Authors such as Georg Brandes, Johannes V. Jensen, and Henrik Pontoppidan are now on the international agenda. This has been inspired, presumably, by the research center already established for Hans Christian Andersen at the University

of Southern Denmark, and that for Kierkegaard at the University of Copenhagen, led by Johan de Mylius and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, respectively.

The conditions are thus in place for the continued internationalization of topics and authors with Danish roots. There many reasons to welcome this development. While research within Denmark can inspire greater versatility with and a closer approach to the sources and the language, Danish research can develop analytically and theoretically by encountering the approaches taken by non-Danish researchers. Ideally, one could avoid the error of making one's book fall back on the existing Danish research—as happened with Jackie Wullschlager's prize-winning biography *Hans Christian Andersen: The Life of a Storyteller* (2000).

Kierkegaard's authorship was internationalized sooner, and more thoroughly, than any other area of Danish culture. If Andersen has been more widely translated, Kierkegaard has been more widely studied—consider Jens Himmelstrup's *Søren Kierkegaard. International bibliografi* (1962), Aage Jørgensen's bibliographies, including *Dansk litteraturhistorisk bibliografi 1967-1986* (1989), and Julia Watkins' "International Kierkegaard Newsletter," distributed to researchers worldwide since 1979, in recent years from Tasmania. Funding for the Søren Kierkegaard Research Center at the University of

Copenhagen by the Danish National Research Foundation was instituted in 1993 with the aim, among others, of encouraging exchange between Danish and non-Danish research in this important area. In addition to training researchers, the Center's greatest task has been the publication of *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, planned to reach 55 volumes.

Regarding *Anthropology and Authority*, which is, in fact, a lovely, well-designed book, it is disappointing that the contributors and editors did not have occasion to refer to the volumes of *SKS* published so far. Here, for the first time, one can speak of a truly scientific edition of the poet-philosopher's works and papers, which can best serve to ground translations into the main world languages. One could argue that Gyldendals' notoriously error-ridden third edition of the *Samlede Værker* (20 vols., 1962-64) is the most widespread edition, and is therefore easiest used as a common starting-point. Yet this does not hold in a scientific context, where one is committed to a body of text for which the papers have been rearranged and a completely new commentary has been written, and where, in addition, one has a pedagogical duty to encourage the research community to use the best possible text. The second edition of the *Samlede Værker* (1920-30) and of *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer* (1968-78) remain the best solution, as long as *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* awaits completion. The difficulty with making use of this edition can be eased by using double-references. One could also argue that many of the contributions to this anthology stem from 1997, specifically from the International Kierkegaard Conference held at the Howard V. And Edna H. Hong Kierkegaard Library, St. Olaf College, in Northfield, Minnesota, the same year that the first volume of *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* was first published. Yet this argument doesn't hold, either, since the editing of *Anthropology and Authority* was not complete until December 1999.

The nineteen articles under present consideration are, with a few exceptions, enlightening and inspiring. The majority are from a philosophy-of-religion perspective—exceptions include Robert L. Perkins's historical explication of church-crown relations, which can serve to confirm Kierkegaard's position in the "church war," and Geoffrey A. Hales' linguistically based article, which supports the claim that even "Kierkegaard" should be considered a pseudonym. In recent years, Danish Kierkegaard research has embraced a tendency toward tighter interplay among theological, philosophical, and literary approaches. Here, perhaps, this tendency is already being supplanted by a new constellation of philosophy-of-religion conceptual analyses and historical derivations, some in terms of Golden Age Denmark, others in terms of the author's biography. While this may be the case, it is nonetheless notable that of the three

approaches mentioned above, the literary is the weakest in *Anthropology and Authority*. Ettore Rocca's splendid article on silence offers a path into the literary (silence, the character of writing, etc.), but offers no literary path into the Kierkegaardian corpus. If that exploration is thorough, it is nonetheless a bit startling that Rocca can declare that the silence in Kierkegaard has only rarely been discussed—and then document his claim with a nineteen-line footnote brimming with references!

If non-Danish research has treated the literary in Kierkegaard with caution, it has had many reasons for doing so: for one, the literary has often been pursued by theologians desiring to clarify their faith—a genuine, often kindhearted approach, which philosophers of religion have now professionalized. The most philosophical example is Arne Grøn's article in the section on anthropology: Grøn moves directly to an examination of Kierkegaard's famous definition of human being as a synthesis; yet, typical for a philosopher, he does so by way of answering his own underlying question, namely: in what sense is the synthesis human?

Another reason to avoid the literary is that, for researchers who are not native to Danish, it is difficult to understand Kierkegaard's extremely nuanced use of language, his style, and his work's entire literary side, including his dialogue with the tradition, which he inscribes intertextually in the pages of his work. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to find that the Kierkegaard presented to Danes by the non-Danish mainstream proves a good deal less interesting than the Kierkegaard they can read on their own.

The older generation of non-Danish Kierkegaard researchers invested much energy in learning to read the original texts. Their common starting-point became a specialized "Kierkegaard-Danish," whose stepping-stones are the central concepts that emerge in the main citations. Where this is combined with a conceptual-analytic approach, the frequent result is a ride through the texts on the shoulders of a concept, whose genesis and development one seeks to uncover. The most prominent representative of this method, Alastair McKinnon, closes his weighty article by communicating the results to date of his statistical-linguistic analyses: Kierkegaard, in his Journals, seems to have used the word "authority" in its conventional Christian sense both before 1846 and after 1849/51, but in the intervening years worked with the concept as a floating signifier, with fluctuating meaning. At this point, McKinnon leaves the reader to judge the merits of his method, adding that, as far as possible, he has "assembled the evidence without benefit of prejudice and subject only to the discipline of the statistical facts" (160). One believes him. And even if one could have reservations about McKinnon's word-frequency analyses, they can still be used to emend lacunae. In my opinion, one should proceed with

contextualizing each concept-bearing word that is more extensive than its immediate neighbor, since this context reflects the textual whole, which McKinnon's method does not disclose—what McKinnon himself does not uphold, context discloses. McKinnon's result fits with those of other, similar inquiries, which show how Kierkegaard worked with a given concept in one period, and then, typically, found new interests elsewhere. I take these results as indications that Kierkegaard was rather more creative and inductive, like literary authors, than rationally analytic and deductive, like philosophers—such as Grøn.

Two conclusions in passing: (1) In the future, the literary approach to Kierkegaard should be strengthened in an international context. That some such strengthening is possible is evident: other great authors are currently discussed in international fora. (2) Grøn's and McKinnon's methods are completely different, yet both pieces are refreshingly disciplined and dryly submitted. Some of the other articles would have benefited by limiting themselves to investigating the central issues Grøn and McKinnon have systematically and chronologically highlighted. This benefit is now available to all.

Naturally, many of the philosophy-of-religion contributors are aware that even philosophical analyses of the deepest problems depend on philological minutiae. Some of them—Udo Doedens, Ettore Rocca, and Mark Lloyd Taylor—have obviously learned more than “Kierkegaard-Danish.” They work so closely with the language that they can allow themselves, as critics, to supersede the present English-speaking translators. Well enough! But even if these three, in my opinion, have written some of the most productive contributions to this volume, I will not productivity can result where linguistic factors play not the slightest role. A good example is Bruce H. Kirmmse's well-written and well-documented discussion of the late Kierkegaard as a sublime liar. The matter here turns not so much on fine distinctions in meaning, which could affect the definition of the concept, but instead requires that we understand this self-description as a non-Christian one, one derived in fact from a literary piece, Shakespeare's *Othello*.

Other types of experience also prove useful, such as when the Hungarian Andr's Nagy discusses democracy in Kierkegaard against the background of the similarities he sees between 1840s Denmark and the development of the small democracies in Eastern Europe. In other articles, it is the experiences of the great thinkers that are

brought into the discussion. Marx, Freud, Foucault, and others, however, appear relatively seldom. This can seem surprising, since none of the articles discuss Kierkegaard's use of the great thinkers or the way he has been used by others and—in short—in every situation, where one rifles through the index and makes oneself an “expert” in what Kierkegaard thought about this or that. There are enough signs, however, that Kierkegaard research has been consolidated as a scientific field. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that there are now frequent references to both Danish and German 19th-century philosophers. Most Danes know Hegel only through Kierkegaard's distortions; those who would be Kierkegaard researchers must do better than merely repeat them. Correspondingly, one must recognize the meaning of the special and close relationships that made possible the poet-philosopher's life and work. Neither the one nor the other can be deduced by a theory.

In his educational and perspicacious introduction, Poul Houe offers a summary of this book, for which he and the two other editors, Gordon D. Marino and Sven Hakon Rossel, deserve thanks. Some will presumably object that one could challenge the two title concepts even more broadly by giving the pen to humanistic freethinkers and to Japanese Buddhists—not to mention to newly religious fanatics or to materialists. Others will insist that the book has already gone far enough in breadth; but they will explain this in conference format, where it will be a topic for debate—preferably at such a degree of breadth that all who are interested can participate.

Houe ends his introduction with a skeptical whisper, leaving the following question to the reader: does the book represent an upgrading of Kierkegaard research, or a new paradigm? The answer is left to us. I would vote that the book is the result of an internationalization that isn't new, but which is now unfolding more strongly and with more consequences than ever. One such consequence is that we can no longer just shift our paradigm. Researchers have the authority to define authority and anthropology, and even if one can be surprised that they can unearth so many partly different messages after a century of Kierkegaard research, one must nonetheless acknowledge that the messages are only partly different. Common to them all is this: that one must not believe the researchers before their claims have been documented. The researchers have the chance to present their theories, but the reader has the authority to evaluate them—just as Kierkegaard made himself the first with the authority to read Kierkegaard.

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