

Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter



A Publication of the Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library
St. Olaf College

Northfield, Minnesota

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NEWS FROM THE HONG KIERKEGAARD LIBRARY

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

DANISH COURSE, SUMMER 2004

The Kierkegaard Library will offer a month-long intensive Danish course for the month of July, 2004. Cost of the course including room will be \$800. If you are interested, email Gordon Marino at marino@stolaf.edu immediately.

KIERKEGAARD HOUSE FOUNDATION RESIDENCY FELLOWSHIPS

Purpose: Provision of assistance to users of the resources of the Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College.

Eligibility: Graduate students, professors, writers, and other serious students of Kierkegaard's writings.

Periods: 4-12 months, with the possibility of extensions of the initial period.

Stipend: Living quarters and \$1,500 per month

Application Calendar: Any time up to 6 months prior to the desired residency period.

Application Information: Curriculum Vitae, plan of work at the Kierkegaard Library, and 2 letters of recommendation.

Address: Gordon Marino, Director
Kierkegaard Library
St. Olaf College
1510 St. Olaf Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057

THE KIERKEGAARD LIBRARY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, 2004

Summer fellowships for research in residence are offered to scholars for use of the collection between June 1 and November 15, 2004. 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 deadline for application is February 15, 2004.**

No stipends will be offered for stays less than 1 month or to late applicants. Scholars coming from abroad will need to obtain a J1 visa which St. Olaf College will assist the scholar in obtaining. All scholars must come with health insurance in hand or notify the Library in advance that health insurance is not available to them.

To apply, send materials and letter to Gordon Marino.

NEWS

SUMMER FELLOWS PROGRAM 2003

Twenty-three scholars participated in the Kierkegaard Library Summer Fellows program this past summer representing 10 countries. Scholars coming to the Library for their first research visit were: Eric Berg, Maria José Binetti, Catalina Elena Dobre, Satoshi Eguchi, Shin Fujieda, Marcio Gimenes De Paula, Bruce Howes, Jack Mulder, James Rodwell, Timothy Slemmons, Elisabete de Sousa, and Massimo Vittorio. Returning to the Library to continue their research were: Brian Barlow, Manuel Caraza Salamon, Tamara-Monet Marks, Amy Peters, Leo Stan, Mark Stapp, Erik Lindland, John Lippitt, Jason Mahn, and Jeremy Allen.

Here are some summaries of research carried out at the Library this summer:

Elisabete Sousa

(PhD candidate, Literary Theory Interdepartmental Program, University of Lisbon, Portugal)

Title: Forms of Art: The Critical Practices of Hector Berlioz, Robert Schumann, Franz Liszt and Søren Kierkegaard. The cases of Berlioz, Schumann and Liszt are presented as evidence of the fact that remembrance and creation co-exist simultaneously with their compositional and critical practices. Kierkegaard is presented as an example of making philosophy by means of a continuous critical method and practice. Furthermore, Kierkegaard's propositions elucidate the use of heteronyms in Schumann, the descriptions of musical language in Berlioz and the unique character of his compositions, and Liszt's transcriptions, as well as the religious, aesthetic and ethical content of much of his musical production.

Jack Mulder

(PhD candidate, Department of Philosophy, Purdue University)

Title: Faith and Nothingness in Kierkegaard: A Mystical Reading of the God-relationship.

My dissertation argues that, contrary to the view of some scholars, it is precisely the aim Kierkegaard's religious dialectic to elucidate the openness in which an encounter with God can occur. This encounter is made possible through the nothingness of the individual which is accentuated, not nullified, in Religiousness B. The prominence of the same theme in mystical writings as well as the Kyoto school of Japanese philosophy is no accident. Accordingly, the dissertation works to remove some of the obstacles to a mystical interpretation of Kierkegaard, and places his thought in conversation with some Kyoto school thinkers.

Amy Leigh Peters

(PhD candidate, Department of Philosophy, Fordham University)

Still in its pre-proposal stage, my dissertation topic focuses on Kierkegaard and the question of what role ethics plays for a religious individual, including how intersubjective relations contribute to the development of ethical subjectivity and to the subjective move away from self-deception. *Works of Love* and *Fear and Trembling* are important texts for this topic. However, this project also considers how irony and repetition are present in the development of the ethical subject.

Eric Berg

(PhD candidate, Department of Philosophy, University of Kansas)

During my stay at the Hong Kierkegaard Library I was able to achieve two goals critical to my dissertation. First, was to come to a satisfactory understanding of a particularly difficult passage in *The Concept of Anxiety* (Chapter I, section 5). I achieved this through interaction with the other scholars and use of the secondary material available. Secondly, I was able to locate several dissertations that are written in the same "style" of the dissertation I am writing, illuminating a contemporary figure (Norman Maclean, *A River Run's Through It*) that has a hidden debt to Kierkegaard.

News from Søren Kierkegaard Society, USA

The following gatherings will take place during the American Academy of Religion 2003 annual meeting in Atlanta:

Søren Kierkegaard Society Banquet

Friday, November 21, 2003

Max Lager's American Grill, 320 Peachtree Street

6:00 Social Hours

7:00 Banquet (contact Lee C. Barret at lbarrett@lts.org)

8:00 Mark Lloyd Taylor, Seattle University (speaker)

"Kierkegaard and the 1830 Danish Altar Book: Tracing the Liturgical Shape of his Writing"

Søren Kierkegaard Society Session at AAR

Saturday, November 22, 9:00 – 11:30 am Marquis-Chablis/Picard

9:00 Gordon Marino, St. Olaf College, presiding

"Kierkegaard on Love and Obligation"

(A Discussion of *Love's Grateful Striving: A Commentary on Kierkegaard's Works of Love* by M. Jamie Ferrerra (Oxford University Press, 2001)

and

Kierkegaard and the Treachery of Love, by Amy Laura Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Panelists: M. Jamie Ferreira (University of Virginia), Amy Laura Hall (Duke University), Lee C. Barrett III (Lancaster Theological Seminary), C. Stephen Evans (Baylor University).

11:15 Business Meeting

The Kierkegaard Religion and Culture Group of the AAR Meeting

The group is hosting a single session this year in Atlanta. The session will appear in the AAR program book under the number "A 37".

Session Theme: "**Kierkegaard, Eschatology, and Terror**"

Saturday, November 22, 2003, 1:00 – 3:30 pm

Amy Laura Hall, Duke University, Presiding

Hugh Pyper (University of Leeds), "Your Wish is My Command": The Peril and Promise of the Bible as "Letter from the Beloved"

Martin Beck Matustik (Purdue University), "Violence and Secularization, Evil and Redemption"

Vanessa Rumble (Boston College), "Kierkegaard on Violence and Transcendence: An Ethics of the Sublime"

Responding: Patricia Huntington (Loyola University, Chicago)

Business Meeting: Marcia C. Robinson (Syracuse University) presiding

For more information about any of these gatherings please contact Vanessa Rumble at rumble@bc.edu.

News from the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre in Copenhagen Schleiermacher-Kierkegaard Congress, October 9 – 13, 2003

The theme of the upcoming conference will be "Subjectivity and Truth." It will offer 4 plenary sessions and 18 parallel sessions with the following titles: *Subjectivität und Wahrheit*; *Individuum und Gesellschaft*; *Sünde und Erlösung*; and *Sprache und Erkenntnis*. The languages of the congress will be English and German.

The congress will be arranged by Theodor Jorgensen, Professor, dr. theol., Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, and Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Director, Dr. h.d., Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre at the University of Copenhagen, together with Internationale Schleiermacher-Gesellschaft and Det danske Kierkegaard Selskab.

Fees for the congress are DKK 950 and DKK 550 for PhD students.

For further information consult the following website:

<http://www.sk.ku.dk/Schleiermacher-Kierkegaard>

Or contact organizers at the following addresses:

Congress Secretariat
Store Kannikestræde 15
DK-1168 Copenhagen K
Tel. +45 33 76 69 00
Fax. +45 33 76 69 10
Email: sec@sk.ku.dk

News from Centrum for Danmarksstudier vid Lunds universitet Svensk Kierkegaardsforskning Anno 2003

To be held 17-18 October 2003 at Stiftsgården Akersberg i Hoor, Skane (40 minutes from Malmö).

Program includes Niels Jørgen Cappelørn (Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscentret, Københavns Universitet), Hans-Erik Johannesson (Institutionen for litteraturvetenskap, Göteborgs universitet), Lone Koldtoft (Institutionen for nordiska språk, Lunds universitet), Jonna Lappalainen (Institutionen för filosofi, Stockholms universitet), Karin Linnel (Stockholms Lärarhögskola), Gunnar Marius Mjaaland, (Teologi, Universitetet i Oslo), Wenche Marit Quist (Teologi, Københavns Universitet), Jon Stewart (Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscentret), Københavns Universitet) and Roy Wiklander (Institutionen for religionsfilosofi, Lunds universitet).

For further information and registration, send to the following email: Barbro.Berner@hist.lu.se. Please include your name, address, and email address.

News From *International Kierkegaard Commentary* Editor

UNIQUE CALL FOR PAPERS

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'Prefaces' and 'Writing Sampler'
And

International Kierkegaard Commentary: Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions
will be combined in a single binding.

Due date: by the beginning of the fall semester or 1 September 2004.

Prospective authors should write the editor to discuss their intention to contribute to this combined volume. The volume will be unique not only because of the combination of two IKC volumes in one binding but also because of the radical contrasts between the two volumes being commented upon: the first being a stinging satire on Golden Age aestheticism and the second plumbing depths of Kierkegaard's moral psychology.

VOLUMES IN PROCESS

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'Practice in Christianity'
The manuscript has been delivered to the publishers.

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses'

The page proofs were returned to the publisher on 25 April. The volume is at the printer or at the bindery.

MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED VOLUME

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'For Self-Examinations' and
'Judge for Yourself!'

Contributors and subscribers received their volumes in September 2002.

For further information contact Robert Perkins at rperkins6@cfl.rr.com
Mailing address: 225 South Boundary Avenue, DeLand, FL 32720-5103
Phone number: 386-734-6457

News From *Kierkegardiana*

Kierkegardiana, Volume 23, should be out in December of 2003. The deadline for submissions to Volume 24 is January 15, 2004. For information, contact Pia Søltoft at ps@sk.ku.dk.

News From *Kierkegaard Cabinet in Budapest*

In March 2001, the Kierkegaard Cabinet opened at Budapest University Eötvös Loránd, 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 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 Péter Nadas. Members of the Board include Chairperson, András Nagy; Béla 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 Muvesztudományi Intézet
Muzeum korut 6-8. (-136)
Budapest 1088, Hungary

Phone: 36.1.266.9100/5855
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.mata.vu.hu.

News from Sobreski--Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos de Kierkegaard

IV Jornada de Estudos Sobre Kierkegaard

Pocinhos do Rio Verde – MG

09, 10 e 11 de Outubro

Informações e Reservas: www.kierkegaardbrasil.hpg.com.br and sobreski@iq.com.br

For further information, please contact Marcio Gimenes de Paula at mgpaula@hotmail.com or Fransmar Costa Lima at fransmar@vol.com.br.

The society also announces the translation of *Johannes Climacus on De Omnibus Dubitandum Est* by Sylvia Saviano Sampaio and Alvaro Luiz Montenegro Valls into Portuguese.

For issues of the journal of the society, *Severino*, consult the society website at www.kierkegaardbrasil.hpg.com.br.

Submitted by Cynthia Wales Lund, Special Collections Librarian, Hong Kierkegaard Library. To submit news contact at lundc@stolaf.edu. Tel. 507-646-3846, Fax 507-646-3858.

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Kierkegaard Studies · Yearbook 1996
1996. viii, 577 pages. Cloth.

**German Søren Kierkegaard Edition:
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Volume 2: George Pattison

"Poor Paris!"

Kierkegaard's Critique of the Spectacular City
1999. xvi, 152 pages. Cloth.

Volume 3: Dorothea Glöckner

Kierkegaards Begriff der Wiederholung

1997. ix, 300 pages. Cloth.

Volume 4: Ulrich Lincoln

Äußerung

Studien zum Handlungsbegriff in Søren Kierkegaards
„Die Taten der Liebe“
2000. xii, 516 pages. Cloth.

Volume 5: Niels Nymann Eriksen

Kierkegaard's Category of Repetition

Reconstruction

2000. vii, 182 pages. Cloth.

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bookseller or order directly from us.
Prices are subject to change.*

Adorno's Reception of Kierkegaard: 1929-1933

Marcia Morgan
University of Potsdam, Germany

Theodor W. Adorno provided one of the most fascinating and at the same time most problematic readings of Kierkegaard in the twentieth century. Adorno's study, titled *Kierkegaard. Konstruktion des Ästhetischen*¹ (*Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*), provoked two of the most important issues of Kierkegaard scholarship: the relationship between the aesthetic and religious life possibilities put forth in the heterogeneous writings of Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms, and the question of the extent to which a critical theory of society is made manifest in these writings. But there are many reasons why Adorno's *Kierkegaard* cannot be construed as a convincing interpretation of the writings in Kierkegaard's Collected Works, and needs to be seen rather as a confrontation with something else.

Adorno's *Kierkegaard* must be viewed within the philosophical and historical contexts of the time and place in which it was conceived.² It was written and rewritten between the years 1929 and 1933.³ First published in 1933 in Germany, the book appeared in bookstores on February 27, "the day that Hitler declared a national emergency and suspended the freedom of the press, making his transition from chancellor to dictator."⁴ In the "Note" appended to the second and third editions of *Kierkegaard*, Adorno himself makes reference to the fate of his first publication of the book. He writes:

The final version appeared in 1933 in the publishing house of J.C.B. Mohr in Siebeck, on the very same day that Hitler became Dictator. Walter Benjamin's review appeared in the *Vossische Zeitung* one day after the anti-Semitic boycott, on April 2, 1933. The effect [*Wirkung*] of the book was from the beginning on overshadowed by political evil. While the author had been denaturalized, the book was, however, not forbidden by the authorities and had sold very well. Perhaps it was protected by the censors' inability to understand it. The critique of existential ontology which the book works out was meant at the time of its publication to reach the oppositional intellectuals in Germany (GS2, 261).⁵

The weight of the historical events which the book was forced to carry was nonetheless an external burden. But there is another burden which, although also strongly related to the external political and historical events of the time, is internal to the text itself. It is this internal burden that I want to consider, for it brings to light the real aim behind Adorno's book.

Adorno's vigorous emphasis on the necessity of incommensurable individual experience and the role of preserving its sensuous concreteness – his call to save the 'particular' and to strive for the 'nonidentical,' as he writes in his later work, *Negative Dialectics*⁶ – can be seen clearly in the *Kierkegaard* text. But it is evident that, after having examined the arguments Adorno presents against Kierkegaard, his claims have less to do with Kierkegaard than with a desire to read something else into and against Kierkegaard. Adorno's claims are related more to his fervor against the onslaught of the totalitarian manifestations of his day, and the loss of individuality with its distinct experiential contents that was the consequence of these manifestations. That this was one of the aims behind the project is indicated in Adorno's remark, quoted above, that "the critique of existential ontology... was meant to reach the oppositional intellectuals in Germany" (*ibid.*).

A large part of Adorno's claims in *Kierkegaard* can be understood as his indictment of the German intellectual movement of the early part of the twentieth century which had appropriated much of Kierkegaard's religious and philosophical thinking. This appropriation took on two forms: dialectical theory and existential philosophy. In his *Gutachten* [letter of evaluation] of Adorno's work, Paul Tillich, the supervisor of Adorno's study of Kierkegaard, writes:

Kierkegaard stands in the center of the theological just as much as of the philosophical discussion of the present. Evidence of this is, among other things, the quickly accumulating literature on him. From the theological side he has moved into the forefront through the so-called dialectical theology; from the philosophical side through the so-called existential philosophy (GW 11, 337).⁷

Because of the strong link between dialectical theology and existential philosophy, and because all interpretations of Kierkegaard until this time were from biographical, theological, or psychoanalytic/psychological perspectives, Adorno's attempt at a *purely* philosophical interpretation was a most important undertaking.⁸ However, once one considers the tools with which Adorno carried out his study, namely the problematic translations of Kierkegaard into German at that time, as well as Adorno's problematic method of dealing with these translations, it becomes clear how far away Adorno is from the more credible translations and interpretations of the Collected Works of Kierkegaard we have today.

Not all Kierkegaard's works had been translated into German at the time Adorno was writing his study. The first Collected Works in German was published between 1909 and 1922,⁹ and includes fifteen books assembled into twelve volumes. (For a comparison, the next Collected Works in German, published in 1950-1969 and in 1979-1986), consists of thirty-six works printed in twenty-six volumes.¹⁰) It is well documented that the quality of the translation for the first German Works is highly problematic. Martin Kieffhaber describes the situation as follows:

Kierkegaard is indisputably a "Virtuoso of the Danish language." He has justifiably said of himself: "I am proud of my mother language, whose secrets I know-this mother language, which I amorously handle as a flute player does his instrument." This makes translation admittedly difficult. His fine irony frequently thrives on usually untranslatable wordplay and associative ulterior motives. Another factor to consider is the particular problematic of translation between two languages which are closely related to one another. With all criticism of the translation it is this factor which is to be charged. Grave deficiencies of the Schrempf and Gottsched edition lay, above all, in Kierkegaard's difficult philosophical texts and short works. It is therefore no surprise that, as already mentioned, this edition received little attention in the early reception and research. The translators were obviously overwhelmed by the deft syntax of Kierkegaardian dialectic, such that they made fairly considerable abridgements and inserted chance formulations (Kieffhaber, 26.)¹¹

The appearance of the Collected Works in German was a breakthrough for Kierkegaard scholarship, since until that time Kierkegaard remained a relatively unknown figure internationally. Paul Tillich has commented that Kierkegaard was until the 1880's in Germany still fully unknown.¹² Theodor Haecker wrote in 1925 that to his knowledge Kierkegaard was at that time still fully unknown to English, American, and French audiences, with the exception of one line published about Kierkegaard in a large Pascal study.¹³ Hannah Arendt likewise wrote in a newspaper article published in 1932 that: "Even as short a time as twenty-five years ago – fifty years after his death – Kierkegaard was hardly known in Germany."¹⁴ Although there had been a few works published in German before the appearance of the first Collected Works, these other works were known mainly to the theological circles in Germany and limited therein.¹⁵

The figure of Emanuel Hirsch played a significant role in the circumscription of Kierkegaard scholarship within the field of theology in Germany. He has been named as one of the leading Kierkegaard experts of his

generation,¹⁶ and had published the second Collected Works of Kierkegaard in German that for a large part of the mid-twentieth century was the reliable Kierkegaard source.¹⁷ But he had also been claimed as the leading theologian in relation to the ideology of the 'German Christians' in the early part of that century.¹⁸ Hirsch wrote his influential three volume study of Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard-Studien*, from 1930 to 1933, precisely during the time in which he was energetically engaged with National Socialism.¹⁹ Heiko Schulz has recounted the implications of Hirsch's Kierkegaard interpretation in these *Studien*:

Hirsch's interpretation consistently ignored not only the late writings of Kierkegaard but also forged a most fatal bond to National Socialism, in which the risk character [*Wagnis-Charakter*] of the relation to God in the leap to political decision was recoined for the fascist ideology, completely ignoring the despicable human implications.²⁰

Schultz also refers to the "most dubious (and, by the way, after 1945 unteachable) 'Germanification' [*Verdeutschung*] of Kierkegaard" that Hirsch carried out not only in his *Kierkegaard-Studien*, but also in his later translations of Kierkegaard for the second published Collected Works in German.²¹ This is supported by Alastair Hannay and Gordon Marino, where they write, "Emanuel Hirsch, whose influential German translations reflect personal political leanings, tried to weave Kierkegaard into the tangled web of an existence theology adapted to National Socialism."²² The strong connection between the National Socialistic Hirsch and the early scholarship of Kierkegaard in Germany, referenced by Adorno in his letter essay, "Kierkegaard noch einmal" ["Kierkegaard One More Time"],²³ gave very strong impetus to Adorno's rejection of Kierkegaard.²⁴

From the philosophical side of Kierkegaard appropriation during this time, the most problematic case to Adorno was Martin Heidegger. This appropriation likewise bore connections to National Socialism.²⁵ In *The Origins of Negative Dialectics*, Susan Buck-Morss makes mention of "the Kierkegaard revival of the twenties [which] moved from theological circles (cf. Karl Barth) to philosophy, when Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger 'emancipated' his [Kierkegaard's] existentialism from its religious context."²⁶ In "Kierkegaard noch einmal," Adorno indicts the transformation of Kierkegaard's philosophy by both Jaspers and Heidegger into an 'anthropological ontology'.²⁷ Heidegger is the most representative example of the way in which dimensions of Kierkegaardian philosophy had been used for ends that were antithetical to Adorno's position, both intellectually and politically.²⁸ In the lecture given for his entrance into an official academic post, which was delivered while he was writing his *Habilitationsschrift* on Kierkegaard (the manuscript for the lecture is dated 1931; while the Kierkegaard study, as mentioned, was written and

rewritten during the years of 1929-1933),²⁹ Adorno outlines and criticizes the relationship of Heidegger to Kierkegaard.³⁰ The state of academic philosophy is lamented in this lecture, and Adorno attributes its downfall both to Heidegger alone and to Heidegger's use of Kierkegaardian philosophy. In many ways, Heidegger was the philosophical character representative of this Kierkegaard movement Adorno most despised and held most responsible both for the philosophical errors and political evil of the times.³¹ One need only read Adorno's *Jargon of Authenticity* to note the extent to which Adorno's detestation of Heidegger blocked Adorno's capacity for coherent argumentation against him.³²

Of course, 'coherent' is not a trait one would assign to Adorno's writing even at its best moments. But the lack of coherence in Adorno's writing can be divided into two categories: There is a clearheaded and strenuously organized *anti*-coherence, which refuses to be able to be sifted into repeatable and systematic arguments. This demands a great deal of interpretation on the part of the reader because it includes so many different kinds and levels of arguments, interwoven and embedded intermittently within one another, such that none of the pieces can be understood outside the context of the line or paragraph in which they appear. This characterizes the most brilliant and thought-provoking of Adorno's thinking. The other category of a lack of coherence in Adorno's writing is embodied by a less clearheaded *non*-coherence, saturated by Adorno's agitation and extreme dissatisfaction with the object of his critique. In this noncoherence the main thrusts of his arguments are often repeated without the sensitivity that his antioherence maintains. And without a proper relation to the object at hand. By this I mean that he often, in his fits of noncoherence, disobeys his own principle of the inextricability of context – so crucial to an understanding of his own work – and takes features of the object or characteristics of the philosophical work at hand outside the environment and rules of definition through which they were created. This has clearly been the case with his book on Kierkegaard, and it is most evident in his elimination of the roles of pseudonymity and irony in Kierkegaard's writings. Adorno construes this as the most effective way to fight against what he conceives as the 'magical incantation' [*Zauberspruch*]³³ inherent in Kierkegaard's writings which, to Adorno's mind, not only led to fascistic appropriations of Kierkegaard but also indicates a fascistic core in Kierkegaard's thinking itself.

Despite the fact that Adorno's *Kierkegaard* falls into the lesser of the two categories of Adorno's writing, and that it offers one of the weakest *inhaltlich* [content-based] arguments against the multifarious writings of Kierkegaard, the book has proved to stimulate arguments and research about Kierkegaard to this day. It is frequently cited as one of those studies with which any scholar of Kierkegaard still needs to reckon, and this is even more the case if one takes seriously the early political connections of some of the first receptions of

Kierkegaard outside his native land without which there might not be any Kierkegaard research today.

¹ Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, volume 2, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997); hereafter GS, followed by the volume number. In English: *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); hereafter K.

² I do not here want to 'restore' Adorno's *Kierkegaard* to the exact context in which it was written and received, but rather outline the methodological and historical situation of Kierkegaard research, interpretation, and reception at the time of Adorno's writing of the book. This is meant as a background forum for understanding Adorno's vehement rejection of the religious philosopher. For an excellent review of the philosophical and historical situation against which Adorno was writing his *Kierkegaard*, see Christian Henning, *Der Faden der Ariadne, Eine theologische Studie zu Adorno* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993).

³ Adorno's *Kierkegaard* served as his *Habilitationsschrift*, the second dissertation required for promotion to university professor in Germany. This was Adorno's second *Habilitationsschrift*, the first on Kant and Freud having been rejected by Hans Cornelius in 1927. See Adorno, "Der Begriff des Unbewußten in der transzendentalen Seelenlehre," in GS 1, pp. 79-322. The Kierkegaard study was approved by Paul Tillich, and Adorno became promoted to University Professor thereby. See Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origins of Negative Dialectics* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 268 n. 22.

⁴ See Robert Hullot-Kentor, editor's introduction to Adorno, *Kierkegaard*, p. xi.

⁵ This is my translation of the German.

⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum Press, 1995).

⁷ The citations presented from this text are my translation of the German. Paul Tillich, "Gutachten Über die Arbeit von Dr. Wiesengrund: Die Konstruktion des Ästhetischen bei Kierkegaard," in *Gesammelten Werke*, vol. 11 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), p. 337; hereafter GW, followed by the volume number.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 337-338.

⁹ The books which comprise the first Collected Works in German, which was used by Adorno for his study, include: *Either/Or I and II, Fear and Trembling, Repetition, Stage's on Life's Way, The Concept of Angst, Philosophical Fragments, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, The Sickness Unto Death, Practice in Christianity, The Point of View of My Work as an Author, Two Upbuilding Discourses (1843), on My Effectiveness as an Author, For Self-Examination, and The Moment*. Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke*, 12 volumes, trans. Hermann Gottsched and Christoph Schrempf, ed. Eugen Diederichs (Jena, 1909-1922).

¹⁰ Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke*, 36 vol. Trans. and ed. Emanuel Hirsch et al. (Düsseldorf: Eugen Diederichs Verlag 1950-69 and Güttersloh, 1979-86).

¹¹ This is my translation. Martin Kieffhaber, *Christentum als Korrektiv* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald Verlag, 1997), p. 26.

¹² Tillich, GW 4, p. 147.

¹³ See Theodor Haecker, "Søren Kierkegaard," in *Søren Kierkegaard*, ed. Heinz-Horst Schrey (Darmstadt:

Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), p. 19. Haecker had likewise written in his study of 1913: "Das Deutsche Reich had etwa 65 Millionen Einwohner, selbst der entschiedene Pessimist kann nicht glauben, daß unter so vielen Menschen nicht einige jener, Einzelnen' sein sollten, die sich Kierkegaard zu seinen Lesern gewünscht hat. Aufmerksam werden müssen aber auch aus purem Pflicht- und Anstandgefühl all jene Philosophen und Kritiker der Zeit, die sich mit Fragen des geistigen Lebens, der Ethik, der Religion, des Christentums beschäftigen, denn daß 60 Jahre nach dem Tode Kierkegaards, Bücher und Broschüren über diese Dinge erschienen, obne daß eine einzige die Bekanntschaft mit dem Werke Kierkegaards verrät..." Haecker, *Søren Kierkegaard und die Philosophie der Innerlichkeit* (Munich: Verlag J.F. Schreiber, 1913), pp. 5-6.

¹⁴ First published in German in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, No. 75-76, January 29, 1932. Republished as "Søren Kierkegaard," in Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, p. 44.

¹⁵ These first few individual publications included *The Moment*, published in 1861; *For Self-Examination* in 1862; *Practice in Christianity* in 1878; and *The Sickness Unto Death* in 1881, *Works of Love* in 1890, as well as Kierkegaard's late writings, which were published under the title *Kierkegaard's Attach on Christianity* in 1896. Heiko Schulz has written that familiarity with Kierkegaard's works in Germany did remain limited to the theological circles until the appearance of the *Collected Works*. See Schulz, "Die theologische Rezeption Kierkegaards."

¹⁶ See R.P. Eriksen, *Theologen unter Hitler*, p. 40, cited in Kiefhaber, p. 16.

¹⁷ Hirsch had both translated and edited this *Collected Works*. See footnote 25. Hirsch had also been one of the two translators of another edition of Kierkegaard works, published in two volumes in 1971 in Düsseldorf and Cologne.

¹⁸ Kiefhaber, *ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.* See Emanuel Hirsch, *Kierkegaard-Studien* (Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann, 1933).

²⁰ This is my translation of Heiko Schulz, "Die theologische Rezeption Kierkegaards in Deutschland und Dänemark," in *Kierkegaard Studies, Yearbook 1999*, eds. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Hermann Deuser (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), p. 229.

²¹ *Ibid.*, see note 22 on p. 289.

²² Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, eds. Hannay and Marino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 1.

²³ Adorno, "Kierkegaard noch einmal," in GS 2, p. 244: „Besiegelt wurde das, als ihn in Deutschland vor 1933 der Nationalsozialist Emanuel Hirsch in Generalpacht nahm: Sieg als Niederlage.“

²⁴ This is not to say that Hirsch was the only important theologian to research and appropriate the thinking of Kierkegaard in Germany. But he was, unfortunately, the first of such significance. A very good counter example, however, is the figure of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who used Kierkegaard's philosophy precisely in his opposition to National Socialism. Roger Poole writes, "Every thinker who falls under Kierkegaard's sway does so for his own reasons. Kierkegaard's effect on theologians has usually been because of the existential nature of his own theological thinking... One

important theologian, whose life was brutally cut short by the Nazis in 1945, was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose *Letters and Papers from Prison* introduced to the world the idea of 'religionless Christianity'. Early influenced as an academic theologian by Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer later had reason to come to understand the existential or lived nature of Christianity when he was imprisoned in 1943 for his resistance to Hitler and for his involvement in a plot on his life. His taking on of the secular authorities of his time, his deliberate entry into the political events of his own Germany, unheard of for a Lutheran pastor, was deeply indebted to that Kierkegaard who had found it his duty in his own time to enter into conflict with the whole established Danish Church." Poole, "The unknown Kierkegaard: Twentieth-century receptions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, pp. 53-4. See, cited therein, Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, trans. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan Company, 1971). The issue of whether Kierkegaard's philosophy of its own accord lends itself to fascistic appropriations, especially to that of the Protestant theologians in the early part of the twentieth century in Germany, is outlined well by Martin Kiefhaber in *Christentum als Korrektiv*, pp. 14-16.

²⁵ I do not here want to enter into the discussion of whether Heidegger's philosophy was itself bound up with the political movement of National Socialism. This debate is a library unto itself and is outside the scope of this short article. What is important here is the fact that Adorno had interpreted Heidegger as having contributed not only to the downfall of philosophy, but to that which prepared the way for fascism or was itself fascistic.

²⁶ Buck-Morss, p. 269 n. 25.

²⁷ Adorno, "Kierkegaard noch einmal," GS 2, p. 242.

²⁸ Fred Dallmayr has written: "Adorno's opposition to Heidegger, in any event, does not seem to have been grounded (primarily) on this issue [Anti-Semitism] – given that many of his criticism were formulated prior to Heidegger's overt political involvement. Needless to say, Adorno's antagonism was greatly deepened and intensified by Heidegger's pro-Nazi affiliation; there can also be no doubt that the episode (understandably) overshadowed all subsequent relations and that Adorno at least partially blamed Heidegger for the disasters occasioned by the regime." Fred Dallmayr, *Life-world, Modernity and Critique: Paths between Heidegger and the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 54. See also Hermann Mörchen, *Adorno und Heidegger: Untersuchung einer philosophischen Kommunikationsverweigerung* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981); quoted in Dallmayr, *ibid.*

²⁹ See "Editorische Nachbemerkung" in GS 1, p. 383; and "Notiz" in GS 2, p. 261.

³⁰ See "Die Aktualität der Philosophie," GS 1, pp. 325-344. In English: „The Actuality of Philosophy,“ in *The Adorno Reader*, ed. Brian O'Connor (Malden MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 23.

³¹ See Mörchen, *Adorno und Heidegger*, insert before title page: „Die Schuld derjenigen Repräsentanten des Geistes, die das Hochkommen Hitlers mit ermöglicht haben, weil sie die Notwendigkeit des Widerstands nicht oder zu spät erkannten, ist noch keineswegs aufgearbeitet. Adorno verstand seinen Kampf gegen Heidegger als ein Stück dieser Arbeit...“ This is

similar to George Lukács's rejection of Kierkegaard for the same reason, namely that what he conceived as Kierkegaard's 'irrationalism' contributed to fascism. See Lukács, *Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Darmstadt und Neuwied, 1962); in English: *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer (Atlantic Highlands NJ: Humanities Press, 1981).

³² Adorno, *Jargon der Eigenlichkeit*, GS 6, pp. 413-526; in English: *Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

³³ Adorno's concern in reducing the texts of Kierkegaard and of his pseudonyms into what they can render literally is described by Adorno himself as a fight against the "dangerous power" of "fascination" one falls under when reading these texts. In *Kierkegaard* he writes: "Fascination is the most

dangerous power in his work. Whoever succumbs to it by taking up one of the imposing and inflexible categories he inexhaustibly displays; whoever bows to its grandeur without comparing it with concretion, without ever investigating if it is adequate to concretion, has fallen under its dominion and become the servant of a mythical realm" (K, 11/GS 2, 19). This realm is, according to Adorno, "ruled by magical incantation [*Zauberspruch*]" (ibid.) as well as a "logical immanence in which everything must find its place" (K, 11/GS 2, 20). The apparent freedom of Kierkegaard's poetic tools is at bottom of Adorno's critique a magical force of compulsion, which comprises an order of predetermination. One of the strongest devices of Kierkegaard's magical incantation according to Adorno is the pseudonymity.

**KIERKEGAARD'S
ILLUSION OF CHRISTENDOM AND ATTACK ON CHRISTENDOM
An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria.**

- **Philosophical Investigations, Section 580**

•
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What is the place of *Attack Upon "Christendom"* in Kierkegaard's authorship? Is the *Attack* consistent with Kierkegaard's authorship, as he explains it in *The Point of View*? Walter Lowrie in the "Translator's Introduction" to the *Attack* says this:

At all events, it is clear to us now that the *Attack* was the consistent conclusion of his life and thought.¹

And Howard Johnson in "Kierkegaard and the Church, A supplement to the Translator's Introduction" writes:

He [Kierkegaard] was to be nothing more than a "corrective".²

Being 'nothing more than a corrective' involves the Socratic stance which Kierkegaard takes and explains in *The Point of View*; there Kierkegaard does not claim to have any authority beyond what one human being can do for another. He claims to have no authority and to say that it is not important whether he is a Christian or not.

What requires the corrective is the illusion of Christendom or, in other words, the misunderstanding of *what it means to be a Christian*. To that end, there are two aspects (1) the presentation and explanation of what is to be corrected, what is amiss, the misunderstanding, and (2) the correction or the cure, the presentation and explanation of the correct understanding. In order to call

the misunderstanding *an illusion* of Christendom, Kierkegaard must hold that those under the spell of the illusion possess what is essential to Christianity and only need to be reminded or awakened. Kierkegaard provides the wake-up call. The Christian Socrates cannot claim authority and must assume that the truth is present in the Christians of the society. Introducing the truth of Christianity is not Kierkegaard's task, just as Socrates did not claim to introduce the truth to his interlocutors.

The Attack is not consistent with Kierkegaard's Socratic, corrective authorship. The *Attack* abandons the idea that those, whom Kierkegaard once believed were under the spell of an illusion, have everything which was essential concerning Christianity in their possession. As Kierkegaard puts it in a Journal entry from the 1850-53 period:

...the current preaching in Christendom leaves out *something essential* in the proclamation of Christianity - 'imitation, dying away, being born again, etc.' (my emphasis)³

If something essential is left out, then the Socratic or maieutic approach is inappropriate and the problem is not the problem of correcting a misunderstanding or exposing an illusion. The problem requires direct attack. Unfortunately, Kierkegaard retains the language of illusion in the direct attack; but the new 'illusion' is not

the illusion set forth in *The Point of View*. I will try to explain this.

I.

**"...`Christendom' is a prodigious illusion."⁴ ---
Kierkegaard**

Kierkegaard believed he had discovered an illusion, which he called "the illusion of Christendom." One expression of it might be this: the Danes (circa 1850) believed they were Christians, but they were not Christians. This involves, I take it, not only each believing oneself to be a Christian, but believing everyone else is a Christian, too. Another expression of the illusion might be: everyone is a Christian "as a matter of course." There may be other expressions of it as well.

My interest concerns the intelligibility of certain expressions that Kierkegaard uses, in particular, the word "illusion" in the expression "illusion of Christendom". The word "illusion" suggests that those persons, who believed they were Christians, but were not Christians, had confused Christianity with something that is very similar to Christianity, as it were, confusing counterfeit money with good money.⁵ Accordingly, it should be possible to present the counterfeit and the good money, showing in particular the differences, since the similarities create the illusion. The task is to present the differences, dispelling the illusion.

With respect to counterfeit money there can be an innocence or ignorance: not knowing it is counterfeit and not noticing the differences. One of my questions is whether that aspect of innocence can exist with respect to the situation which Kierkegaard calls "the illusion of Christendom." It is a question, which, I believe, began to bother Kierkegaard. I will consider this aspect and its bearing on the role of *Attack Upon "Christendom"* in Part II.

How *did* Kierkegaard discover 'the illusion of Christendom'? The possibility of such a discovery seems *prima facie* at odds with Kierkegaard's various remarks about 'hidden inwardness' and 'the essential secret', since no one can discover or know another's hidden inwardness. Kierkegaard remarks in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* that "Judge not lest you be judged" expresses an impossibility⁶. No human being can judge another with respect to faith or one's relationship to God, unless God has given one that authority (apostolic authority). Kierkegaard insists on numerous occasions that he is 'without authority'. Was Kierkegaard's detection of the illusion of Christianity a matter of a keen observation, as it is in the detection of the counterfeit money?

Kierkegaard is making a *judgment* about certain people when says, "There is an illusion of Christianity", for he is

implying: "They believe they are Christians" and "They are not Christians". He is not confessing that he is or was under the spell of the illusion. He knows and detects the differences. Is Kierkegaard's detection of the illusion connected to his observations of the daily behavior of these people, what they do or not do? Did Kierkegaard watch and listen as he went about his daily life and thereby, by what he saw and heard, detect the illusion?

Consider this passage from *The Point of View*⁷.

Every one with some capacity for observation, who seriously considers what is called Christendom, or the conditions in a so-called Christian country, must be assailed by profound misgivings. What does it mean that all these thousands and thousands call themselves Christians as a matter of course? These many, many men of whom the greater part, so far as one can judge, live in categories quite foreign to Christianity! Any one can convince himself of it by the simplest observation. People who perhaps never once enter a church, never think about God, never mention his name except in oaths! People upon whom it has never dawned that they might have any obligation to God, people who either regard it as a maximum to be guiltless of transgressing the criminal law, or do not count even this quite necessary! Yet all these people, even those who assert that no God exists, are all of them Christians, call themselves Christians, are recognized as Christians by the State, are buried as Christians by the Church, are certified as Christians for eternity!

Note these expressions in that passage: "*Everyone* with some capacity for *observation*... must be assailed by profound misgivings [about these 'Christians' being Christians]" and "*Any one* can convince himself of it by the simplest *observation*" (my emphases). The word "observation" suggests that Kierkegaard was looking at and listening to his fellow Danes, as he met and knew them in everyday life, and observed something, which tipped him off concerning the illusion. The words "everyone" and "any one" suggest that no special talent or skill is involved. It is a matter, I suppose, of paying attention—and knowing what to pay attention to, to look for. And what is that?

What is an example of a "simple observation" (much less "the simplest observation")? A simple observation might be like this: our streets are filled with litter. It is unsightly, but no one seems to notice. One day a civic-minded

Kierkegaard points it out: our streets are an embarrassment. "Look about you, as you walk about; see the litter everywhere". This is a simple observation. There is nothing obscuring the litter. Perhaps some have noted the litter, but not thought about it or thought it a problem. Others simply had not paid attention. I am not sure whether the observation of litter in the streets would be one of the simplest observations. It is one that does not require a telescope or microscope; it does not require a special vantage point or education. Anyone going about daily activities could notice the litter.

But what in particular did Kierkegaard observe in the streets and lives of the Danes—something anyone could observe—which prompted him to say: There is a monstrous illusion. That the persons he met and saw in his daily life were not Christians, but believed they were, does not seem to be something one could observe as simply as observing the litter in the streets. It does not seem a simple observation and perhaps not an observation at all.

I want to consider in Kierkegaard's own words, what he suggests that he observed and what any one could observe. Kierkegaard observed the following of some persons who believed they were Christians:

- never once entering a church
- never thinking about God
- never mentioning the name "God" except in oaths
- never thinking they might have an obligation to God
- feeling that not breaking the criminal law is the maximum criterion
- feeling that not breaking the criminal law is not quite necessary
- asserting that no God exists

I want to consider each of these on the basis of observation, what anyone might observe. Let us note that Kierkegaard does use the expression "as far as one can judge", which acknowledges that in the detection of this illusion, in the observing and judging involved, there are limitations. What kind of limitation he was thinking of is not explained. If the observations came from his participation in normal social activities, going for walks, going to the store, going to church, reading the newspaper, etc., then Kierkegaard would obviously be limited to what he could observe publicly. Another kind of limitation might be that Kierkegaard doesn't intrude in these people's lives by coming out and asking them: do you ever think about God? do you ever think of your obligation to God? He observes them without their knowing he is observing them or knowing the purpose of the observations. I do not mean that someone might not have noticed Kierkegaard looking out his window or looking at someone from a table in a café. Rather they did not know he was observing them to judge whether they were Christians or not. It would be wrong to think

that the limitation on judgement is that Kierkegaard cannot *know* their hidden inwardness, because that is not a *limitation*.

Entering a church is observable. Kierkegaard might have known persons who never went to church, yet believed themselves to be Christians. However, it seems superficial to judge that someone is not a Christian, because of not going to church. Just as it would be superficial to judge that someone *is* a Christian solely because the person went to church. *That* seems a symptom of the illusion of Christendom: by going to church every Sunday, some believe they are Christians. But did Kierkegaard really detect the illusion, in part, because he knew persons who were considered Christians but did not go to church?

What observations might support the assertion that someone never thought about God? One might think about God at night when one cannot sleep or when a severe illness occurs or when someone dear dies unexpectedly. Perhaps Kierkegaard watched certain mean spirited, avaricious, empty-headed persons on a daily basis and said, "They never think about God." It does not occur to Kierkegaard or does not suit his particular purpose to suppose that perhaps in these persons' hidden inwardnesses, they do at times think seriously about God and their obligation to God. How did Kierkegaard judge that some persons *never thought* about their obligation to God? Is there certain behavior one might observe that shows that there is no thought of God in these people's lives, behavior they would not be doing if they thought about God or their obligation to God. This "not thinking about" might be in the sense of: "If he had thought about his fiancée, he would not have done that". Or: "She was not thinking about her health, when she did that." But in these cases "*never thinking about*" doesn't seem quite right. It would be strange if the betrothed *never thought* about each other or one *never thought* about one's health in what one did. It is not clear what Kierkegaard means by the expression "never thinking about God" with respect to what is observable, i.e. the criteria for using that expression.

The search for a simple observation is just as problematic with: never thinking about one's obligation to God. Someone, who has an obligation, has an obligation to *do* (or not *do*) certain things. An obligation is part of a relationship. What is difficult with respect to an obligation to God is that the kinds of relationship with which we are familiar—such as, between husband and wife, parent and child, employer and employee, creditor and debtor, physician and patient, master and slave, king and subject—provide analogies and disanalogies to the relationship between the individual and God. Certainly there is the aspect of God the father and the idea that Christians have obligations to God as children do to their fathers. Would Kierkegaard say that Christians have an obligation to God to obey his commandments, say, to obey the Ten Commandments? Let us say yes. Then

Kierkegaard observes that the Danes never think about their obligation to God because they live a certain way and do not obey the Ten Commandments. Of course, those who do not obey might still think about their obligation.

One possibility in lieu of specific behavior would be that certain persons simply told Kierkegaard, "I never think about my obligation to God." However, this assumes that those persons realized that they had such an obligation. Perhaps someone might have said, "There is no obligation to God." It is unclear in what circumstances someone would tell that to Kierkegaard or say it at all. Certainly, it does not seem consistent with Kierkegaard's remarks to think of him as conducting a survey. But if these people are under the spell of the illusion, they might well say, "Of course, I have an obligation to God, and I think of my obligation to God. I donate my time and money to the church and say my prayers." I do not think that would have satisfied Kierkegaard.

Consider the idea that certain persons think that by not breaking the criminal law ("the maximum criterion"), they are Christians. This might be the expression of an attitude that the distinction between law-abiding citizens and criminals is the same as between Christian and non-believer. I can imagine Kierkegaard hearing someone call another a "good Christian" because the other had a decent job, paid one's bills, and did not break the law—or perhaps only broke a few minor laws. We could imagine that someone who had never heard of Christianity could have visited Kierkegaard's Copenhagen, observed the Danes, and noted that these people call themselves Christians because they go to church regularly or because they are law abiding citizens. Along with that I imagine there would be an attitude toward the Scriptures, such that the story of Abraham, for instance, is a kind of exaggeration or, if not, is a story of events that took place long ago, in an uncivilized world. Such an attitude would not accept that God might tell someone in Copenhagen to do something like what He told Abraham to do. In the *Attack* there is the following remark (under the heading *Short and Sharp*):

It is related of a Swedish priest that, profoundly disturbed by the sight of the effect his address produced upon the auditors, who were dissolved in tears, he said soothingly, "Children, do not weep the whole thing might be a lie."⁸

The editors provide the following note to that passage:

In the fifteenth century this story was told of a friar at Naples, who on Good Friday had harrowed the congregation by his description of the Lord's Passion, and seeing them in tears had tried to

comfort them by the reflection that "all this was a long time ago, so let us hope it is not true."⁹

The last observation in the passage from *The Point of View* concerns this: there are persons who assert that no God exists, and either call themselves Christians or are recognized, despite their assertion to the contrary, as Christians. This seems most odd, for it does not seem possible that those persons, who assert there is no God, nevertheless call themselves Christians. If Kierkegaard meant that others call them Christians or they are listed on the parish register as Christians, then it is clearer. Perhaps they call themselves Christians in doing their daily business, as it is required for licensing, etc. But are they, then, under an illusion?

Here I want to bring out as aspect of the grammar of the word "illusion". I will borrow from Bouwsma, for he has already pointed this out with some clear examples:

My interest is confined to the general context of language with which the word "illusion" is connected. Notice for this purpose, the following sentences:

I thought I saw a mouse, but it wasn't a mouse.

I thought I saw a dead dog lying in the street, but it wasn't a dead dog.

I thought I heard someone at the door, but there was no one.

...And now notice the question that goes with these expressions of illusion, and the sorts of answers one gives. The question is: "And what was it?" or "And what was it you saw?" And we get such answers as these, answers which also commonly enter into the explanation of the illusion.

It wasn't a mouse; it was a rubber ball rolling across the floor.

It wasn't a dead dog lying in the street; it was an old brown coat.

There was no one at the door. It must have been the wind rattling the windows.¹⁰

In the case of an illusion there is always what something seemed—a mouse, a dead dog, someone at the door—and what something actually is—a rubber ball, an old brown coat, the wind rattling the windows. In these cases we know what it is to see a mouse and to see a rubber ball, to see a dead dog and to see an old brown coat, and to hear someone at the door and to hear the wind rattling the windows. An aspect of the grammar is that one might have thought the rubber ball rolling across the floor and under the couch was a mouse and

never find out it was not a mouse. *But being able to find out* is an essential part of the grammar. Someone can bring out the rubber ball from under the couch and show how the rolling ball looked like a mouse.

Kierkegaard encapsulates his detection of the illusion in the expression " [they] live in categories quite foreign to Christianity". This expression, I think, means: correct descriptions of their lives only use words from pagan and natural categories. The pattern of life is aesthetic. It is not the pattern of a Christian life. This does seem a matter of observation, for those descriptions are the results of the observations of human lives. That the particular descriptions do not accord with the pattern of a Christian life is not an observation, unless it is a grammatical (conceptual) observation. Here, it seems, there is the aspect of the grammar of illusion which we need: the pattern of an aesthetic life and the pattern of a Christian life. These two kinds of life are mixed up. Are these two kinds of life observable and describable? Are they so similar that they can be confused, one taken for the other? What does "finding out" come to in this case?

What is the pattern of a Christian life that Kierkegaard is looking for and does not find? Certainly, Christ's life as a human being is the pattern. Kierkegaard also uses this expression: "Christ is *the prototype*"¹¹. But what would it look like for someone to live a life following that pattern? As I am presenting it, Kierkegaard finds a pattern, which is called "Christian", but which is not Christian—it is pagan.

Let us consider the expression "pattern of a Christian life." I am thinking of *pattern* as in the expression:

"Grief" describes a pattern [ein Muster] which recurs, with different variations, in the weave of our life.¹²

There is certainly a wide range of behavior, even contradictory behavior, which would still count as part of the expression of grief. Someone might cry incessantly; someone might show no emotion, being stony faced, yet consumed with grief. There are also thoughts, memories, feelings, dreams, longing, and a variety of facial expressions, which are tied in with a hurly-burly of occasions. There are also, one could say, different stages of grief, as time from the immediate occasion of grief passes. To describe grief would be to describe a good part of someone's life. There is also insincere or feigned grief. How do we describe that? Do we begin with a description of someone in grief, then add: they do not really mean it? Suppose a part in a play called for "feigned grief." How would that be conveyed to the audience?

We could also substitute "pride" in the above sentence. "Pride" describes a pattern which recurs, with different variations, in the weave of our life. When Bouwsma was talking with Wittgenstein about ethics and pride,

Wittgenstein asked: "How do you exhibit 'pride'?" Bouwsma responded, "By reading from *The Brothers Karamazov*."¹³ Bouwsma then writes:

W. seemed to approve of this but he made some objection which I did not understand. He said somebody else might write a different book, apparently exhibiting pride in a different light. The point seemed to be that what is relevant is *patterns of life which are enmeshed with all sorts of other things*, and so this makes the matter much more complex than at first it seemed. Perhaps this is it. Pride is, in anyone's life, always only a part. No man is pride alone. Pride is specified in a context off other interests and other human beings. It is this *total situation* in which pride infects with evil. (my emphases)¹⁴

The expressions "patterns of life which are enmeshed with all sorts of other things" and "total situation" are relevant to the expression "pattern of Christian life". What I want from this is: one might describe various lives, as Dostoevsky does in *The Brothers*, and show, say, Ivan's pride a certain way, but someone else might show pride in a very different way. What Dostoevsky gives in *The Brothers* is a vast context with all kinds of details. This suggests that to describe what the pattern of a Christian life is would be just as problematic and particular. The "the" in the expression "the pattern of a Christian life" should not suggest that there is a single pattern at all. But how can there be a *pattern*, at all? A pattern provides for the recognition and detection and the application of the expressions "Christian" and "not Christian" and "seems Christian."

Is the illusion of *misunderstanding* what it means to be a Christian a misunderstanding of the Scriptures? I should add, that if we say yes, then the misunderstanding might best be understood as a nest of misunderstandings. To be under the spell of the illusion, there cannot be mere ignorance of the Scriptures or what it means to be a Christian. If it were from ignorance, then it would not be proper to call the situation "an illusion." The situation of the illusion involves a familiarity with the Scriptures, perhaps one beginning in childhood. Now what kind of misunderstanding is involved? Are they misunderstandings concerning different expressions and stories in the Scriptures? Who is to say what the proper understanding is?

Consider the following passage from Bouwsma's "The Invisible":

...I said we do not know how to read the Scriptures. I think I had better say that we cannot say what understanding the Scriptures is. In the sense in which

I was saying that we do not know how to read the Scriptures there is also no human being who can teach us. The idea is that when God speaks or God writes only God himself can give the understanding. ... God does not speak or write English or any other earthly language, no matter how much like English or any other language the language of Scripture looks like and sounds like English. I realize that this sounds paradoxical and like the divine language is almost unintelligible.¹⁵

Kierkegaard must have the proper understanding, it seems, of the Scriptures in order to say: there is a *misunderstanding*, which is at the root of the illusion of Christendom. Kierkegaard does not speak of a misunderstanding of Scripture in the passage I cited from *The Point of View*. He refers to aspects of the lives of those around him. Would it be right to say that Kierkegaard learned of that pattern of life, which he does not find, from his understanding of Scripture? Should we say God gave that understanding to him?

Kierkegaard is sometimes presented as concerned to clear up certain conceptual confusions or misunderstandings of Scripture. For instance, he shows that the opposite of the Christian concept "faith" is the concept "sin", and not the concept "doubt" (and that the opposite of "sin" is "faith", not "virtue"). Certainly, there are cases in which doubt is contrasted with faith, as in "You don't have faith in me to succeed" when someone raises doubts. When the concept of doubt is seen as the opposite of the Christian concept of faith, it leads to the confusion that faith is a matter of removing doubt and providing grounds for certainty. For Kierkegaard, Christian faith is not an intellectual matter of proof or right grounds, but of obedience and passion.

These remarks seem to support the idea Kierkegaard is, among other things, clearing up conceptual confusions, confusions of biblical concepts. I have suggested that he was doing that with the concepts of faith and offense. However, if, as Bouwsma remarks, "there is also no human being who can teach us [how to understand Scripture]", perhaps this account of Kierkegaard clearing up conceptual confusions is itself a confusion. Would any person (without authority) presume to explain to another what God has said or written? to provide conceptual analyses of divine language? I am not saying it cannot be done or that Kierkegaard did not do it.

I have suggested that Kierkegaard's detection of the illusion of Christendom concerned the observation of a pattern of human life, in particular Kierkegaard's observations of his fellow Danes. The expression "observation of a pattern of human life and behavior" is wide, for at times it refers (1) to observations about

personal behavior, such as going to church, working and living as people concerned with security and happiness, and betraying (to Kierkegaard) lives "in categories not Christian", (2) to thinking or not thinking about God or one's obligation to God, and (3) to more general, perhaps conceptual, issues, in terms of what the customs might be, such as everyone being baptized shortly after birth, the State requiring all state positions be filled by registered Christians, or the Church providing every deceased person a Christian burial. I am noting and not objecting to this. It does not seem to be, as Kierkegaard says, a simple observation at all.

In *Training in Christianity* Kierkegaard has an imagined interlocutor raise the question about what is observed, about the hidden inwardness, about being a "knower of hearts".

"What! Are you presuming to be a knower of hearts who judges people's innermost being; when a man himself says that he is a Christian, you surely do not presume to deny it?"... But does he really say that? I thought that in established Christendom it was hidden inwardness that we were supposed to keep it hidden. "Yes, we certainly are supposed to keep it hidden, simple because it is a given that all are Christians." Then how is it a given if everyone individually keeps it hidden—because it is a given that all are that?

The situation is this. If everyone around defines himself as being a Christian *just like* "the others", then no one, if it is looked at this way, is really confessing Christ. On the other hand, it is well known that everyone, if it is looked at this way, is a Christian of sorts.¹⁶

Here Kierkegaard adds something to the expression "Everyone is a Christian" (as an expression of the illusion) by specifying "just like 'the others'" and contrasting that with "*personally* confessing Christ". Hence it isn't simply that everyone is a Christian, but the objective manner in which each is a Christian, being just like everyone else. I get the feeling that Kierkegaard almost objects to any plural subject for the adjective "Christian", since only the individual can use it and use it with respect to oneself and perhaps only use in talking to oneself (or God) about oneself. Yet Kierkegaard is also saying: there is the illusion of Christendom.

II.

“...official Christianity, the official preaching of Christianity is in no sense the Christianity of the New Testament.”¹⁷

“The Christianity of the New Testament simply does not exist. Here there is nothing to reform....”¹⁸

At Bishop Mynster's memorial service Martensen, who wished to be and did become Mynster's successor, called him “a witness to the truth.” That Mynster's comfortable and worldly life bore no resemblance to the biblical witnesses to the truth was obvious to Kierkegaard (another one of the simplest observations?). To Kierkegaard's objection concerning Mynster being a witness to the truth, Martensen was baited into seeming to agree that *all* the priests and pastors were witnesses to the truth.

Consider this passage from *Attack Upon “Christendom”*.

Now what I protested against was the *linguistic solecism of calling* what we mean by priests, deans, bishops, “witnesses” or “witnesses to the truth”; it was against this *linguistic usage* I protested, because it is blasphemous, sacrilegious... In the New Testament Christ *calls* the Apostles and the disciples “witnesses,” requires them to witness to Him. Let us see now what it to be understood by this. These are men who by the renunciation of all things in poverty, in lowliness, and thus ready for every suffering, were to go out into the world which expresses mortal hostility of the Christian way of life. This is what Christ *calls* “witnesses” and “witnessing”.

What we *call* “priest,” “dean,” “bishop,” indicates a livelihood, like every other employment in the community, and in a community, be it noted where, since all *call* themselves “Christians,” no danger is in the remotest degree connected with teaching Christianity, where on the contrary this profession may be considered one of the most agreeable and the most highly honored. (my italics)¹⁹

Are Martensen's remarks about Mynster and subsequent remarks that imply that there are other witnesses to the truth part of the illusion of Christendom, namely, a misunderstanding of the concept “witness to the truth”, which had been watered down so as to apply to anyone

who has an official position in Christianity? The expression “linguistic solecism” could be replaced with the expression “conceptual confusion” and connected to the idea of a misunderstanding of Scripture. Clearly, Kierkegaard is objecting to “this linguistic usage”, namely, *calling* the priests, deans, bishops, “witnesses to the truth”.

THE CONCEPT OF WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

Christ's Use	Martensen's Use
Renunciation of all things	Agreeable profession
Poverty	Comfortable livelihood
Lowliness	Social honor
Prepared for suffering	No danger
Hostile reception	Friendly reception

For Kierkegaard, the proper use of the expression “witness to the truth” is shown in Christ's use, which is revealed by noting those whom he called “witnesses”.²⁰ Kierkegaard's point is: those whom Martensen calls “witnesses” do not meet the same grammatical criteria.

Kierkegaard makes a distinction between the attack on the illusion of Christendom and the attack on Christendom. The attack on the illusion is indirect, the attack on Christendom is direct. Kierkegaard in *The Point of View* has a rationale for the indirect attack and why illusions *cannot* be attacked directly. What this comes to, as I have noted, is that those enmeshed in the illusion have what is essential to understanding their situation and breaking free; hence the attack on the illusion focuses on a presentation of concepts and expressions which are misunderstood.

Given that, it is not clear why the “illusion” cannot be attacked directly. Look at what Kierkegaard does with the expression “witness to the truth.” He presents the biblical use and the current use, side by side. The immense difference is easily noted. Is that indirect or direct? Perhaps the indirection is the grammatical nature of the *Attack*. But is the illusion of Christendom an illusion of understanding? Or does Kierkegaard come to the idea that the New Testament is well enough understood, but it is too difficult. The young rich man understood well enough when Christ told him to give away to the poor all he had and follow him. The man went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

The Instant No. 10, which was the last of the *Attack* and was on Kierkegaard's desk as he was dying in the hospital, begins with “What I call optical illusion”. The first two sentences are:

This [the optical illusion] consists in what looks as if it were serving a higher interest, the infinite, the idea, God; but upon closer inspection proves to be

...serving the finite, low things, profit. And it was this Bishop Mynster practiced with rare virtuosity²¹

Kierkegaard is once again using the grammar of illusion in order to articulate his problem with the state of Christendom. The expressions "looks as if" and "optical illusion" mean that Kierkegaard conceived of the problem as a kind of switch between two things which look alike, but are different. It isn't, however, a question of a misunderstanding of some expression. The expression "with rare virtuosity" (Kierkegaard also uses the expression "virtuosity in ambiguity") implies that Mynster knew the difference. Is the illusion that Mynster appears to be serving God, preaching and ministering, but is not serving God?

Kierkegaard does not mention any particular person in treating the illusion during his authorship, as put forth in *The Point of View*. But the attack on Christendom focuses on two particular men. Perhaps this is part of what makes the attack on Christendom 'direct'. Kierkegaard is still talking about conceptual misunderstandings ("linguistic solecisms"), but now he mentions two men who have *intentionally* misused the concepts, two men in positions of authority, respect, and power. There is the suggestion in *Training in Christianity* that New Testament Christianity has been preached in a false spirit by Mynster; for example: the preaching of Abraham or Job's suffering as a condolence to the suffering of the loss of a spouse or a child. Kierkegaard wants to say that such losses occur in paganism and are felt with the human heart, as shown in the great pagan writings, for instance. Religious suffering is *different*.

We understand the word "suffering" and can describe cases or refer to cases to display the concept. It is, as with the earlier examples of "grief" and "pride", involved with a broad weave of life. But when it comes to "religious suffering", Kierkegaard wants to separate it *categorically* from what we normally understand. If we learn our everyday language in aesthetic categories, that is through our shared interests and natural expression of pain, pleasure, fear, etc ("the universally human" in Kierkegaard's language), then how do we move into the religious categories? That a child smiles, cries, likes sweet tastes, makes a face at bitter tastes, etc. is as suffering. But to use the word "suffering" is to make the connection. There is a similar difficulty with Kierkegaard's use of the word "despair", as in "Sin is despair". We have the word "despair" in our everyday language. We can describe cases. Now Kierkegaard comes along and says: all of these cases, even some in which you say this is not despair, are cases of despair. We might say of someone who lost all his money in a venture that he was in despair. But upon finding that the investor had not put his money into the scheme and he was saved, he was happy. But Kierkegaard says: he is in despair. But whatever Kierkegaard goes on to do with

the word "despair", doesn't he launch from our normal understanding of it?

Here is a passage from Kierkegaard's Journals:

Especially at the end of *A Literary Review* I have said that none of the 'unrecognizable ones' dares at any price to communicate directly, or assume recognizability-- yet in my *On My Activity as an Author* I have owned up to the aesthetic foreground of my authorship and said: 'The whole thing is my own upbringing.' How is this to be understood?

As follows. Granting that the illusion 'Christendom' is the truth and must be left standing, then the maxim is unrecognizability. But if the illusion is to go away we must take it in this way: You are not really Christians. Then there must be recognizability. And here I have intimated the lowest level: that it is I who am being brought up in Christianity.

If the illusion 'Christendom' is the truth, if the current preaching in Christendom is in order, then we are all Christians and all that matters is to increase inwardness: so maieutic and unrecognizability are the maxim.

But then suppose (as I was not aware at the start) that the current preaching in Christendom leaves out something essential in the proclamation of Christianity -- 'limitation, dying away, being born again, etc', then we in Christendom are not Christians, and here the stress must be towards recognizability. As I said, my own proclamation is the lowest in direct recognizability: that the whole thing is my upbringing.

O my God! Oh, thank you! How clear everything becomes to me!²²

What I want from this passage, as it relates to my paper, is this. The attack on the illusion seeks to retain the structure of Christianity ("the illusion 'Christendom' is turth"), as it existed in Denmark, and, so to speak, remodel it by bringing the illusion to attention. The *Attack*, on the other hand, seeks to alter in a radical way the structure, because it "leaves out something essential in the proclamation of Christianity." With the illusion nothing essential is left out, but something essential has been misunderstood; with the *Attack* something essential ("imitation, dying away, being born again, etc.") has been left out. People do not want to hear that part of the Gospel. This is a big difference.

The treatment of the illusion from within the church does not require 'recognizability' on the part of the dispeller; that is, the person under the spell of the illusion is to come to the idea on one's own that something is amiss and not be *told*. The dispeller is invisible in order to create the proper unrest and to provide the cure; this is the Socratic aspect of Kierkegaard. The attack on Christendom requires 'recognizability', for it requires *Kierkegaard* to say directly and plainly: this is not Christianity, Christianity is not being preached, Mynster is not a witness to the truth, and you are not Christians.

A succinct way of expressing the theme of this paper is the following. In the-illusion-of-Christendom works and their period, such sentences as "These people are Christians" or "Everyone is a Christian" are misunderstandings rooted in assimilating the concept "Christian" to various worldly concepts. In the *Attack* period those sentences are not expressions of misunderstanding; they are false.

¹ *Attack Upon Christendom*, p. xiii.

² *Ibid.* p. xix.

³ *Papers and Journals: A Selection*, ed. Hannay, p. 542. I quote the full passage at the end of this paper.

⁴ *The Point of View*, p. 22.

⁵ See *The Point of View*, p. 40. "...one does not begin directly with the matter one wants to communicate, but begins by accepting the other man's illusion as good money."

⁶ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 322.

⁷ *The Point of View*, p. 22.

⁸ *Attack*, p. 181.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

¹⁰ *Toward a New Sensibility*, "Are Dreams Illusions?", pp. 67-69.

¹¹ *Training in Christianity*, p. 239.

¹² *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 179.

¹³ *Wittgenstein, Conversations 1949-1951*, p. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 5.

¹⁵ *Without Proof or Evidence*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁶ *Training in Christianity*, pp. 219-220.

¹⁷ *Attack Upon "Christendom"*, p. 24.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁰ See, e.g., Acts 10: 34-43.

²¹ *Attack Upon "Christendom"*, p. 275.

²² *Papers and Journals: A Selection*, ed. Hannay, p. 542.

Kierkegaard and the Treachery of Love.

by Amy Laura Hall

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Reviewed by Amy Leigh Peters

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Amy Laura Hall's *Kierkegaard and the Treachery of Love* is an extensive study of Kierkegaard on love. Hall begins with a discussion of *Works of Love* and its depiction of human love. In each subsequent chapter, she examines a pseudonymous text (*Fear and Trembling*, *Repetition*, *Either/Or*, and *Stages on Life's Way*). Taking guidance from *Works of Love*, Hall presents a new understanding of these pseudonyms (including characters within), by displaying their erroneous conceptions of love and how they fall victim to self-deception and false confidence. Furthermore, she argues that de Silentio, Constantin, Judge William, and the Diarist, among others, deceive themselves by avoiding honest and critical self-assessment.

On Hall's reading, Kierkegaard was well-aware of our tendency to delude ourselves with misplaced confidence in our ability to love, especially in our intimate relations.

He observed this in "the misuse of Luther's idea of vocation wherein the married state itself is cause for confidence" (14). For example, Judge William, echoing many of the views of Kierkegaard's Lutheran contemporaries on marriage, takes great confidence in his ability to love in marriage and therefore, does not honestly examine himself. According to Hall, Kierkegaard uses his pseudonyms and their flaws to prod the reader into self-examination and toward confession:

What Kierkegaard intimates in these pseudonymous texts, indirectly and variously, is that the reader must repent. Each story involves a different false start along a wrong route, and the reader must seek instead a relationship with that one who occasions our repentance and our redemption. (3)

Though I will only trace out a few, Hall makes many original claims in her close and nuanced readings of Kierkegaard. First, she highlights Kierkegaard's connection between confession and love. Hall recognizes that he does not deliberate extensively on *how* one is to make the shift from human love to Christian love, and yet, without offering a Kierkegaardian recipe, she identifies what is required for the transformation of one's ability to love. Hall notes that the structure of *Works of Love* reveals Kierkegaard's attempt to push the reader toward confession. He does this by closing the work "with a section provoking the reader's recognition that, ultimately, 'you are able to do nothing at all' (WL 362)" (36). According to Hall, Kierkegaard never explains how we can transform our love, but only that Christian love is not possible without the lover's confession and turning to God. Confession, for Kierkegaard, is not a "univocal confession of sin" (49), it must be humbly grounded in continual and honest self-evaluation. Furthermore, because of our tendency for self-justification, Kierkegaard's understanding of confession and repentance is that of a continual task, a life-long project, addressed with priority "throughout his [own] life" and ours (49). Hall stresses that this process requires us to examine our lives and relationships honestly, and with sensitivity to our own particular forms of self-deceit.

Second, Hall's book focuses on the relationships where we are least critical and most confident—our intimate or special relations (lovers, friends, family). Here, we take for granted that we love the beloved selflessly. When Kierkegaard's command to love the "neighbor" is primarily taken as a call to love those whom we have yet to love (even *strangers*), the private place of one's most intimate relations goes unexamined. Hall coaxes us out from behind these closed doors by focusing on intimate relations and in her choice of examples from the pseudonymous texts. Whether it be through an idealization of the beloved (de Silentio or the young man), a sexist understanding of the beloved's existence as being for the lover (Judge William), or a fear-driven retreat into solitude (the Diarist), Hall demonstrates how each character embodies a unique evasion of honest self-assessment and confession.

Finally, I believe Hall's most interesting claim concerns the relationship between distance and spiritual closeness. Hall suggests that in the command to love the neighbor God becomes a "wedge" between the lover and the beloved, so that the lover is to love the beloved as first loved by God. The surprising result of this reading is that "separation" is therefore an essential part of Christian love, even in our intimate relations. The *proper* distance between two lovers arises out of a recognition of the beloved as belonging to God (and not to the lover).

By way of contrast, Hall explains that when the *lover*, rather than God, is responsible for creating distance between himself and the beloved, the separation is out of character for Christian love. For example, Hall points to the Diarist's deceitful distance from his beloved. In this case, the distance is created by his fear and hidden suspicions of his lover, which ultimately send him fleeing to a monastery. Hall outlines numerous possibilities of improper distance—all of which she loosely groups together as two different types: either, (1) the lover attempts to possess and subsume the beloved's distinctness from himself, or, (2) as represented by "woman" in Kierkegaard's texts, the lover subsumes oneself under the control of the beloved. In both cases, God is absent as the middle term of the relationship. With a careful analysis of the relationships before her, Hall has us question whether the distance we sense between ourselves and our lovers is a result of failed disclosure and lack of humility, or of the healthy acknowledgment that we ourselves and our beloved belong only to God. Hall has clearly followed Kierkegaard's lead in encouraging the reader to identify with his characters and to acknowledge his or her own illusions about love and marriage. She challenges us to recognize the characters' detours around self-examination as *our* detours, and their distortions of love as similar to our own. The result is a provocative and valuable contribution to Kierkegaard scholarship. There is, however, one issue that I would like to see Hall address in a future publication.

Given Kierkegaard's negative view of preferential love as a disguised form of self-love, it is unclear how (if at all) we are to engage in intimate, special relations, so that preference does not play a role. Hall accentuates Kierkegaard's "stark contrast between merely human love and the love commanded" as "not mere rhetoric" (13). Even further, she stresses the intensity of the command to love one's neighbor in its relevance for our intimate relationships. Unfortunately, she is silent on Kierkegaard's ambiguity on this issue and does not address whether or not these unique special relations (with a romantic partner or spouse) can escape being preferential. It is almost as though she presupposes that these relations are in no way problematic for Kierkegaard.