

Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter



A Publication of the Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library

St. Olaf College

Northfield, Minnesota

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



5th International Kierkegaard Conference June 11-15, 2005

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Hong Kierkegaard Library will host its 5th International Conference June 11-15, 2005 at St. Olaf College. The theme of the conference will be "Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks." Professor George Pattison of Oxford University will offer the keynote address.

Papers are to have a reading length, which will be strictly applied, of 20 minutes. We are also planning to hold a dissertation panel discussion in which scholars who are in the process of writing or who have just completed their dissertations will summarize their research.

To submit a paper or dissertation discussion proposal, please send two copies of either the complete paper or a detailed abstract by December 15, 2004. Complete papers must be submitted by March 15, 2005.

Anyone interested in submitting a paper or acting as a commentator should contact Gordon Marino. More information regarding registration will be sent out in October, 2004.



CHALLENGE GRANT

The Friends of the Kierkegaard House Foundation have offered a one million dollar challenge grant to St. Olaf College on behalf of the Hong Kierkegaard Library. Like almost all good things that have come to the Library, this opportunity owes a great deal to the boundless generosity of the Hong family.

According to the terms of the agreement, the college must raise the full amount by 31 May 2005. The activities of the Library are funded by the interest from our endowment. As our programs have expanded, our resources have been stretched very thin. With the successful completion of the challenge, the endowment of the Library would be a little over \$3,000,000 and we would be in much better financial fettle.

We are off to a strong start. This spring we received word of \$100,000 grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation and the Friends of the Library have generously pledged \$20,000. We have also received a pledge of nearly \$300,000 from an anonymous benefactor. Still, we have a long way to go. So, if you have a strong interest in Kierkegaard and in supporting the study of his works, please consider contributing to the campaign.

KIERKEGAARD HOUSE ON CAMPUS

Working in concert with the Kierkegaard House Foundation, St. Olaf College has designated a recently acquired home as the Kierkegaard House. This lovely and commodious building is intended for the use of Kierkegaard House Foundation

scholars. These researchers are advanced scholars who will be in residence at the Library from four months to a year. In addition to free housing, the fellowship carries a stipend of \$1500 per month. House Foundation scholars for the academic year 2004-2005 are:

Patricia Dip (University of Buenos Aires, Argentina) – July 20 – November 20

John Lippitt (University of Hertfordshire, England) – September 1 – June 15

Dolors Perarnau Vidal (University Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain) – September 1 – June 15

Oscar Parcero Oubinya (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain) – September 1 – June 15

DANISH COURSE, SUMMER 2005

This summer (2004) Dr. Sinead Ladegaard Knox offered a month-long intensive Danish course at the Library. The course, which focused on learning how to read Kierkegaard, will be offered again either next summer or in 2006. The cost for tuition and board will be \$1200. Please let me know if you are interested in taking this excellent class. There is also a possibility that Dr. Knox, who hails from Copenhagen, would consider offering a second level class as well. Please note that this is not a course in conversational Danish but rather one specifically designed to help students of Kierkegaard study the Dane in the original. Also, while we will offer a certificate of successful completion, the course does not come with any official academic credit. For further information contact Gordon Marino at marino@stolaf.edu.

SUMMER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM 2005

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 \$300 per month stipend (for scholars in residence longer than 30 days who are not supported by their home institutions). A limited number of scholarships are also available at other times during the year. Please contact Gordon Marino if you are interested in the 2005 program.

KIERKEGAARD HOUSE FOUNDATION RESIDENCY FELLOWSHIP

The primary aim of the Foundation is to augment the Visiting Scholars Program of the Kierkegaard Library.

The Foundation is pleased to offer housing and financial assistance to long-term resident scholars. Advanced graduate students, professors, and other serious students of Kierkegaard are invited to apply.

Kierkegaard House Foundation Residency Fellowships provide living quarters and \$1500 per month for periods of four to twelve months (with the possibility of extension). Applications for September are due April 1st.

Please send a *curriculum vitae*, a plan of work at the Kierkegaard Library, and two letters of recommendation to:

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

NEWS

Remembering Louis Mackey

We recently received the sad news of the death of Professor Louis Mackey (March 25, 2004). A remembrance will appear in our next issue.

Remembering Paul Holmer

After a long illness, Professor Paul L. Holmer died on June 29, 2004. Services were held at the Chapel of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Professor Holmer had an enormous number of students and somehow or other he made everyone feel as if he or she were his only student. My paths crossed with this wonderful teacher in the early 80's. I was a graduate student in philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. At the time, there was no one in the Philosophy Department at Penn who felt competent enough on Kierkegaard to guide a study. Through the grapevine, I had heard about a gifted interpreter of Kierkegaard's in New Haven and so I wrote to Professor Holmer asking him for guidance. He invited me to come and see him at Yale and for the next year, he put time aside to meet with me every two weeks to discuss Kierkegaard. Holmer was a brilliant and immensely generous individual, and those of us who enjoyed the privilege of working with him can only try to pass his gift on to our own students. — Gordon Marino

* * *

Shortly before Professor Holmer's funeral, Mark Horst offered the following remarks on our beloved teacher:

Paul Holmer enjoyed being mistaken for many things. I think he relished confusing people who tried to pin him down:

Is he a philosopher, a theologian, a preacher?

Is he Yale School?

A Wittgensteinian theist?

An analytical philosopher?

Kierkegaardian gadfly?

Maybe that's why he seemed fond of this story—

He flew out to Indiana to give a convocation address at a small Quaker college. As Holmer explained it, "The man who picked me up was in overalls, but because it was a Quaker college, I just assumed it must be the dean, because they all believe in plain living...

He brought me my breakfast and we were chatting...

He was talking an awful lot about animals, and I became suspicious. So I asked him, 'What time do I begin?' And he said, 'Any time you get there.'

I said, 'Well yes, but I'm speaking at a convocation before the whole student body.' He said, 'Speaking?' I said 'Yes.' He replied, 'I thought you were here to take semen from my bull.' "

Editors at *The Christian Century* immediately excised this story from an article that I had written on Holmer for that magazine. But let me take a minute to describe the ground that I think Paul Holmer stood on and would not give up.

Holmer often complained that a false distinction had been drawn between the Christian teachings and the Christian life. As he saw it, theologians had drawn too sharp a distinction between theology and devotion, theology and preaching, theology and the Christian life. Holmer insisted that prayer, the Christian life, and Christian church practices were not optional to theology. They're necessitated by what it means to believe in God. These things are the meaning of the Gospel. The meaning of the Gospel cannot be stated in theological terms. It has to be stated in terms of these practices and modes of activity. So Holmer was always critical of the theologians who pulled them apart—thereby making much professional theology seem at odds with the task of the church. The teachings and the life go together.

As a theologian Holmer gave unfailing support to the local church. He never ceased to elevate the role and significance of the parish ministry. His familiarity with the local church also gave him a critical perspective on the church. As far as he was concerned, the church's claim on people seemed, in all too many instances, to be independent of theology. Holmer

made it part of his task as a teacher to close the gap between theology and the church and to get more God-centered religion in the churches. He said, "that's what I need myself and that's what I seek when I go there."

On Holmer's reckoning, part of the difficulty of ministry in the church is that we so easily lose sight of the theological basis of the task and begin instead to respond to the unfocused demands of the institution. The church easily becomes an institution with its own vitality independent of that teaching tradition. It's a genial, natural religiosity of some sort—a communal feeling. Exasperated he would say, "I don't know what to make of it." A lot of times the religion of the New Testament doesn't get articulated there. The minister is supposed to be everything to everybody, help everybody, do everything for everybody." And so the challenge for parish ministers is to keep clarifying the task for themselves: "What is this congregation all about? Why do we do this every Sunday? Pulling everyone back to that awareness of themselves as sinners in need of God—that's the task. Once you see that then you don't have to educate everybody."

Holmer continued, "Human beings are out of synchronization with God and the name for that diagnostic fact is sin. You don't have to parade the concept of sin around all the time any more than you have to tell everybody that they're ignorant in order to teach. But the clergy ought to keep the diagnostic fact clear before themselves. There's something like an ill-health of the human spirit here. There's no fundamental or profound human happiness. Sin for most people is despair. They're walking instances of despair, there's no hope, love doesn't come easily."

When Paul Holmer summarized his work as a teacher he said this:

When I look back upon the years that I spent, sure there's a narrowness, but it's a narrowness that consists of two things. I was just trying on the one hand to discover where the dignity, honor, and glory of being a person lies. And that's what I was doing by reading novels, by reading world literature, by thinking the thoughts of the great thinkers. I was on an enterprise here of realizing my own humanity. And helping to share that with everyone. So that's one side. Kind of a secular version. Correlative to that is that the glory of being a human being, moral, upright seeking the truth... also is brought to a climactic point for me by what it is to be a Christian. Being a Christian is pulling all those things to a sharp focus. The loveliness of the Christian gospel is that, while all these other ways of being human will finally fail us, there is another way of being a human being [that will not fail] that is shown us in Christ Jesus.

REPORT ON SUMMER PROGRAMS 2004

The Kierkegaard Library welcomed scholars this summer from 13 countries. The summer fellows included: *Catalina Dobre, Jonas Roos, John Spalding, Kara McCollum, Jamin Asay, Daniel Greenspan, Brian Barlow, Tamara Marks, Lone Koldtoft, Simon Podmore, Travis Tucker, Erik Lindland, Leo Stan, Rafael Garcia, Manuel Caraza, Amy Peters, Rob Puchniak, Roman Kralik, Philip Lindholm, Brian Prosser, James Rodwell, J. Aaron Simmons, Laura Llevadot, Matt Gibault, Narve Strand, Elisabete Sousa, and Ingrid Basso*. This summer also marked the first year of our Young Scholars Program. This program was aimed at highly accomplished college seniors and recent graduates. The junior researchers came to the Library for three weeks in August. They met for daily seminars with the curator and composed an essay on Kierkegaard at the end of their stay here. The Young Scholars for 2004 were: *Joseph Ballan, Melissa Davey, Heather Schiewe, Seth Heringer, Robert Kehoe, Alex Krantz, Jonathan Wood, Paul Gleason, Eric Reitz*.

Søren Kierkegaard Society, USA

From the President, Vanessa Rumble:

APA Kierkegaard Session: The American Philosophical Association will meet this year in Boston and the Kierkegaard Society meeting at the APA will be held on December 28. The session title is "Kierkegaard, Alterity and Love". The key-note address will be given by John Lippitt. His title is "Getting the Story Straight: Alterity, Narrative and Self-Understanding". Other papers will be:

Andrew Jones-Cathcart: "Where art Thou? An Evaluation of Buber's Critique of Kierkegaard".

J. Michael Tilley, "Kierkegaard and Buber: On the relationship between the Individual and the Community"

Sergia Hay, "Silence and the Imperative to Love".

The new APA representative for the Kierkegaard Society is John Davenport (Davenport@Fordham.edu). [See information from John Davenport on p. 6.]

AAR Kierkegaard Sessions

The Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Group, led by Marcia Robinson and Timothy Polk, is sponsoring two sessions at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Antonio, Texas (USA), November 20-23, 2004.

Meeting #1

The first session focuses on Kierkegaard's work in relation to constructions of society and gender, as these may apply to questions of individual and social responsibility; gender politics and identity; or justice and movements of social reform.

The participants and papers for this session are:

Timothy H. Polk, Hamline University, presiding.

Avron Kulak, York University, "Between God, Self, and Neighbor: The Twofold Ethics of *Fear and Trembling*"

Sylvia I. Walsh, Stetson University: "Godly and Ungodly Women: Gender and Sexual Politics in Kierkegaard and American Fundamentalism"

Keith Hyde, University of St. Andrews, "Keeping your Distance: Kierkegaard and Social Reform"

Kevin Hoffman, Valparaiso University, "Compassion and the Descent of Love: Reading Kierkegaard through Nussbaum".

Business Meeting, Timothy H. Polk, presiding

Meeting #2

The second session, co-sponsored with the Nineteenth-Century Theology Group, is a critical discussion of Jon Stewart's new book, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (Cambridge, 2003). The participants and papers for this joint session are:

Andrew Burgess, University of New Mexico, presiding.

Robert L. Perkins, Stetson University: "Jon Stewart's Mediated Kierkegaard"

David Kangas, Florida State University: "Which Hegel? Reconsidering Hegel and Kierkegaard"

Stephen N. Dunning, University of Pennsylvania: "A Response to Jon Stewart on Kierkegaard and Hegel"

Rick Anthony Furtak, Colorado College: "Ancient Passion, Modern Abstraction: Kierkegaard on the Hellenistic and the Hegelian Conceptions of Philosophy"

Jon Stewart, Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre, Copenhagen, Denmark responding.

The papers for this session will be printed in the program book of the Nineteenth-Century Theology Group typically mailed 6 weeks in advance rather than at the meeting. To obtain a copy, please contact Dr. Charles Talar of the University of St. Thomas School of Theology in Houston at talarc@stthom.edu.

Additional Meetings at the AAR

The annual Søren Kierkegaard Society Banquet will be held on Friday, November 19, 6:00 PM-10:00 PM at Rio Plaza restaurant on the Riverwalk in downtown San Antonio

(245 E Commerce St). David Wood, Vanderbilt University, will read a paper titled "A Singular Life".

The Søren Kierkegaard Society, USA will also sponsor a session on Saturday morning, November 20, entitled "Kierkegaard: A Life of Writing". This session has been supported by a generous grant from the Danish Literary Center. Marcia Robinson of Syracuse University will be presiding over a panel discussion of Kierkegaard and biography that focuses upon two recent publications: *Kierkegaard: A Biography*, by Alastair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and *SAK: Soren Aabye Kierkegaard, En Biografi* (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2000); appearing in translation with Princeton University Press later this year). Panelists will be:

Daniel Conway, The Pennsylvania State University
Joakim Garff, Søren Kierkegaard Research Center, Copenhagen
Alastair Hannay, University of Oslo
Elsebet Jegstrup, Elon University
Edward Mooney, Syracuse University

(The above information was presented by David Kangas, Secretary-Treasurer of the Society in the *Søren Kierkegaard Society Newsletter*, May 28, 2004)

From John Davenport, APA Representative

The upcoming session at the Eastern APA in Boston will occur December 28th from 7:30 – 10:30 pm at Tufts (Third Floor).

The program will be:

Chair: John Davenport (Fordham University)

Speakers:

John Lippitt (University of Hertfordshire, UK)

"Getting the Story Straight: Alterity, Narrative, and Self-Understanding"

Andrew Jones-Cathcart (University of North Florida)

"Where Art Thou? An Evaluation of Buber's Critique of Kierkegaard"

J. Michael Tilley (University of Kentucky)

"Kierkegaard and Buber: On the Relationship between the Individual and the Community"

Sergia Hay (Columbia University)

"Silence and the Imperative to Love"

APA Western Division

The Kierkegaard Society hopes to schedule a session on Kierkegaard and his Postmodern Critics (Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida) at the Western APA in San Francisco, April 2005.

APA Central Division

There will be no Søren Kierkegaard Society session at the Central APA in the spring of 2005, but there will be a session for the following Central APA in the spring of 2006. Topic to be announced.

Announcement of Volume I, Kierkegaard's Journals and Notes (KJN)

Princeton University Press is currently producing Volume I of the new English translation, *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notes (KJN)*. Bruce Kirmmse is chairman of the Editorial Board. The editors and translators for this project include Niels Jorgen Cappelorn, Alastair Hannay, David Kangas, Bruce Kirmmse, Gordon Marino, George Pattison, Vanessa Rumble, and Jon Stewart.

NEH Grant for KJN

Bruce Kirmmse writes that he has received formal written notice of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*. The grant is for 2-years for \$125,000 and is formally made to Connecticut College. Bruce is the project leader.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD RESEARCH CENTRE at the University of Copenhagen From the Director, Niels Jorgen Cappelørn

"More volumes have been published in the new Danish scholarly edition, *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*. Now that the first ten of Kierkegaard's NB journals have been published in 2003 as volumes 20-21 along with the accompanying commentary volumes, K20-21, it is time to return to Kierkegaard's published works, and now specifically to *En literair Anmeldelse* (A Literary Review) and *Opbyggelige Taler I forskjellig Aand* (Edifying Discourses in Various Spirits).

Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter. Vol 8,. *En literair Anmeldelse Opbyggelige Taler i forskjellig Aand* (431 pages). Vol. K8 *Kommentarer til En literair Anmeldelse/ Opbyggelige Taler in forskjellig Aand* (372 pages). Edited by the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre and published by G.E.C. Gad's Publishing House, Copenhagen 2004. Hard-bound. Collected price 525 DKR.

The commentary volume K8 contains an exciting description of the manuscript material and 2,836 explanatory notes which attempt to make clear what is not immediately accessible, and which make this one of the most user-friendly editions of *En literair Anmeldelse* and *Opbyggelige Taler I forskjellig Aand*.

Kjerlighedens Gjerninger [The Works of Love] is scheduled to be published in October, 2004 and *Christlige Taler* [Christian Discourses] in November, 2004 as vols. 9 and 10 in *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, with accompanying commentary volumes K9 and K10."

Kierkegaard Society in Japan

The Kierkegaard Society in Japan met in Kyoto on May 9, 2004. The Society will sponsor an international Kierkegaard Conference in Melbourne, Australia from December 4-6, 2005 in cooperation with Julia Watkin and Ormond College of the University of Melbourne. For further information, please contact Dr. Shin Fujieda at shinfujieda@nifty.com.

International Kierkegaard Commentary Editor

Sponsored by the President's Office, Stetson University, DeLand, FL

International Kierkegaard Commentary

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NEWS

Call for Papers

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'Without Authority'

Due date: 1 September 2005

Prospective authors should write the editor to discuss their intentions to contribute to this volume.

Unique Call for Papers

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

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions'

Volumes 9 and 10 will be combined in a single binding.

Due date: by the beginning of the fall semester of 1 September 2004,
Whichever is first.

Submissions that do not adhere to the enclosed conventions and sigla will be returned unread.
All essays are submitted for evaluation by the Advisory Board; no papers are commissioned.

VOLUMES IN PROCESS

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits'

The manuscript was mailed to the publisher in June, 2004. The galley is expected from the publisher before 1 September.

International Kierkegaard Commentary: 'Practice in Christianity'

The book will be available in November, 2004.

SOBRESKI: Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos de Kierkegaard.

November 11 – 13, 2004, the Society will hold its 5th Encounter about Kierkegaard in Sao Leopoldo. The Society also announces two publications by Alvaro L.M. Valls: *Do desespero silencioso ao elogio do amor desinteressado* – (From Silent Despair to Disinterested Love's Apology: Aphorism, Novels, and Discourses of Soren Kierkegaard.). Also his article, "Kierkegaard in Brazil". The location is UNISINOS (Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos) and EST (Escola Superior de Teologia). For further information contact Marcio Gimenes de Paula at mgpaula@hotmail.com

For further information, consult the SOBRESKI website at www.kierkegaardbrasil.hpg.com.br.

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 Muvezettudományi 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@axelero.hu.

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.

Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered*

**Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
(*Modern European Philosophy Series*). 695 pp.**

**Reviewed by Merold Westphal
Fordham University
Bronx, New York 10458**

The product of prodigious research, this volume is of enormous help in placing Kierkegaard in his immediate, Danish intellectual milieu. Stewart has put us greatly in his debt. He examines in great detail the relation of Kierkegaard's writings to contemporary discussions among the Danish "Hegelians" and "anti-Hegelians". Together with Bruce Kirmmse's *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, this work provides both the incentive and the guidance for reading "the melancholy Dane" in his Danish context. However, while the book illumines Kierkegaard's relation to his fellow Danes, it obscures his relation to Hegel.

The focus on the Danish scene is the key to Stewart's attempt to refute what he calls the "standard view" of Kierkegaard's relation to Hegel. But it is not clear just what this view is supposed to be. Sometimes it holds that the relation was "purely negative" (p. 3); or that Kierkegaard "waged a rabid campaign against both Hegel's philosophy and his person" (p. 4); or that the two "had nothing in common" (p. 16) or that he "rejected Hegel entirely" (p. 19). We can call this the extreme version. At other times we get a more moderate version of the "standard view" according to which Kierkegaard "engaged in a campaign against Hegel" (p. 11) or was "an uncompromising critic of Hegel" (p. 27). To see how dramatically different these two versions are we need but notice that the latter is compatible with the view 1) that, like other Danish "anti-Hegelians", the young Kierkegaard had a Hegelian period, and 2) that even when later engaged in a campaign against Hegel, he employed Hegelian ideas and vocabulary, just as a coach might use plays learned from watching film of another team against that very team. Two parties can wage military campaigns against each other without it being the case that they have "nothing in common." France and Germany did so three times since 1870 while having a great deal of western civilization in common. Similarly, two politicians can wage campaigns against each other while having much in common. As I write President Bush and Senator Kerry are waging electoral campaigns against each other while sharing the views that democracy is superior to dictatorship and that it would be fatal to "cut and run" from Iraq. But each is an "uncompromising critic" of the other on a multitude of issues. So to refute the extreme version of the "standard view" isn't even to address the moderate version.

Stewart takes Thulstrup to be the poster boy for the "standard view", whose extreme version he clearly represents, and speaks freely of Thulstrup's influence in making it standard. But apart from the claim that various others hold to Thulstrupian orthodoxy, evidence is hard to find that it is due to his influence. This problem might be minor were it not that the stronger and weaker versions are not distinguished, so that wherever Kierkegaard is viewed as waging a campaign against Hegel or as an uncompromising critic Thulstrup's presence is inferred and the reader is lead away from the possibility that the weaker version might result from reading Kierkegaard and Hegel rather than from reading Thulstrup.

There is also a chronological problem. Granting for the sake of argument that the extreme version of the "standard view" was at one time indeed standard, where is the evidence that it continues to be and is in need of being refuted? Most of the evidence cited is quite dated and the secondary literature of the past several decades is conspicuous by its absence except to illustrate the emergence of dissenting views, but without careful examination to see whether the extreme version has died a natural death and this dissent is now more nearly standard. One would be tempted to say that the polemic against Thulstrup is tilting at windmills had Stewart not provided a better image himself. He bemoans the tendency of scholars to see historical debates as struggles between good and evil, defending their heroes against all comers. "A part of this involves the creation of a *Feindbild* to which one can return at one's convenience in order to criticize something as the opposite of what is presumed to be the correct view" (p. 26). Thulstrup, I fear, provides Stewart with his own *Feindbild*.

Stewart's general thesis is that "there are many more points of comparison and similarity between the two thinkers than are generally recognized." More specifically, he argues for distinguishing three periods during which Kierkegaard's relations (plural) to Hegel, are quite varied. Up through *Either/Or* "he was strongly and positively influenced by Hegel and Hegelian philosophy." From *Fear and Trembling* through *Postscript* (along with *The Book on Adler*) we have anti-

Hegelian polemics, a campaign, if you like, but one that is "directed at other sources and not at Hegel himself." During his final period Kierkegaard "dropped his polemic and for one reason or another made his peace with Hegelianism . . . [using] Hegelian concepts and methodologies as in *The Sickness Unto Death*" (pp. 32-34).

Stewart regularly makes this claim that the critiques of "Hegelian" philosophy in Kierkegaard's texts are directed at the Danish "Hegelians" and not at Hegel. It is problematic in several ways. 1) Its psychologistic hermeneutic is of biographical interest but by itself hardly of philosophical significance. Knowing of whom Kierkegaard was thinking when he wrote a particular text does not tell us the scope of its force. 2) It is rhetorically too easy to give the impression that by showing that Kierkegaard was thinking especially of Heiberg, or Martensen, or even in the latter's overenthusiastic students, one has shown that he was not thinking of Hegel. But even at the level of psycho-biography this is a *non sequitur*. For Kierkegaard may well have thought that whatever differences there may have been between the Danish "Hegelians" and Hegel himself, the agreements and continuities are substantial while the divergences are superficial. In which case, remaining at the intentionalist level, he would think that a critique of "Hegelianism" in its most proximate form was *ipso facto* a critique of Hegel himself.

3) Moreover, he might well be right in so thinking. To be of significance for an appraisal of the philosophical relation of Kierkegaard's thought (ideas he presents to us, whether pseudonymously or not) to Hegel's it is not sufficient to show that he was more immediately thinking of some Dane or other; it is necessary to show whether or not a given critique fits Hegel, whether consciously aimed at him or not (though an affirmative answer would only open, not close the debate on how much damage is inflicted and what kind). Stewart knows this, and in the midst arguing that *Johannes Climacus* is directed at Martensen and not Hegel, he writes, "The real question concerns whether or not Martensen's use of the expression [*de omnibus dubitandum est*] and his general treatment of philosophical doubt, for which it stands, is in harmony with some principle in Hegel's own thought" (p. 261). He often tries to show that an anti-Hegelian critique is well wide of the mark when it comes to Hegel himself. It is here that his argument is at its weakest. He repeatedly makes a convincing, even overwhelming case, for the psycho-biographical thesis that Kierkegaard was addressing some current Danish text or debate. But his arguments that the resultant critiques of "Hegelianism" are wide of the mark when it comes to Hegel *himself* are, well, consistently wide of the mark. He regularly underestimates the opposition between these two great thinkers. His blindness to the substantive oppositions between Kierkegaard's thought (in the sense specified above) and Hegel *himself* fatally damages his reconsideration of their relation. The result is a book that throws rich light on Kierkegaard's relation to the Danish debates about Hegelianism, but consistently misleads about his conceptual relation to Hegel.

This claim can only be supported retail; fully to defend it would take more space than is available to a reviewer. At most I can offer some examples. The mantra, "not Hegel, but only the Danish 'Hegelians'," is not restricted to analysis of Kierkegaard's second period. It is reaffirmed without any such qualification (p. 38) and already put to work in the analysis of the first period. Stewart makes a strong case for something like an Hegelian period in the young Kierkegaard, but in the process covers over the emerging criticisms of Hegel himself. Thus we are told that in the satire of *The Battle between the Old and the New Soap-Cellars* contains "no criticism of anything particularly Hegelian" (p. 105), has "nothing intrinsically to do with Hegel's actual philosophy . . . which is never really discussed" (114). But there are three themes utterly central to Hegel's own thought that are at the heart of the satire: the possibility of a philosophical system without presuppositions and independent of tradition, the role of radical doubt in arriving at such a standpoint, and the notion of Hegel's system as the telos of the history of philosophy in which previous systems are but moments (pp. 113-14)!

This problem carries over into the later discussion of the draft manuscript, *Johannes Climacus, or De omnibus dubitandum est*. That Martensen is the immediate target is clear enough, since he and not Hegel regularly invokes this Cartesian slogan. Stewart rightly protests that Hegel does not practice methodological doubt in the same way that Descartes does. He concludes that "there is in the work no real pretense of a criticism of Hegel" and that "the positions that are criticized are Martensen's alone and have nothing to do with Hegel" (p. 241; cf. pp. 257, 262). Stewart appears to qualify this categorical judgment (pp. 253, 261, 279), as well he might. For once again the subjects of (satirical) critique are crucial to Hegel, especially in the *Phenomenology*, whose opening chapter is the theme of Part II of this text. These include the question of a beginning for the system, as well as for the individual thinker, the question of absolute knowing, the intimately intertwined question of presuppositionless philosophy, and above all the role of doubt in the erection of the system.

Stewart asserts, "Philosophical doubt is important for Descartes but not for Hegel" (p. 266)! This is doubly strange. In the first place, he has just told us that Martensen, so far from simply identifying Cartesian and Hegelian doubt, claims that only Hegel brought the principle of doubt to its proper fulfillment (p. 244). Then he cites the famous passage from the *Phenomenology* in which Hegel describes the *via dolorosa* on which natural consciousness journeys to Science as "the pathway of doubt [*Zweifel*], or more precisely the way of despair [*Verzweiflung*]," noting that both Martensen and Kierkegaard make this same word play in Danish, but not noting that in the same paragraph Hegel refers to this way as a "thoroughgoing scepticism" (p. 265). Kierkegaard, it would seem, was not impressed with either Descartes or Hegel, as Stewart reminds us by citing a passage from *The Concept of Anxiety*, which claims, in blatantly Hegelian language, that "philosophers have never quite surrendered to the negative . . . They merely flirt with doubt" (p. 277).

This critique is not a bad summary of *Johannes Climacus*. That it does fit Hegel, precisely because of the way in which he *is* interested in philosophical doubt, can be shown easily enough by giving a much more detailed analysis of the methodology, or better, the movement of the *Phenomenology* in the light of the passage just cited therefrom and of Hegel's distinction between ancient and modern skepticism in *The Encyclopedia Logic*, §§ 39, Remark, and 81, Remark 1, along with the 1802 essay to which he there refers, "Relationship of Skepticism to Philosophy, Exposition of its Different Modifications and Comparison of the Latest Form with the Ancient One."

But if Hegel's practice of doubt becomes dubious, his royal road to Science as Absolute Knowing and presuppositionless philosophy becomes a dead end street. It won't do to say that Absolute Knowing is accomplished in the movement from the empirical to the categorical, for if the account of the categorical is just one more moment in the history of philosophy (to which this honorific title is not granted), giving a preliminary, incomplete account of the Concept based on contingent, historical presuppositions, it might well be its own time comprehended in thought but it would surely be grist for any satirical mill to call it Absolute Knowing. In other words, the end of history theme is not a myth based on a single passage in the *Philosophy of History* (pp. 253 ff.); it signifies the end, not of empirical events, to be sure, but of the historical unfolding of the Concept, and it is utterly crucial to Hegel's speculative project in both the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*. In both texts Hegel makes it clear that this completion is possible, but only in the present age.

Along with *Johannes Climacus*, *Either/Or* brings Kierkegaard's "Hegelian" period to a close. Stewart calls this a very Hegelian text (pp. 183-84), and with good reason; for while Judge William is no professor, there are important Hegelian aspects to his world view. But, as Stewart reminds us, in *Postscript* Climacus calls this work an "indirect polemic against speculative thought which is indifferent to existence" (p. 185) and complains, "Hegelian philosophy has cancelled the law of contradiction, and Hegel himself has more than once emphatically held judgment day on the kind of thinkers who remained in the sphere of understanding and reflection and who have therefore insisted that there is an either/or" (p. 192). Stewart calls our attention to the ongoing debate among the Danes about the status of the principle of excluded middle in the context where mediation, in the form of *Aufhebung*, converts an either/or into a both/and by locating a larger whole to which both (apparently) opposed moments belong. This is what Hegel himself does with sex and marriage in *The Philosophy of Right*. One of the most Hegelian moments in Judge William is his *Aufhebung* of the opposition between the erotic-esthetic and the ethical by making the former a legitimate if subordinate moment in the ethical institution of marriage.

Fair enough. But once again we get the claim that whatever critique is to be found is directed at the Danes, in this case both Heiberg and Martensen (pp. 205-209). This is not persuasive for three reasons. First, Judge William himself argues that mediation is valid only in the realm of thought but not in the realm of freedom. Here Stewart can find only "a hint of a criticism" of Hegel, even when the judge writes, "If the philosopher is only a philosopher, absorbed in philosophy without knowing the blessed life of freedom, then he misses a very important point, he wins the whole world and he loses himself" (p. 203). This occurs in a context where speculative philosophy is not just logic but also philosophical world history, and clearly anticipates Climacus' question in *Postscript* (Section II, Ch. I) what would happen to ethics if world history were to replace the task of becoming subjective as the highest human task. In both cases the critique fits Hegel simply because he regularly presents speculative philosophy as the highest human task. The freedom at issue here is not the freedom of Objective Spirit, participation in (more or less) rational social practices; it is rather the freedom of the responsible individual who must choose in which (existential and not merely logical) categories to live.

Second, Judge William takes his own warning seriously. While arguing passionately for mediation, the teleological suspension or the *Aufhebung* of the esthetic in the ethical, he leaves unmediated the situation in which choice is called for.

By virtue of mediation there is no either/or between the esthetic and an ethical that simply excludes the esthetic; but there is an unmediated either/or, from which the book gets its title, between the esthetic and the ethical in which the esthetic is an *aufgehoben* moment, and he pleads with his young friend to see this and to choose. This claim that reflection must lead to decision is a not very indirect polemic against a Hegel who tells us that philosophy, the highest form of human life, must not stoop to edification.

Finally, there is the homily with which volume II ends. This "existentialist" Judge William is *aufgehoben*, we might say, in a bourgeois persona, and the world of marriage he begs the esthete to choose is very Hegelian, not least in being disturbingly complacent. Nietzsche would surely huff, "Wretched contentment." The judge sees his young friend but not himself as having a spiritual task ahead of him. The sermon "The Upbuilding That Lies in the Thought That in Relation to God We are Always in the Wrong" is a rebuke both to him and to Hegel for their shared assumption about the sufficiency and the ultimacy of the *Sittlichkeit* that constitutes bourgeois modernity. Both our jurist and our philosopher talk endlessly about God, though neither has a God who can interrupt their moral complacency.

But Abraham does; and the homily provides a perfect segue to *Fear and Trembling*. Here we enter Kierkegaard's second period, the one regularly (and rightly I should think) seen as containing most fully his campaign against Hegel. That Hegel himself is the intended target would seem clear from the way the three problems that make up the bulk of the text are introduced: perhaps Hegel is right, but in that case Abraham is wrong and cannot be honored as the father of the faithful. Once again Stewart tells us its really about the Danes, this time both Heiberg and Martensen. He finds the explicit references to Hegel "odd" and "enigmatic" (pp. 306, 310, 316, 323, 332-33) because there are no quotations or extended analyses of Hegel's texts as there were in *Irony*. Really? Would it be "odd" or "enigmatic" to refer to Descartes in a critique of modern subjectivity as a self-transparent *cogito* or of a foundationalist epistemology without quotations and extended analysis? In a dissertation, perhaps, but in other contexts, surely not.

Before we get to the problems there is the Preface. Because there is a satire of "going beyond doubt", Stewart assumes a reference to Martensen. But this proves little, for such a description fits both Descartes and Hegel just as well since each goes beyond doubt in his own distinctive way. In any case, Stewart recognizes that "going beyond doubt" plays a secondary role to "going beyond faith," which is Silentio's real concern. He quotes the latter, "Even if someone were able to transpose the whole content of faith into conceptual form, it does not follow that he has comprehended faith, comprehended how he entered into it or how it entered into him" (p. 308). This is a bull's eye so far as Hegel himself is concerned, for he regularly invokes the movement beyond faith to understanding or knowledge in the form of translating religious *Vorstellungen* into philosophical *Begriffe* along with the claim that God is fully knowable. This transposition is utterly central not merely to his philosophy of religion in the *Phenomenology*, in the *Encyclopedia* version of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, and in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (which Kierkegaard may not have read but may well have known through Marheineke's lectures, which he attended in Berlin), but even to his System as a whole, as indicated by the introductory paragraphs (especially §§ 1-6) of *The Encyclopedia of Logic*. The very essence of his speculative theology, which is the key to his System as a whole, and not just the Danish versions, is called into question in the passage cited.

So it would be odd if the explicit reference to Hegel in Problema I were odd; but it is not. Stewart thinks it is because Hegel and Silentio are discussing different issues. The latter refers to the section, "Good and Conscience" from *The Philosophy of Right*. There Hegel is merely arguing that subjectivity in the form of private conscience cannot be the basis of universal morality and law; he is not discussing the nature of faith, which is Silentio's concern. Hegel discusses religion elsewhere (310-16). Stewart avoids the common mistake of thinking that the ethical whose teleological suspension is in question is some eternal moral truth as one might find in Plato or Kant; he is clear that the universal is what Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit*, the historically emergent and particular laws and customs of one's people. But he mistakes the significance of the reference to the "Good and Conscience" section. Silentio's point is not merely that in Hegel's political philosophy one's subjective conscience, whether abstractly Kantian or arbitrarily romantic, must be teleologically suspended (*aufgehoben* – an equivalence Stewart strangely fails to note) in the laws and customs of one's people, which are the highest norm for one's behavior; it is that nowhere else in Hegel's system, most particularly not in his philosophy of religion, is this ultimacy of *Sittlichkeit* challenged. It always remains the highest norm for one's behavior, since he knows only society and the individual who is rightly subordinated to it. That is why it makes sense to say that if Hegel is right, Abraham is a murderer.

Hegel's God never trumps the norms of one's culture. The God of Abraham (Isaac, and Jacob) cannot be so constrained. This God can lift Abraham above the laws and customs of his people, which are *not* the highest norm for his behavior. The issue is not merely political but theological; at issue are two deeply different conceptions of God. Here, if not sooner, begins Kierkegaard's "attack upon Christendom," for Christendom's God, like Hegel's, leaves it to the laws and customs of my people to determine how I should live.

In a passage Stewart cites from "Good and Conscience," Hegel rejects good intentions, a good heart, and subjective conviction as providing justification for violations of social morality and law (p. 319). But that is hardly what Silentio's Abraham is about. His defense is not, "I sincerely believe that God told me . . ." but simply, "God told me . . ." His absolute duty is not toward his conscience but toward God.

We can now see how the question of a teleological suspension of the ethical (Problema I) is the same as the question whether there is an absolute duty to God (Problema II); for Silentio's analysis doesn't abolish but only relativizes the authority of *Sittlichkeit*. Stewart recognizes this, but (like Levinas) misstates its implication when he writes, "Abraham's duty as a father is 'suspended' by his higher duty towards God" (p. 324). In the light of Silentio's analysis, the proper question is rather the following: who ultimately determines what my duty to my son is, God or my society and the currently prevailing *Sittlichkeit*? If Hegel is wrong and the killing of Isaac would have been sacrifice and not murder, it is not Abraham's "duty as a father" that is suspended but his *prima facie* duty as defined by the laws and customs of his people, which have only relative and not absolute normative validity.

Stewart concludes his discussion of Problema II, having referred to allusions to Heiberg which need not be challenged, with another emphatic denial that it has anything to do with Hegel (p. 329). But it has everything to do with Hegel and the unmediated opposition between his view of God and Abraham's.

This is true for Problema III as well. Here the problem is not practical normativity but theoretical, discursive justification. Stewart acknowledges that the problem is "that the divine command, qua revelation cannot be grasped by reason" (p. 330). Silentio's argument is that Hegel's God does not exceed reason by revelation, which is too bad for Abraham. For Hegel, speculative theology is the mediation, the *Aufhebung* of revelation in reason; it is religion within the limits of reason alone, which turns out to be the theoretical component of the language game also known as *Sittlichkeit*. But this a priori conformity of revelation with reason means to Silentio that what calls itself reason is ideology and that its God is an idol. The God of Abraham (Isaac, and Jacob) cannot be so constrained. This God can and does exceed the discursive justifications in terms of which any human society defines itself and its "God". Revelation will go both beyond and even against "reason". This is precisely the meaning of the earlier claim that Abraham's faith involves paradox and the absurd. What he does and what he believes are paradoxical and absurd *in relation to merely human calculation*. Here again, whatever references to Heiberg and Martensen there may be, there is nothing "odd" or "enigmatic" about the explicit reference to Hegel. The practical and theoretical implications of his doctrine that the universal, human culture and its conversations, is the highest are shown to stand in an unmediated either/or relation with biblical faith.

For a final example I turn to *Philosophical Fragments*, which focuses on the epistemic issues. Stewart tells us that he will "put aside the question of sinfulness for the moment in order to concentrate on the epistemological question" (p. 340). But the question of sin is utterly central to the epistemological question. In the thought project in chapters I and II in which revelation and recollection are contrasted, and which Stewart all but completely overlooks, the need for revelation as the divine gift of both the truth and the "condition" for recognizing it as such is quite precisely identified as sin. Then, in chapter III, the absolute difference which makes the god something that thought cannot think is, once again, sin, as Stewart himself points out (pp. 340 and 353). So when we put sin aside we completely lose contact with the epistemic issue Climacus wants to discuss.

That issue is the Pauline/Augustinian/Lutheran notion of the noetic effects of sin, the notion that sin blinds the intellect in crucial respects. That doctrine is the very heart of Climacus' interpretation of revelation as the divine aid that remedies this blindness by giving us both the truth and the condition to recognize it as such. Hegel clearly falls on the side of recollection, for reason has no need of divine aid and, a fortiori, no need of epistemic grace to overcome the noetic effects of sin. If one looks at Hegel's account of the fall, either in *The Encyclopedia Logic* or the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, one can easily see that he does not even have a concept of sin in which such a possibility could arise. Moreover, what Climacus calls the giving of the condition is what the Reformers called the witness of the Spirit, divine grace

enabling the believer to recognize revelation as divine truth. Hegel is explicit that the spirit in question is *our* spirit. We already have the condition.

Once again Climacus is right on target. The critique hits the bull's eye again. Like Silentio, he does not so much argue that Hegel is wrong as that here is a view in unmediated opposition to Hegel's view and it is the view of biblical or Christian faith. Both anticipate Climacus' argument in *Postscript* that Hegel's philosophy may be right, but one thing is for sure, it is not Christianity. But since a central claim of Hegel's is that his philosophy is the highest version of Christianity, the ironical result is that if Hegel is right about the universal being the highest and reason needing no divine aid, he is wrong about this latter claim.

My quarrel with Stewart could continue, in relation to both *Philosophical Fragments* and other texts. But perhaps I have given enough examples of why I find his "only about the Danish Hegelians, not about Hegel himself" argument unpersuasive. Ironically, perhaps, I find his book enormously helpful, but only about the Danish Hegelians, not about Hegel himself so far as their relationships to Kierkegaard are concerned.

Admiring The Passion?

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Mel Gibson's *Passion* came out in theaters just over four months ago, and the debates over the propriety and accuracy of Mr. Gibson's portrayal of Christ's suffering have been raging ever since. Some have argued that the film is nothing but a horrific display of violence, utterly disconnected from the purposes of a Jesus come to heal, save, liberate and forgive.¹ To others, *The Passion of The Christ* is a triumph—a haunting film comparable to other great works of Christian art,² and a powerful public witness to the claims of orthodox Christianity.³ Reaction to this film reveals the polarization of the contemporary North American Christianity.

In this polarized situation, students of Søren Kierkegaard will instinctively wonder how Kierkegaard might have reviewed the film. One thing is for sure, Gibson strove very hard to provide an accurate depiction of the physical event of the crucifixion; hence the use of the Aramaic and the uncensored and yet realistic brutality of the film. However, from a Kierkegaardian perspective, the bloodbath of *The Passion* could render it difficult to remember that it was the psychological rather than the physical suffering of Jesus that was unique.

In *Practice in Christianity*, Kierkegaard (writing under the pseudonym of anti-Climacus) frequently describes the depth of Christ's suffering not in physical, but in social and psychological terms: poverty, lowliness, abasement, betrayal.⁴ In another place, he even *contrasts* the suffering that Christ experiences through betrayal with "mere" physical pain: "...there is no suffering, not even the most excruciating physical suffering, in which love agonizes as it agonizes soulfully in being betrayed..."⁵ According to Kierkegaard, physical pain by itself cannot begin to approach the depths of Christ's suffering. Once again, it is the psychological realities of Christ's betrayal and abasement (along with his life of poverty and lowliness) that render his pain unique and finally salvific. If we can here trust Kierkegaard's reflections on the content and meaning of Christ's agony, we will very likely find Mr. Gibson's film lacking.

Still, this response is simply one more reply to the question of the content of the film. As piquant as this question may be, perhaps there is another, even more relevant question that right now begs to be asked. That is—the question not of content, but of *relation*. Perhaps we do well to temporarily sidestep our debates about the content of this film, and ask rather about the *relation* that such a film implies between its subject (its creator; its audience) and its object (Christ and his suffering). If we want to ask this difficult and rather pointed question, Søren Kierkegaard has again some important insight to offer.

In *Practice in Christianity* Nr.3,⁶ Kierkegaard distinguishes between two ways of relating to Christ: *admiration* and *imitation*. One can either admire Christ, or one can imitate him. A vast difference exists between the two, and only the one relation is truly Christian:

Now, it is of course well known that Christ continually uses the expression “imitators.” He never says that he asks for admirers, adoring admirers, adherents; and when he uses the expression “follower” he always explains it in such a way that one perceives that “imitators” is meant by it, that is not adherents of a teaching but imitators of a life...⁷

Especially in “established Christendom,” it is easy to proclaim one’s admiration of Christ and even to do so effusively and publicly, without ever entering into a truly Christian relation to Christ—that is, without imitating him in his poverty and abasement. Kierkegaard describes this terrible confusion in a ‘Christian society,’ “...where someone in the strongest terms admires and adoringly admires and admires and adores [*sic*] Christ—whereas his life expresses the very opposite of Christ’s life as it was lived on earth by him, who... was born and lived in lowliness and abasement.”⁸ According to Kierkegaard, in a Christian sense it hardly matters if one observes and learns the truth; it hardly even matters if one appreciates and publicly *adores* the truth. Without imitation, one’s relation to truth is false. “And therefore, Christianly understood, truth is obviously not to know the truth but to be the truth.”⁹ In fact, “...[knowing the truth] becomes untrue when knowing the truth is separated from being the truth or when knowing the truth is made identical with being it.”¹⁰ To admire or know the truth—without imitating the truth—is to come into a false relation to the truth. Therefore, “Only the imitator is the true Christian.”¹¹

With this distinction made, Kierkegaard asks a question that inspired the pairing of this text and film. It is the question of Christian art—the question of whether or not it is Christianly possible to represent Christ through artistic means. Kierkegaard wonders what kind of relation to Christ is implied by Christian art, and he inquires, “Would it be possible for me, that is, could I persuade myself, could I be motivated to dip my brush, to lift my chisel in order to represent Christ in color or to carve his figure?”¹²

Kierkegaard’s answer is not timid:

That I cannot do... for me it would unconditionally be an impossibility... in truth it is... incomprehensible to me from whence an artist would gain the calmness, or incomprehensible to me is the calmness with which an artist has sat year in and year out occupied in the work of painting Christ—without having it occur to him whether Christ would wish to be painted, would wish to have his portrait, however idealized it became, depicted by his masterly brush. I do not comprehend how the artist would maintain his calm, that he would not notice Christ’s displeasure, would not suddenly throw it all out, brushes and paints... because he suddenly understood that Christ has required only imitators, that the one who here on earth lived in poverty and lowliness, without a place where he could lay his head... I do not comprehend this artistic indifference, which his surroundings indeed manifested, that the picture of the goddess of sensuality found in his studio occupied him just as much, so that not until he finished it did he start to portray the crucified one.¹³

To create an artistic representation of Christ is, necessarily, to step back from him and to turn him into an aesthetic object to be studied and admired—and then chiseled or painted (or even filmed). Such an endeavor requires an artistic—even scientific—indifference—a calm detachment implied even by the word “object” itself. And could this possibly be the relation Christ desires others to have with himself? Kierkegaard’s answer is an unapologetic “No.” Christ does not want us to stand back and know him as an aesthetic object or to admire the details of his suffering. He does not want us to be impressed by the artist’s technique or by the sense of verisimilitude he or she might have the artistic power to evoke. No. Quite simply, Christ wants only disciples: followers, imitators of a life. When this is the crucified one’s call, it seems nearly blasphemous to stand back and admire a perfect lighting angle—or perhaps an eye-catching pose—while Christ hangs there, suffering on the cross.

On to the film. The theological debates about the content and accuracy of Mr. Gibson’s representation of Christ’s passion will probably continue, and perhaps they ought to continue. Though lamentably polarized, they are part of a necessary Christian conversation about the meaning of Christ’s suffering and death. And yet, we must not let these debates get in the way of the more fundamental question: not the question of *content*, but that of *relation*. What sort of *relation* to Christ does a film about his passion inspire? Does it help to put us in a position of imitating Christ in his

poverty, abasement and suffering; or does it help us merely to continue as detached, (even if emotional) cultural admirers?

This was my experience: I went to see the film just about a month ago. I drove to the mall and found a spot in its expansive parking lot. I bought a ticket at a cinema simultaneously showing eleven other Hollywood productions. I found a place in the theater, sat in a nice cushy seat, and ate popcorn while I waited for the film to begin. As I sat there, I watched commercials for sleek new SUVs. A few minutes later the screen suddenly changed and began showing an agonizing depiction Jesus Christ's tortuous last hours on earth.

In the midst of this terrific incongruity, I recalled a few words that I had found myself underlining just a few days prior. Once again, the words describe admirers: "They are related to the admired one only through the imagination; to them he is like a theatrical play....they make the same demands that are made in the theater: to sit safe and calm oneself, detached from any actual relation to danger, while they still put it down in their favor that they admire him, whereby they presumably think to share in his merits of truth and right..."¹⁴ It was not then Aramaic, nor Latin, that came to mind, but just a bit of Greek: *kyrie eleison*. Lord, have mercy on us all.

¹ Cf. Matthew Myer Boulton, "The Problem with The Passion," *Christian Century*. March 23, 2004. pp. 18-20.

² Cf. Russell Hittinger and Elizabeth Lev, "Gibson's Passion," *First Things*. March 2004. pp.7-10.

³ Cf. David Neff, "The Passion of Mel Gibson: Why Evangelicals are Cheering a Movie with Profoundly Catholic Sensibilities," *Christianity Today*. March 2004. pp. 30-5.

⁴ Cf. Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity (Kierkegaard's Writings, XX)*. Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991). pp. 182, 240-1.

⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses (Kierkegaard's Writings, XVII)*. Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997). p. 279.

⁶ Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*. pp. 145-262.

⁷ PC 237

⁸ PC 240

⁹ PC 205

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ PC 254

¹² PC 254

¹³ PC 254-55

¹⁴ PC 244

Gregor Malantschuk, *Kierkegaard's Concept of Existence*

**(Marquette Studies in Philosophy No. 35),
edited and translated by Howard V. and Edna H. Hong
(Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003),
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Søren Kierkegaard's scholars have long owed tremendous thanks to Howard and Edna Hong, whose distinguished translations render in elegant, erudite English nearly every line Kierkegaard penned. The Hong's' exhaustive *Kierkegaard's Writings* (Princeton, 1978-2000, 26 vv.) enjoys worldwide recognition as the definitive English edition; their abridged *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers* (Indiana, 1967-78, 7 vv.) is similarly acclaimed.¹ With their latest publication, *Kierkegaard's Concept of Existence*, these tireless editor-translators have completed a long-standing project of corresponding importance in the secondary literature: they have made available in English all of the major works of Gregor Malantschuk (1902-1978), one of Kierkegaard's most influential and beloved twentieth-century interpreters.

Malantschuk, born in the Ukraine and educated at Berlin, served as Lecturer on Kierkegaard at the University of Copenhagen from 1962 until shortly before his death. In his writings, lectures, and informal but rigorous Kierkegaard Study Circles, Malantschuk approached Kierkegaard's variegated authorship with a ferocious sympathy for the author *behind* it all—behind, that is, the riot of pseudonymous books, the edifying discourses, the attacks on the Church, and *The Point of View*. Convinced that every part of the Kierkegaardian corpus deserves interpretation in light of the whole, Malantschuk traversed Kierkegaard's entire oeuvre anew in each of his major works. As a result, the reader who works through one Malantschuk book after another will find herself tracing again and again the full arc of Kierkegaard's career, from the first journal entries of 1834 through to the polemical works of the 1850s, in an edifying repetition of the stages on Kierkegaard's way.

Malantschuk was also a serious Christian—a fact of no small consequence to his scholarly method. He saw in Kierkegaard's "portrayal of the positive and negative levels in a person's development" a schema so accurate that "anyone will be able to find and to recognize his own position" (*Kierkegaard's Concept of Existence*, 181). No doubt because he felt so deeply at home in Kierkegaard's philosophical and Christian anthropology, Malantschuk felt little need to insert his own evaluations or opinions, nor even to announce his own perspective, on the texts he set out to interpret.² Nor do his books presume so much as to classify Kierkegaard as this or that sort of writer, philosopher, or theologian. Malantschuk's writings aim, instead, simply to *listen* to Kierkegaard, to allow the writer's own sly, delicate designs to speak for themselves.

Thanks to the Hong's' efforts, four of Malantschuk's books can now be read in English: the shorter works *Kierkegaard's Way to the Truth* (Augsburg, 1963/Inter, 1987) and *The Controversial Kierkegaard* (Wilfrid Laurier, 1980), along with the two major tomes *Kierkegaard's Thought* (Princeton, 1971) and the volume at hand, *Kierkegaard's Concept of Existence*. The latter makes available to Anglophones the book Malantschuk "considered ... his most important,"³ namely, his final work, *Fra Individ til den Enkelte* (C. A. Reitzel, 1978), celebrated upon its release as the "crowning and consummation" of Malantschuk's distinguished career.⁴

At this point readers familiar with Danish will be itching to learn why the suggestive title *Fra Individ til den Enkelte*—a phrase the Hong's would normally render "from an individual to 'the single individual'"—has here given way to the drier *Kierkegaard's Concept of Existence*. The book's preface indicates that this matter was settled before Malantschuk's death in 1978: "The English title has been formulated by me and the translators" (7). We can reconstruct their likely reasoning from the Preface's careful opening lines:

The objective of this book is to review the complex of issues in Søren Kierkegaard's concept of

existence. It is evident that for Kierkegaard existence is always composed of three elements: namely, the subject, freedom, and the ethical. In the process of clarifying the relation between these three elements in the different stages of existence, the course of the development the individual must go through in order to become the single individual is described. (7)

To Kierkegaard, in other words, human existence must be analyzed both statically—as a set of *stages*, each of which is a particular composite of “the subject, freedom, and the ethical”—and dynamically, that is, in terms of *transformations* by which an individual can move from one stage to another—perhaps even to the highest stage, that of “the single individual.” Hence our two titles can be thought of as opposed but equally accurate descriptions of Malantschuk’s theme. His goal, put briefly, is to explain Kierkegaard’s concept of existence by reviewing the account Kierkegaard’s writings progressively disclose of the stepwise process by which an existing human being can be transformed from an individual to “the single individual.” Accordingly, in the bulk of *Kierkegaard’s Concept of Existence* Malantschuk undertakes a survey of the entire authorship, first extracting the particular portrait of existence laid out in each Kierkegaardian book, then setting each such portrait in its place as part of a larger, gradually emerging account of existence.

Any book so advertised will appeal to at least two distinct sorts of readers of Kierkegaard. Close readers, curious to learn what Malantschuk thinks Kierkegaard means by “existence” at point X in book Y (perhaps attributed to pseudonym Z), will jump to the index, hunt for the relevant pages, and dive in. Meanwhile, generalists—those more interested in the overall account of existence Malantschuk thinks undergirds Kierkegaard’s authorship as a whole—will leaf through the volume from start to finish, hunting for its punch lines.

Much of *Kierkegaard’s Concept of Existence* is liable to disappoint both groups. Malantschuk often strikes a strangely hesitant tone in analysis, particularly when critiquing the pseudonymous authors of Kierkegaard’s better-known early works. The chapter on *Fear and Trembling*, for example, opens by specifying that the pseudonym Johannes de Silentio occupies a “position ... of resignation, which is higher than ... irony,” indeed “approaching the stage of humor,” for he is “personally engaged in existence” (57-58). In the end, however, none of these ambitious classifications matters much to Malantschuk’s interpretation, which concludes that “*Fear and Trembling* treats of the difficulties and conflicts a person faces if he is to subordinate his individual freedom totally to the higher ethical requirements whereby true freedom is first attained” and that “Johannes de Silentio, with the aid of many examples, has in *Fear and Trembling* given an account of the most difficult human ethical-religious conflicts” (66). Johannes de Silentio would surely agree; but Malantschuk’s reader is left to wonder exactly what she is supposed to have learned *about* the book and its author that the wily pseudonym does not himself declare.

Elsewhere, however, Malantschuk’s interpretive strategy works beautifully. Best of all, in my opinion, is the treatment of *The Sickness unto Death* offered under the title “The Self’s Revolt Against Faith: The Forms of Despair and Offense” (164-81). Here Malantschuk argues that the taxonomy of despair set forth in *The Sickness unto Death* also provides an inverted guide to the presentation of existence in Kierkegaard’s larger corpus.

Anti-Climacus [pseudonymous author of *The Sickness unto Death*] carefully and in great detail depicts all the steps that lead from the lower forms of despair to its extreme form, which is active offense at Christianity. It is in going through these negative forms of human existence that the importance of and the coherence between the three central elements in Kierkegaard’s dialectic of existence—namely, freedom, the ethical, and the self—appear more clearly than in any other book. ... The often very brief but precisely formulated intensifications of the levels of despair in this book correspond to the presentation in the preceding authorship of very definite positive developmental steps in the inward deepening of the self. (170-1)

In the pages that follow, Malantschuk correlates in detail the downward ladder of despair and offense described in *The Sickness unto Death* with the upward ladder of existence winding throughout Kierkegaard’s writings, climbing *fra Individ til den Enkelte*, “from an individual to ‘the single individual.’” These two ladders mirror one another, Malantschuk explains, and like all mirror-images they move along a joint axis: toward ever-tightening “requirements of freedom and the ethical” for the human subject (180). For example, awareness of selfhood is required *both* for the descent into conscious despair *and* for the ascent toward religiousness Malantschuk sees depicted in Kierkegaard’s upbuilding writings.

Malantschuk's book, it turns out, portrays the *entire* Kierkegaardian corpus as a mirror-image of *The Sickness unto Death*. Accordingly, just as Anti-Climacus splits his book into two Parts—the first covering immanent forms of despair, the second describing forms of despair that arise before God, ultimately before Christ—Malantschuk divides his tour of Kierkegaard's authorship into two sections as well, the first covering "immanent" stages of existence, the second following "a person's ethical and religious growth as it develops in relation to a transcendent power" (7). Malantschuk locates this bifurcation temporally at or near the beginning of 1847, at a point just after the publication of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and *A Literary Review*, and just before Kierkegaard began his "second" and more explicitly religious authorship with *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*.

The two sections devoted to traversing Kierkegaard's corpus make up the overwhelming bulk of Malantschuk's book. They are supplemented by two shorter sections, which have more of the feel of appendices. The first of these briefly surveys a number of subjects identified by Kierkegaard or his pseudonyms as "difficult": chiefly, the nature of human freedom, the implications of "eternal life" for the individual, and the philosophical consequences of the "absolute distinction between God and man" (196, 203). The book's final section summarizes Kierkegaard's relation to Kant, Hegel, and naturalism, and proceeds to defend him against successors, such as Barth and Bultmann, who in Malantschuk's view failed to appreciate the ethical depth and "radical renewal" to be found in Kierkegaard's thought (257).

I warmly recommend *Kierkegaard's Concept of Existence* to every friend, reader, and scholar of Søren Kierkegaard. In 1968, a reviewer could write in *Kierkegaardiana* that "Dr. Malantschuk ... needs neither be introduced nor recommended to our readers."⁵ It is my hope that, with Malantschuk's major works now available to English-speaking audiences worldwide, we will soon be able to repeat those words in the pages of the *Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter*.

¹ "Monumental in its proportions and as excellent in its achievement," in the words of an early reviewer (Robert L. Perkins). Cf. *Kierkegaardiana XI*, ed. Niels Thulstrup (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1980), 233-4 (234).

² As Edna and Howard Hong remarked in their obituary, "Gregor Malantschuk kept himself so scrupulously out of his teaching and writing about Kierkegaard that it is impossible even with a microscopic eye to riddle out one clue for a biographical sketch of his life." Edna and Howard Hong, "Gregor Malantschuk," *Kierkegaardiana XI*, 228-32 (228).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Review by Jørgen Pedersen, *Kierkegaardiana XI*, 254-7 (254).

⁵ Review by N. H. Sørensen, *Kierkegaardiana VIII*, ed. Niels Thulstrup (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1980), 196-200.

On The Original Reception of Kierkegaard in Russia, 1880-90s.

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The name of Søren Kierkegaard first reached Russia in 1878, in a letter¹ received by Ivan Alexandrovich **Goncharov** from his longtime correspondent Peter Emmanuel **Hansen**. Hansen was born in Copenhagen (1846), but in 1871 his fortunes brought him to Omsk, Siberia, to serve as head of a telegraph school. In his spare time, Hansen worked on translations. No matter how far away he was from Denmark, the figure of Søren Kierkegaard lingered in Hansen's memory. Mind you, this was not Kierkegaard's actual image, but was rather the mental picture passed on to Hansen by friends, actors at the Royal Theatre, who had known Kierkegaard personally.

Goncharov praised Kierkegaard effusively to his friend Leo Tolstoy, whose "The Death of Ivan Illyitch" a spellbound Hansen translated into Danish. It was for Tolstoy's sake, ultimately, that Hansen first rendered Kierkegaard into Russian. By 1917, when Hansen had to leave Russia and return to Copenhagen, he had translated eleven separate works of Kierkegaard. Several of these were ready for publication by 1885:

1. Parts of *In Vino Veritas* (in a manuscript preserved in Tolstoy's private library)

2. Parts of "The Immediate Erotic Stages or The Musical-Erotic" (titled by Hansen Don Juan in Music and Literature;
3. Selected Journal entries from the period of *The Corsair* affair (1847), also translated for Tolstoy²;
4. For Self-Examination/Judge for Yourself!: though in 1885 Hansen informed Tolstoy that he had translated these texts, there is no evidence that Tolstoy ever received the translations.

Hansen published the following Kierkegaard selections:

- 5) "Equilibrium Between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Composition of Personality"—a complete translation, titled by Hansen The Harmonious Development of the Aesthetic and the Ethical in a Human Personality³;
- 6) "Diapsalmata" (titled An Aesthete's Aphorisms⁴);
- 7) The Seducer's Diary.

The above three texts were collected by Hansen in an anthology entitled Pleasure and Debt⁵.

In addition, four incomplete translations remain in the Hansen family archive in St. Petersburg:

- 8) Repetition, completed and published in my 1997 edition;
- 9) a highly abridged translation of Fear and Trembling in 60 pages, published in 1982, in New York, by Hansen's direct descendant Sergey Kozhevnikov;
- 10) fragments from Guilty?/Not Guilty?;
- 11) fragments from "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage."

This accounts for Kierkegaard's initial, one might say unbiased, reception in Russia. By the time Jurgis **Baltrushajtis**'s translations of "Diapsalmata" and "The Unhappiest Man" appeared (1908), Kierkegaard had already been classified as "modernistic." In general, 19th-century Russian thought had an *adoptive* character, defining itself around the great names of the Western world, such as Schelling, Hegel and Marx. Later Leo Shestov would try to add the name of Kierkegaard to this cadre.

The responses to the first Russian translations of Kierkegaard were both few and superficial. Only five critiques appeared, and even by the rather low journalistic standards of the day, these were almost comically inept. The earliest critics did not trouble themselves with such details as Hansen's warnings about Kierkegaard's indirect method of communication; rather, they simply refused to take Kierkegaard's use of pseudonyms seriously. There are a variety of reasons for this literary blindness. The first respondent, Professor Timophei Ivanovich **Butkevich**⁶ of the Kharkov Theological Seminary, made no secret of the fact that his sole preoccupation was saving souls. Fusing Judge William and SK, he informed his readers that as a judge, married man, and a respectable parishioner, Kierkegaard "preached that good intentions and deeds were the only road to salvation."

A writer for the journal **Russkoye Bogatstvo**⁷ ["The Russian Welfare"] read and commented upon both "Equilibrium" and "The Seducer's Diary." In his review, this journalist groped for an understanding of Kierkegaard's apparent duplicity. The respondent decided that Kierkegaard could be identified with Judge William, "a common German burgher... very neat, very tidy and moderate, self-satisfied, well-nourished and loyal," but a hypocrite, since it must have taken a very two-faced preacher to set people right in such a conniving way. As in the case of Butkevich's reading, this reviewer wrote as if indifferent to the fact that "Either/Or" is a

literary work, not just a complicated attempt at moral edification for the public benefit.

The remaining responses were inspired not by Hansen's translations but by a broader interest in the figure of Kierkegaard, who was quickly winning popularity in Europe. Although Hansen's biographical article on SK for the famous Brockhaus-Efron Encyclopedia was available, the second group of Russian journalists chose to ignore it and drew instead upon the French Revue de Paris and Nouvelle Revue. Despite their use of common sources, these writers reached diametrically opposed conclusions about Kierkegaard.

In the conservative journal Russkiy Vestnik, Kierkegaard was described as the spiritual father of both Henrik Ibsen and modernism, the latter being marked by "artificiality, pretentiousness and mannerism." The author dismissed modernism as dangerously decadent and described Kierkegaard as psychologically disturbed and good only for making his readers feel "like fish out of water."

The Odesskiye Novosti correspondent Isaak Vladimirovich **Shklovskiy** was a former "Narodnaya Volya" terrorist group member and prisoner, who had been exiled to Odessa. Shklovskiy, wrote under the pseudonym Dioneo, and sympathized with Kierkegaard because of his scandalous reputation. He liked Kierkegaard's eccentricity, which he classified under the rubric "the cult of passions and the romanticism of the soul." Shklovskiy penned the only favorable review of Kierkegaard during this time.

The third review which was as comically superficial as the rest, came from the hand of Boris Osipovich **Effrusi**, editor of the entertainment section of Mir Bozhiy. Effrusi registered his views on Kierkegaard between articles on the status of women-workers in Great Britain and the spread of infectious diseases. The author regarded Kierkegaard as a mere *phenomenon* to be observed with a naturalist's eye; he did not offer any evaluation of the Danish writer. Together, these two groups make up the first wave of Kierkegaard's reception in Russia.

Almost simultaneous with these journalists, there appeared another cadre of thinkers better equipped to understand Kierkegaard. Included in this group were Konstantin Dmitrievich **Kavelin**, who immediately recognized in Kierkegaard "a writer of genius," and who tried to help Hansen get his first translations published in the Vestnik Yevropy. There was also Nikolay Nikolaevich **Strakhov**. Last but not least, there was Leo Nikolayevich **Tolstoy**, whom one would reasonably expect to have fully grasped Kierkegaard's value. Tolstoy, however, could only appreciate like-minded thinkers. By the time he encountered Kierkegaard, the famous author was consumed by his own quest and, because he could not assimilate Kierkegaard into his own project, he became rather dismissive of him. Tolstoy only took notice of Kierkegaard after Hansen promised to retranslate For Self-Examination "in conformity with the spiritual interests of the Russian people." Tolstoy then recommended Hansen to his publisher, Ivan Gorbunov-Posadov; their negotiations reached a deadlock, however, when Hansen refused to follow Tolstoy's recommendations about making Kierkegaard more accessible. Hansen never wrote a popular book on Kierkegaard, though Tolstoy believed such a propaedeutic was necessary because "Kierkegaard did not make his great and often brilliant and beautiful thoughts clear to the reader," since "his speech was obscure."⁸ Kavelin similarly advised Hansen to write a book on Kierkegaard, warning that "otherwise, for the Russian readers ignorant of German philosophy, to say nothing of the Danish, the subtle discourse of the Danish writer is very likely to disappear without a trace."⁹ Using even stronger language, Strakhov complained in an 1890 letter to Tolstoy that "To read him [Kierkegaard in Hansen's translation - D.L.] was beyond my powers. So I got the book in German - I thought it might help, but it did not! The translator, his great admirer, also confessed in the Preface that he would not guarantee that he had understood everything right. But how could it happen that such a dark writer could win such fame and find so many followers?"¹⁰

A more complete bibliography of the pre-revolutionary publications would contain a few more articles by authors whose names are now forgotten. Such a list would include Nikolay Alexandrovich **Yegorov**, an employee of the Russian Orthodox Church's mission in Copenhagen, whose article was issued in 1909 in "The Orthodox Encyclopedia of Theology"¹¹. Karl Friedrich **Tiander**, Professor at the Helsingfors (Helsinki) University, also wrote articles on Kierkegaard for the Encyclopedia of Granat Bros. and The New Encyclopedia¹². And then there was Mikhail Vladimirovich **Odintsov**'s report on Kierkegaard in "The Philosophy of the Religious Act"¹³—a very well-researched essay bristling with references to Danish sources. Such secondary works belonged to a new, more scholarly epoch of the Russian reception, an epoch made possible by the sources and criticism first available at the

start of the last century. Scholars of this period considered it their *duty* to read Kierkegaard correctly. Yet their predecessors—the first-rate Russian thinkers of the nineteenth century, including Tolstoy—had no one check their egregious misreadings. Nikolay Strakhov asks, “How could it happen that such a dark writer could win such fame and find so many followers?” The answer is plain—such darkness is not an obstacle to fascination. In truth, Strakhov simply could not imagine a serious author without a following. In the 1890s he became an unofficial chief of Russkoye Bogatstvo, a highly influential periodical which published the first serious review of Hansen’s translations.

I think that Tolstoy’s deafness to Kierkegaard is the most interesting fact to be faced in trying to fathom the Russian reception. Tolstoy was drawn towards moralizing, whereas Kierkegaard was primarily interested in theology and philosophy. Hence Tolstoy, in his edifying pieces, appears less amenable to philosophical examination than Kierkegaard. This is obvious, for example, when we think of Judge William’s “Equilibrium between the Aesthetic and the Ethical,” Johannes the Seducer’s shadow constantly looms before our eyes, making our choice easier—or rather, more difficult. In contrast, Tolstoy disturbs us both by his use of rationalization and clumsy preaching, but also, and even more, by the fact that his edifying writings prove so effective, as they were for Berdyaev, Florovsky, and for many other Russian thinkers. The latter tried to explain this away by making thin excuses for the “rationality” and “nihilism of Tolstoy” (Berdyaev¹⁴), “only a writer, who fell into the poor and scant experimentation of the new projects” (Rozanov¹⁵), a writer “who is condemned to separate art from thinking” (Gilyarov-Platonov¹⁶). However, when reading Tolstoy, this sense of moral constraint vanishes, since for Tolstoy the *Whole* of the world (“Peace”) lies before him, in all its chaos, and is present everywhere, including in his moral preaching. Yet when reduced to direct slogans, Tolstoy’s preaching startled his intellectual followers as poor and abstract.

Tolstoy nonetheless declared that chaos is a necessary part of life: salvation, for him, cannot always be separated from it. This explains his suspicious attitude to art, and his almost knee jerk approval of anything that seemed guileless in a human being. For this reason, Tolstoy was sympathetic to Kierkegaard: “Both of them [Tolstoy here responds to Kierkegaard and Bjørnson - D.L.], being different in the genre, have the main quality of the writer - sincerity, ardor, seriousness. They both think seriously and express what they think.”¹⁷

Judging from his marginal notes, Tolstoy only read Kierkegaard’s 1847 journals. These journal entries were what might be termed “direct communications” and Tolstoy interpreted them as if they had been penned in his favorite Buddhist-Schopenhauerian didactic style. Oddly enough, Tolstoy went so far as to score these readings on a numerical scale calibrated to his level of agreement with the text.

Tolstoy’s evaluation of people and thinkers is a separate question entirely. At first glance, Tolstoy’s reaction to Kierkegaard was slightly condescending: he considered him “young and therefore too perky.”¹⁸ Yet in order to understand Tolstoy as a possible reader of Kierkegaard—assuming that he had read all the material suggested to him by Hansen—we should take into account the *form* of his chary esteem: as edifying and clear as in all his writings, particularly his vivid depiction of characters in his famous novels.

Kierkegaard’s relation to people and thinkers, on the contrary, was indirect in form, ironic, and open to a variety of interpretations, ready to embrace all possible limits of existence and to share the drama of the ironic duplicity of reception with the reader. In some cases, Kierkegaard’s evaluations are philosophical judgments on existence communicated in a literary way. As Georg **Brandes** wrote of Kierkegaard, “No author in our literature has reached deeper into the human heart’s abyss, no one has felt more deeply, thought more sharply or has taken in higher flight in his enthusiasm for the ideals of purity and truth.”¹⁹ I suggest that Kierkegaard initiated the new, ethical turn of European philosophy. In so doing, he pointed to fresh “ideals of purity and truth,” to new horizons of human morality.

For Tolstoy, on the contrary, such an interweaving of the aesthetic and ethico-religious perspectives is not something to be elaborated in a philosophically *subjective* way. As Vasiliy **Rozanov** wrote of Tolstoy, “He guesses that life certainly is very far from the ideal and “the heaven”, but it is still precious by the fact that we all live with it, and it consists of such pillars as that Vronskiy - a stupid, principled, solid fellow who never reasons...What a wonder! A genius writer is creating stupidity as zealously as God was creating the man.”²⁰ The ideological gap

between Tolstoy and Kierkegaard is too wide to permit further speculation. If only they had both preached morality directly, one could perhaps find a similarities between them; but they did not. A potentially successful mode of comparison would look for the moral and religious messages inscribed in their “left-hand” authorship. In these writings, the preaching is communicated *indirectly* and always against the kind of rich background of feelings and reflections which force a person to argue with himself, and—sometimes—to find a way out.

¹ *Correspondence of Ivan Goncharov in Literaturnyi Arkhiv*, Moscow: Nauka 1961, v. 6, p. 73.

² Later published in *Vestnik religioznogo khristianskogo dvizheniya* N 148, Paris 1986.

³ In *Severnyi Vestnik* N 1, 3, 4, St. Petersburg 1885.

⁴ In *Vestnik Yevropy* N 3, part 5, St. Petersburg 1886.

⁵ S. Kirkegor *Naslazhdenie i dolg*, St. Petersburg: M.M. Lederle И Co publishers, 1894.

⁶ “The Danish Philosopher Søren Kierkegaard as a Preacher of the Ethical Principles in the Composition of a Personality” in *Vera i Razum* N 16, Kharkov 1886.

⁷ In *Russkoye Bogatstvo* N 6, St. Petersburg 1894. Reviewer anonymous.

⁸ Tolstoy’s words said to Hansen’s wife are quoted in *Scando-Slavica* vol. 24, Copenhagen 1968, p. 61.

⁹ Quoted from Hansen’s letter to Tolstoy (1885) in *Literaturnoye Nasledstvo* v. 75, Moscow: Nauka 1965, p. 316.

¹⁰ Nikolay Strakhov – *Leo Tolstoy Correspondence*, St. Petersburg 1914, p. 310.

¹¹ *The Orthodox Encyclopedia of Theology* vols. 1-12, St. Petersburg 1900-11; v. 10, 1909, pp. 439-451.

¹² *Encyclopedia of the Granat Bros* vols. 1-58, Moscow 1910-48; v. 26, s.a. (ca. 1913) and in *The Encyclopedia* vols. 1-29, St. Petersburg 1911-16; s.a.

¹³ Made on the sitting of *Petersburg Religious-Philosophical Society* (1912) and published in *Russkaya Mysl* N 10, St. Petersburg 1912.

¹⁴ Nikolay Berdyaev *L. Tolstoy* (1928) in N. Berdyaev *Collected Works* vols. 1-4, Paris: YMCA-Press 1985-1990; v. 3, 1989, p. 116.

¹⁵ Vasiliy Rozanov *Once more about Count L.N. Tolstoy and his teaching on Non-resistance to Evil* (1896) in V. Rozanov *O pisatel'stve i pisatelyah*, Moscow: Respublica, 1995, p. 12.

¹⁶ Nikita Gilyarov-Platonov, a famous Russian publicist, is quoted in V. Rozanov *Count L.N. Tolstoy* (1898) in V. Rozanov, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁷ Leo Tolstoy *Letter to Hansen* (1891) in L. Tolstoy *Collected Works* vols. 1-22, Moscow: Hudozhestvennaya literature; vol. 19/20, 1984, p. 224.

¹⁸ According to Hansen’s testimony during his visit to Tolstoy in 1890 (v.: Peter Hansen *Five Days spent in “Yasnaya Polyana”* in *Istoricheskyy Vestnik* N 1, St. Petersburg 1917, p. 143.) in; 1917 No 1, p. 143.

¹⁹ Brades’ words in *Søren Kierkegaard. En kristisk Fremstilling i Grundrids* are quoted by Hansen in *Vestni, Yevropy* N 3, part 5, St. Petersburg 1886, p. 107.

²⁰ V. Rozanov *In the Decline of Life. Leo Tolstoy and the Daily Round* (1907) in V. Rozanov, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

... only translating Kierkegaard

By Adrian Arsinevici,
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In 1947, 103 years after Kierkegaard published his *Frygt og Bæven*, the French Algerian existential writer Albert Camus (1913-1960) published *The Plague*. One of the characters in the novel, the meek public servant Joseph Grand, discloses that he is a closet writer. He confides that he spends agonising evenings trying to find the most appropriate word or conjunction for his work. Monsieur Grand excitedly shows his manuscript to a friend and asks his opinion. The manuscript contains one sentence: “*One glorious morning in the month of May, an elegant Amazon came riding on a superb fawn-coloured mare, along the flowery paths of the Forest of Boulogne.*” Grand confesses that he wrote and re-wrote the same sentence time and again and was prepared to continue doing so until it was perfect and conveyed both the picturesqueness of the Gallic weald and the rhythmic clip-clop of the equestrienne’s noble animal.

Grand’s writer’s block, his Hamlet-like endless brooding over his first and only sentence on the blank manuscript,

is something all writers fear, and so do translators of Kierkegaard. Indeed, Grand reminds me of someone who dreams of doing the first complete translation of some literary masterpiece but cannot get started. His endless polishing of phrases will ring familiar to many translators who perhaps get stuck on the first page with one of SK's quaint Danish, German or Latin mottoes.

How many translators of Kierkegaard have begun by studying Danish language and literature and then moved on to advanced courses in philosophy, linguistics, theology, graphology, German, psychology, history – and then perhaps rounded off their studies with a degree in translation theory? Very few, I presume. Translation seems to be a trade one learns by doing. The enthusiastic self-made translator skips the preliminaries and jumps into the task and the text. However, shortly after having translated the first pages, or chapters, of a Kierkegaard text, a species of doubt and anxiety creeps into the soul of our ambitious apprentice. He begins to worry that he does not have the intellectual capacity to translate Kierkegaard. He decides that before beginning to translate he must broaden his philosophical, theological, and linguistic knowledge. We could ask whether it is necessary to become a universal scholar in order to translate SK.

In truth, in the annals of European history there are few records of erudite individuals itching to translate. Unlike in the East, where translation is a highly esteemed occupation, our culture concentrates almost exclusively on creativity and original thinking. Translators, who, at their best, merely pass on the originality of others, never seem to play a prominent role. But this fact does not deter our ambitious translator, nor does the low esteem in which translators are held quell the enthusiasm – of contemporary possessors of good heads and oceans of time – from taking the encyclopaedic path. (And, to paraphrase SK: “I invoke everything good for them and for other knowledge holders in that omnibus.”) It is still hard to tell what kind of stock the good SK translator is made of. Experience shows that few gatherers of such comprehensive knowledge are similarly interested in popularising other people's thinking and writings. Fewer still, willingly choose the low-status and modestly remunerated art of translation.

A solid educational background is a necessary but not sufficient condition for doing a successful translation. Sooner or later the ambitious SK translator will also wish to learn a technique to mould his formless knowledge to make it fit the structured needs of translation *per se*. He will seek a proper theory and method of translation. As these cannot be acquired through the orthodox machinery of the academy, he will attend translation seminars and listen to learned philosophers, linguists, and philologists who disclose and make it easy to comprehend new and unknown facets of the text. Methodologists of translation will present him with interesting approaches and deconstruct the alchemy of translation. The variety and versatility of the approaches may make the ambitious translator waver and falter between the semantic, comprehensive, literal and communicative methods introduced to him.

The task of finding and following a creed for translation turns out to be time and life consuming. Its pattern feels Procrustean and the results of its application not very rewarding. The idea of a perfect objective translation, “untouched by human hand,” proves to be a Fata Morgana. This self-inflicted puritanical hygiene may turn him into a translator of words; beautiful meanings will be sacrificed on the altar of ugly literal objectivity.

In contrast, the resigned SK translator, as we could call him, is a connoisseur of language who accepts his limitations and resists the grandiose temptation to become a new Pico della Mirandola. He also eschews belief in the panacea of translation theories. He understands that his life is short and SK's art is long. As a result, he will not possess much encyclopaedic knowledge, but he will possess many encyclopaedias, dictionaries and reference books. He will spend less time than his ambitious counterpart preparing and perusing neo-intellectual commentaries, updated secondary literature, books on semiotics, psychiatry, anthropology and other contemporary sciences that only marginally relate to his humble task. He does not compete with philosophers, but takes advantage of the conclusions of their quarrels. He does not mind Kierkegaard's alleged egocentricity and narcissism, but appreciates the positive impact that SK has had on the world. Thus he reads more of the corpus and scours the texts for parallel passages. He approaches the text itself with resignation and pays greater attention to it.

He smiles in amusement and exasperation at his constant efforts to resist reading himself into the text and he humbly acknowledges his unavoidable subjectivity. The resigned translator notices that often an apparently insignificant aside that he has overheard may turn out to be more helpful than a theory of translation. Slowly he

learns that a hint, a corny motto, a maxim, a – seemingly – unrelated line of poetry, may help him more in his task than mastering a new field of study. He notices that certain words and maxims – which he may have heard incidentally and discarded as irrelevant – remain imbedded wisely in his subconscious, ready for use at the right moment.

In relation to this last point about the role of "irrelevant facts" and the synchronicity of subconscious revelations, I would like to dust off two often quoted and influential Italian maxims. Even though they are frowned on by many and dismissed as alliterative word plays, they have endured – solid as pyramids – the trial of time. These sayings speak in the introduction to many translations and resound many learned discussions on this subject of translation. The two maxims are: *traduttore – traditore* ("translator – traitor", to translate is to betray) and *bella e infedele, brutta e fedele* (a translation is either "beautiful and unfaithful", or "ugly and faithful").

These expressions have long terrorised translators, with the implication that no translator will be able to coerce the immune system of a target language into accepting the structure of a foreign (source) language. On close inspection, one could say that the maxims echo a clear bias in favour of the source text and its author. Further, the scepticism they express regarding the possibility of a fair translation indicates their overt *mimetic* preference. Judging from the maxims, translations are doomed to be inferior copies of the original source text; which in our case means that no translator could succeed in capturing the meaning, atmosphere, and beauty of the original work of a genius such as SK. As the translators we have in mind deal mainly with masterpieces of universal value, it does not take much psychological insight to grasp that beginning a translation of SK with the qualification of "traitor" does not have a congenial influence on one's work capacity, performance, and state of mind.

After years of labouring under these Italian adages, a new and more sanguine saying came out of South America. Its Spanish reads as a pastiche of our first quoted Italian maxim: *traductor-recreador*, ("translator - re-creator"). The present hermeneutical maxim elevates the translator-imitator to the rank of translator - re-creator, and perhaps even co-creator. One of the implications of this adage is that it is easier to create something original than to translate!

Not surprisingly, the father of this maxim is the Argentine writer, and scholar, Jorge Louis Borges (1899-1986). For Borges, best known for his creative writing, translation was (as for Alexander Pope and Baudelaire) a *violon d'Ingres*. As a Joyce translator he was content to render the last page of *Ulysses*. He shows his interest for translation in general in his essays: "Joyce's Ulysses", "The Homeric Versions" and "The Translators of The Thousand and One Nights", the latter being a comparative analysis of different translations of the *Arabian Nights*. In these texts, his entirely subjective ruminations on translation speak to the person trying to transform Kierkegaard's Danish into another language. In the following I will sketch some of Borges' points that Waisman found pertinent.¹

- In both theory and practice, Borges establishes that there is no reason to believe that a translation is inferior to the original, he problematises issues of "authority", "originality", and "fidelity", and negates the concept of a "definitive text".
- "Joyce dilates (expands) and reforms the English idiom; his translator must try to take the same kind of liberties."
- The source text is: "a temporary object, that can be re-written continuously, therefore the idea of a definitive text constitutes a fallacy. One can always find new readings of the text."
- When we realize that every translation, every text, is a re-writing of – dialoguing with – a previous version, what does fidelity mean?
- Of greatest importance are the "creative infidelities" of the translator, his capability to manipulate the language and the "syntactic movement". He must be willing to take risks, to omit, change and exercise his preferences as needed.
- The belief that a translation should be literal (Newman's), and that it should eliminate any details that distract or interrupt the text (Arnold's) are both valid. The translator's "creative infidelities" make him able to be both literal and free.
- A literal translation is never faithful to the original, sometimes the least literal version can be the most loyal.
- A literal translation misses the idiomatic meaning of the original.
- To read a text is not a matter of changing the original, but of elucidating the new context in such a way as to

make the text referred to glow with new meanings.

- The relationship between reading and translation is equivalent to the relationship between reading and writing.
- "There is nothing that cannot be translated."

SK's philosophy, theology, and psychology are wrapped in a language specific only to him. Translating Kierkegaard does not require literally imitating his way of writing but, rather, trying to achieve the same difference of expression, to make the same effort to express things as subjectively and idiomatically as he did in relationship to his native language. But what do SK's fellow citizens think about his language?²

*Kierkegaard er vel periodens største stilkunstner, efter de første forsøg en lidenskabeligt og bevidst arbejdende virtuos, med mange og villedte tilnærmelser til talesproget og det hørlige, rytmiske, men dog overalt i et retorisk leje, præget af vidtløftighed, fremmedelementer (især tyske) og en abstraktion, der ikke vandt ham mange læsere i samtiden og næppe heller – bortset fra en del orddannelser – satte direkte spor i sprogets norm, hvorimod stilpåvirkninger nok kan skimtes hos senere skribenter.*³

The musicality and rhythm of Kierkegaard's sentences demand a translator with an ear for musical texts. The length of some sentences (sometimes as long as 350 words, in *Lovsang til Modersmaale* [Panegyric to the Mother Tongue]) with many subordinate clauses, and clauses subordinated to previously subordinated ones, are a well known challenge to all translators. It is, nevertheless, a pity when some of these translators avoid this challenge by "ironing out" and "normalising" SK's syntax. A long sentence is chopped into several more palatable short ones. Subordinate clauses are locked in parentheses. SK's idiosyncratic German word order is reconstructed in *easy listening* sentences. For an example of taking this easy way out, *Sygdommen til Døden* (*The Sickness unto Death*) has been rendered in Romanian translations as *Maladia Mortala*, ("Mortal Malady") and *Boala de Moarte*, ("Terminal Illness").

Leaving the mine field of syntax, I would like to register some difficulties specific to a Romanian translator. Romanian is a flexible language in that it has a rich case inflection. In Danish, the word order is quite strict and noun declension is virtually extinct. There are three genders in Romanian: masculine, feminine and neuter. Danish nouns have two forms. Let us take the example of Danish demonstrative pronouns *den* and *det* (*denne, dette*), which stand for both animate and inanimate nouns and have no declination. As a result a "faithful", literal translation, of the Danish text will be prolix to the Romanian ear. It will therefore have to be over-translated. Consider, for example, the following quotation:

"...Gud... dannede Helten og Digteren eller Taleren. Denne kan Intet gjøre af hvad hiin gjør, han kan kun beundre, elske, glæde sig ved Helten. Dog er også han lykkelig, ikke mindre end denne; thi Helten er ligesom hans bedre Væsen, ..."⁴

It is not easy to decide whether *denne* is the hero, the poet, or the speaker; or a *duo* consisting of the hero and the poet.

Translating SK's concepts into Romanian demands even more care. You have to strike a balance between translating terms *qua* concepts and *qua* ordinary words. For instance, *angest qua* concept must be translated consistently as anxiety. But considered as an ordinary word, *angest* exists within a context and should therefore be translated accordingly either as fear, worry, fright or dread. As a result of the tension between concept and word orientation, it is difficult to standardise translation terminology. Still, such guidelines would be useful. Here I must also mention the attention demanded by the established Romanian SK terminology, heavily tainted by the intermediate French, Italian, and German vehicles, that transported SK's words to the country in the course of history. SK's concepts have, one could say, different degrees of translatability. Hence, a concept such as *Øieblikket* ("eye-blink" or blink of the eye) can be translated relatively easily as *clipă*, ("a clipi", "to blink") points to the eye. (Not as "moment", which points to the watch.)

A polysemantic word such as *Bestemmelse* can/ought to be translated as: definition (definiție), qualification (categoric), determination (determinare), character (calitate), determinant (expresie), trait (caracterizare), according to the context. Such polysemanticity brings across SK's "semantic intention" to the reader, but, alas, rules out

concordance – the consistent use of a single foreign word for rendering a Kierkegaardian term. I would like to give a couple of examples from *Begrebet Angst*. I will first list a brief quotation in Danish and then follow this with the English given in the Lowrie and Thomte translations.

- 1) B.A. p. 110, 1-7
Når man saaledes i Dogmatikken kalder Tro det *Umiddelbare* uden nogen nærmere **Bestemmelse**...
- 2) CD p. 10, 1. 12 Thus when in dogmatics a person says that *faith* is the *immediate*, without a more precise **definition**...
- 3) CA p. 10, 1. 11
Thus when in dogmatics *faith* is called the *immediate* without any other **qualification**...
- 4) p. 206, 1. 39
...det *Indesluttede* og det *ufrivilligt* Aabenbare. Disse tvende **Bestemmelser** betegne, hvad de og skulle, de samme.
- 5) 110, 1 7
...shut-upness *unfreely revealed*. These two **traits** denote, as they should, the same thing.
- 6) p. 123, 1 20
...inclosing *reserve* and the *unfreely disclosed*. The two **definitions** indicate, as intended, the same thing.⁵

For an additional example, the difficulty of translating a concept such as *Anfægtelse* (as employed in *Frygt og Bæven*) seems to have been underrated. Since the word has no direct equivalent in languages other than German and Scandinavian, one has to settle, in this text, for synonyms. As a result it has been rendered as “temptation” and/or “trial”. The problem is that “temptation” (*ispita*) and “trial” (*ordalie*) are, rather, (semantic) equivalents of two other Kierkegaardian concepts: “*fristelse*” and respectively “*prøvelse*”.

Similar problems must have been posed in the history of translation by the initial adoption of (untranslated) philosophical concepts: Greek (*catharsis*), Latin (*fatum*), German (*Dasein*), Sanskrit (*dharma*) etc. which must have been totally unfamiliar to begin with. In the future, thanks to a substantially increased body of translations a consensus regarding the translation of such terms will emerge, and the interest in SK’s writings will familiarise the public with his original terminology. A possible drawback may be an increase in the bulk of commentaries.

To make Kierkegaard sound as delightful in English, French, and Romanian as he sounds in his Danish does not require that the translator succeed in coming up with something that equals or surpasses the original. The translator only needs to tap into the deep structure of SK’s writings. By doing this he will naturally find a happy way of recasting Kierkegaard words into his own contemporary language.

¹ Each of the quotations below are taken from: Sergio Gabriel Waisman, “Borges Reads Joyce. The Role of Translation in the Creation of Texts.”, *Variaciones Borges 9/2000, Journal of Philosophy, Semiotics and Literature*, p. 59-73, ed. by The J.L. Borges Center for Studies and Documentation University of Aarhus – Denmark.

² The following quotation is taken from: Skautrup, Peter, *Det danske sprogs historie*, vol.III, p. 268, Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1968.

³ Kierkegaard is arguably the greatest stylist of the period, after his first attempts (he became) a passionate, conscious working virtuoso with many studied approaches to spoken language and the audible and rhythmic, but always in a rhetorical vein, characterised by verbosity, foreign elements (particularly German) and the level of abstraction that won him few contemporary readers or – apart from a few word formations – left any direct traces on the standards of language, whereas his stylistic influence can probably be glimpsed in later writers.

⁴ *Frygt og Bæven*, Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter, vol.IV, p.112, GADS Forlag, Copenhagen, 1997. “God... created the hero and the poet or orator. This can do nothing that the other does; he can only admire, love and take delight in the hero. Yet he, too, is happy, not less than that; for the hero is, so to speak, his better nature...” (Own literal translation.)

⁵ 1. BA, Søren Kierkegaard, *Samlede Værker (SV3)*, Bind 6, udg. af A.B. Drachmann, J.L. Heiberg, and H.O. Lange, Gyldendal, 1963.

2. CD, Kierkegaard’s *The Concept of Dread*, trans. with introduction and notes by Walter Lowrie, Princeton, PUP, 1967.

3. CA *The Concept of Anxiety*, by Søren Kierkegaard, ed. and trans. with introduction and notes by Reider Thomte in collaboration with Albert B. Andersen, PUP, New Jersey, 1980.