

# Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter



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

Northfield, Minnesota

NUMBER 50: AUGUST 2006

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## Contents

	Page
<b>ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ARTICLES</b>	
Kierkegaard's Conception of Indirect Communication in "The Dialectic of Ethical and Ethical Religious Communication" of 1847 Noel S. Adams	10
Martin Andic and Søren Kierkegaard David Goicoechea	16
<b>REVIEWS</b>	
Joel D.S. Rasmussen, <i>Between Irony and Witness: Kierkegaard's Poetics of Faith, Hope, and Love</i> by Janne Kylliäinen	25
Rick Anthony Furtak, <i>Wisdom in Love: Kierkegaard and the Quest for Emotional Integrity</i> by Michael Strawser	27
John Lippitt, <i>Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kierkegaard and Fear and Trembling</i> by Paul Martens	29

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

### Professor Julia Watkin

by Gordon Marino

The Kierkegaard community lost a dear friend last year. On January 22, Professor Julia Watkin died sitting in her chair in her garden in Launceston, Tasmania. Those of us who did research in Copenhagen in the late seventies through the eighties will be forever in Julia's debt. She was a guiding light and helping hand for every scholar who came to the Kierkegaard Biblioteket to study.

Professor Watkin was of course a very accomplished scholar and a prolific author. Having taken her doctorate from the University of Bristol in 1980, Julia went on to teach at DIS, the People's University in Copenhagen, and finally in the Department of Philosophy at the Tasmania State University of Technology. At various times, she was on the editorial board of *Populære Skrifter*, *Kierkegaardiana*, and *International Kierkegaard Commentary*. Julia was also the founding editor of the *International Kierkegaard Newsletter* and the translator of Kierkegaard's *Early Polemical Writings* (Princeton University Press, 1990). She was the author of many articles and a number of books including *Kierkegaard* (Geoffrey Chapman, 1997), *Historical Dictionary of Kierkegaard's Philosophy* (Scarecrow Press, 2001) and *God and the Modern World* (Marquette University Press, 2005). But for all of her amazing scholarly accomplishments, Julia spent the bulk of her time and energies helping the rest of us find our way into Kierkegaard.

True to the author of *Works of Love*, Julia paid no heed to worldly distinctions. She treated highflying scholars and tyros alike, as if we were all very special to her. When we came on our study pilgrimages to Copenhagen, Julia would find us apartments, fellowships, books, and she would take time to critique our work. For years, she and her dear friend Grete Kjær would regularly invite Kierkegaard scholars to their home for coffee, treats, and a lively discussion. Whether it be by providing a contact or offering suggestions about travel fellowships or writing one of her countless recommendations, Julia did not cease to be your guardian angel after you left Copenhagen. No matter how pressed for time, she would always keep in contact and was always willing to help in any way that she could.

In conversation and in the pages of Julia's articles and books, I learned a great deal about Kierkegaard but more than her scholarly contributions, Julia was an object lesson in how to live. She was at once deadly serious and a barrel of fun. Her gleaming smile and inimitable laugh were enough to lift the spirits of anyone around her. If ever anyone did, Julia presupposed love in others. Though she was an individual of very keen conscience, she scrupulously avoided passing judgment and always gave a generous read of the behavior of others.

Julia was also an individual of great courage. It seems to me that one of the hardest tasks in life is to live with grace and generosity when you feel as though you are going under. During her last year, Julia knew that she was dying. She had a great appetite for life and was at times terribly frustrated by her illness. Her situation would have been enough to drive most of us into ourselves, but not Julia. No matter how sick she was, she never ceased to ask me about the travails of others and if there was anything that she could do to help scholars. I am only one of many when I say that I count her presence in my life as one of my greatest blessings.

In an effort to help support Kierkegaard scholars all over the world, Julia bequeathed her estate to the Hong Kierkegaard Library. With her largesse, the Library has initiated a yearly Julia Watkin lectureship. The first Watkin lecturer will be distinguished scholar and editor of the IKC, Professor Robert Perkins. The Library is also endowing a research fellowship in Julia's name.

### **Danish Course, Summer 2006**

For the 3rd time the Kierkegaard Library sponsored a month-long intensive Danish class for Kierkegaard scholars taught by Sinead Ladegaard Knox from Copenhagen. The class this year included 11 students each of whom received certificates for completing the course. Participants included Bruce Baugus, Ashley Cake, Cheryl Cottine, Leslie Ballard, Andrew Nam, Jenny Veninga, Joseph Brown, Jamie Ferreira, Peder Jothén, Elizabeth Musselman, and Walter Wietzke. According to Sinead Knox, the course is designed to “help Kierkegaard scholars appreciate Kierkegaard in his native language, grasp the original meaning of his writings and to enhance their own ability to work their way through passages and paragraphs.”

### **Danish Course, Summer 2007**

The Kierkegaard Library will offer the Danish course in July of 2007 if we can enroll 10 students minimum. Sinead Knox will again teach the course. Cost for the course is \$1200 including housing on campus. If you are interested in taking this course, please contact Cynthia Lund as soon as possible at [lundc@stolaf.edu](mailto:lundc@stolaf.edu).

### **Summer Fellowship Program, 2006**

The Library welcomed 21 scholars to do their own research in the Library during the Summer Fellowship Program for various lengths of stay between June 3 and August 15. This group included 14 American scholars and 7 scholars from the following countries: Argentina, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Mexico, and Russia. Participants this summer were: Noel Adams, Tony Aumann, Leslie Ballard, Bruce Baugus, Joseph Brown, Ashley Cake, Ernest Carrere, Christoph Claussen, Ingrid Constant, Cheryl Cottine, Oscar Craviotto, Jamie Ferreira, Almut Furchert, Mime Ikeda, Søren Landkildehus, Erik Lindland, Elizabeth Musselman, Andrew Nam, Mikhail Nemtsev, Addison Smith, Jenny Veninga, and Walter Wietzke. Recipient of the Jonathan Stenseth Memorial Fellowship this year was Mikhail Nemtsev.

### **Summer Fellowship Program, 2007**

Summer fellowships for research-in-residence are offered to scholars for use of the collection between June 1 and August 15, 2007. 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 or other outside fellowships. Please contact Cynthia Lund if you are interested in applying for 2007. Decisions are made on these applications by March 15.

### **Kierkegaard House Foundation Fellows, 2005-6**

Recipients of House Foundation fellowships during the past academic year and summer 2006 included Maria José Binetti, Almut Furchert, Gabriel Merigala, Toshi Hachiya, Roy Sellars, Leo Stan, and Narve Strand. These scholars lived in the on-campus residence for Kierkegaard scholars, Finholt House, as space allowed and represent colleges and universities in Argentina, Canada, Denmark, Germany, India, and the US.

### **Kierkegaard House Foundations Fellows, 2006-7**

The following scholars have received fellowships for the coming academic year: Maria José Binetti, Gabriel Merigala, Søren Landkildehus, William McDonald, Myron Penner, John Poling, and Narve Strand. These scholars are citizens of Argentina, Australia, Canada, Denmark, India, Norway, and the US.

### **Kierkegaard House Foundation Fellowship, 2007-8 and 2008-9**

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 stipends for periods of 4-12 months. Applications are on a rolling admissions basis. Please send a CV, a plan of work at the Kierkegaard Library, and 2 letters of recommendation as soon as possible to:

Cynthia Lund, Acting Curator  
Kierkegaard Library

St. Olaf College  
1510 St. Olaf Avenue  
Northfield, MN 55057

### **Visiting Scholars Program, 2006-7, 2007-8**

Kierkegaard scholars are invited to visit the Library to do their own research at any time when the Library is open during the year. Possible support and housing vary depending on the circumstances of individual scholars and the dates involved. Scholars with support from their own institutions or grant-funded projects are also encouraged and welcome.

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Northfield, MN 55057

### **Gordon Marino on Sabbatical/Leave of Absence**

After 11 years of leadership by Gordon Marino, the Library will be working this year without his direction. Dr. Marino will be on sabbatical leave and a leave of absence living in Florida. Cynthia Lund will serve as Acting Curator from September 1 until May 31. Communications to the Library including inquiries should be sent to Cynthia Lund at [lundc@stolaf.edu](mailto:lundc@stolaf.edu). The winter issue of the Library will be edited by Gordon Marino but communications for the newsletter should be sent to Cynthia Lund during this year. Gordon Marino will return in November for events surrounding the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kierkegaard Library.

### **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Kierkegaard Library, November 2006**

St. Olaf College will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kierkegaard Library by a visit from the Danish ambassador to the US on November 9th. Events to mark this occasion will include the first Julia Watkin Memorial Lecture to be given by Dr. Robert Perkins, funded by the Julia Watkin bequest to the Library.

### **The International Kierkegaard Newsletter – future plans**

Julia Watkin's publication, *The International Kierkegaard Newsletter*, was transferred to the Kierkegaard Library some months ago. Past issues of this publication appear on our website – part of Julia's website which was transferred to us before her death. We hope to continue her efforts to provide a very complete bibliographic reporting resource for world-wide Kierkegaard work, conferences, discussions etc. Sylvia and Robert Perkins as well as David Possen are personally involved in continuing Julia's work for Kierkegaard study worldwide. The next issue of the *Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter* will have further information regarding the future shape of Julia Watkin's *IKN* including how to report events and publications.

### **Donors to the Hong Kierkegaard Library since August 2005**

Books, articles and financial gifts were given to the Library by the following individuals during the past year:

Maria Jose Binetti, Joseph Brown, Andrew Burgess, Clare Carlisle, Ernest Carrere, Katalina Elena Dobre, Karel Eisses, Jamie Ferreira, Donald Fox (books from the library of Walter Lowrie), Junichi and Mime Ikeda, Roman Kralik, Sharon Krishek, Janne Kylläinen, Soren Landkildehus, Eric Lund, Gordon Marino, Laura Llevadot Pascal, Rafael Garcia Pavon, Gertrude Pojman, Simon Podmore, Roy Sellars, Tatiana Schitzova, Elisabete Sousa, Leo Stan, Patrick Stokes, Tamar Aylat Yaguri, and Zdenek Zacpal,. The Friends of the Kierkegaard Library also gave financial support to the work of the Library. The estate of Julia Watkin provided printed and archival resources as well as financial support.

The Library is grateful to all who have contributed to the Library. We welcome books, articles and financial assistance including scholars' own publications in all languages.

## OTHER NEWS

### **KJN - Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks**

Bruce Kirmmse reports that Volume I of the Princeton University Press new edition of the Journals and Notebooks is expected now to be available in January of 2007. Volume II is expected to be in print by May of 2007.

### **General Information about the Kierkegaard Society Sessions at the American Philosophical Association (APA) Meetings**

The Kierkegaard Society (U.S.A.) currently plans to hold sessions at two out of three APA meetings each academic year. During the 06 academic year, we will run sessions at the Eastern APA in Washington D.C., and the Pacific APA in San Francisco. During the 07-08 academic year, we will run sessions concurrently with the Eastern APA and the Central APA. This rotation should continue, with a session at the Eastern APA each year, and the Central and Pacific every other year in alternation.

Topics or themes for the sessions will vary, and suggestions are appreciated. Submitters are encouraged to focus on the philosophical dimensions and themes of Kierkegaard's work (and the work of other thinkers being compared with Kierkegaard) on the topic. Of course this will often include reference to religious themes and ideas, but papers with a narrowly theological focus are generally less appropriate for the APA.

If you do not see or receive a call for papers by March of the academic year before the conference for which you want to submit, please contact the Society's APA rep:

John Davenport, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy,  
Fordham University, [Davenport@Fordham.edu](mailto:Davenport@Fordham.edu), 212-636-7928

The deadline for the Eastern APA will generally be **April 1**  
The deadline for the Pacific or Central will generally be **June 1**

Since our email list for members of the Society is not perfect, the Call for Papers will also be posted on the Society's webpages, and we will try to include it in SK Society Newsletters, as well as bulletins from the Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College. Scholars, including graduate students, who have not spoken recently at an APA group meeting of the SK Society are especially encouraged to submit. We also make special efforts to include papers by a European scholar during the year. But usually only one submission from a single individual will be considered in a given academic year. Papers will be refereed for quality and relevance to the session theme. (Submissions from anyone connected with Fordham will be evaluated by a separate outside referee).

Anyone interested in chairing a session should also contact John Davenport at the email above.

### **Current CALL FOR PAPERS**

#### **Søren Kierkegaard Society Meeting at the Eastern APA**

December 27-30, 2007, Baltimore, MD - Marriott Inner Harbor

Session Theme: *Kierkegaard and World Religions*

Reading time: 20-25 minutes max.

Deadline for submission: April 15, 2007. Two open slots.

Keynote address to be given by Steven Emmanuel.

#### **Søren Kierkegaard Society Meeting at the Central APA**

April 14-20, 2008, Chicago, IL - Palmar House Hilton

Session Theme: *Kierkegaard, Kant, and German Idealism*

Reading time: 20-25 minutes max.

Deadline for submission: June 1, 2007. Two open slots.

Keynote address to be given by Ulrich Knappe (University of Copenhagen)

Any submission broadly related to these topics will be considered. Scholars, including graduate students, who have not spoken recently at an APA group meeting of the SK Society are especially encouraged to submit. No more than one submission per person, please. Submit to [Davenport@fordham.edu](mailto:Davenport@fordham.edu).

Upcoming Kierkegaard Society Group Meetings at APAs

### **Group Session at the Eastern APA**

December 28-30, 2006, Washington, D.C. Marriott Wardman Hotel.

Session Title: *Faith and Despair: Fear and Trembling and Sickness Unto Death*

Chair: John Davenport (Fordham University)

Presenters:

1. *Keynote Address* : Sheridan Lynne Hough (The College of Charleston): "To Begin Where Thought Stops: Faith's Knowledge as Epistemic Flexibility."
2. Andrew Nam (Baylor University), "Does Choosing Despair Mean Annihilation of the Self? A Critique of Poul Lübcke View of Despair and the Self."
3. Michael Cantrell (Baylor University), "The Unbearable Anxiety of Belief: *Fear and Trembling* as a Study in the Sociology of Knowledge"

Comments: Merold Westphal (Fordham University)

### **Group Session at the Pacific APA**

April, April 3-8, 2007, St. Francis Hotel: San Francisco, CA.

Session Title: *Furtak and Others on Kierkegaard, Wisdom, and Love*

Chair: Noel Adams (Marquette University)

Presenters:

1. *Keynote Address*: Robert C. Roberts (Baylor University), "Emotions as Epistemic Ground: Comments on Furtak's *Wisdom in Love*"
2. [being determined]
3. [being determined]

Response to Critics: Richard Anthony Furtak (Colorado College)

### **News from the Søren Kierkegaard Research Center in Copenhagen**

The topic of this year's Research Seminar was *Edifying Discourses in Various Spirits* (from 1847) and *Christian Discourses* (from 1848). The speakers were: Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Istvan Czako, Iben Damgaard, Hermann Deuser, Elisabeth Grab-Schmidt, Albrecht Haizmann, Jack Mulder, jr., Michael H. Olesen, Joel Rasmussen, Vanessa Rumble, Bartholomew Ryan, Pia Søltoft, Steen Tullberg. The seminar took place in Copenhagen between August 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>.

The Søren Kierkegaard Research Center plans to publish *Lilien paa Marken og Fuglen under Himlen; Tvende ethisk-religøse Smaa-Afhandlinger; Sygdommen til Doden og "Ypperstepraesten" - "Tolderen" - "Synderinden"* (all from 1849) as vol. 11 in *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*.

The Søren Kierkegaard Research Center carried out “Kierkegaard in Copenhagen Seminar: *Either/Or*” at Oresund Summer University – 2006. The aim of the seminar-style course was to become acquainted with Søren Kierkegaard’s first major pseudonymous work, *Either/Or*. The seminar took place at the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre at Vartov from July 3- August 7, Monday, Wednesdays, and Thursdays and 13:15-15:15. Course coordinator was K. Brian Soderquist.

### **Kierkegaard and Asia Conference, December 2005**

Submitted by Patrick Stokes

'Kierkegaard and Asia,' the first international conference of the Kierkegaard Society of Japan (Kyoto), was held from December 2-5th at Ormond College, University of Melbourne, Australia. Scholars from Asia, Australasia and North America presented papers covering a range of topics with a special emphasis on Kierkegaard's reception and engagement in Asian philosophical and religious traditions. This highly successful event was the first such conference held in the Asia-Pacific region and augurs well for the future of Kierkegaard studies here.

### **News from SOBRESKI (Brazilian Society of Kierkegaard Studies)**

Submitted by Donald Nelson

The 6<sup>th</sup> journey of studies of SOBRESKI took place the 10-11<sup>th</sup> of November 2005 in Sao Paulo at the federal university. The 150 years since the death of SK was observed. Several themes including reflections on SK and Heidegger, by Professor Daniel Nascimento; existential tensions in SK by Prof. Christina Oliveira; Fransma Lima talked about Kafka and SK; time and experience in SK and Benjamin by Ilana do Amaral; ethics and SK in “Concept of Dread” by Prof. Dr. Marcio Gimenes de Paula; ethics and politics in the thought of SK by Dr. Jorge Almeida; SK and the romantic tradition by Dr. Suzuki; Thiago Nilo spoke about semiotic literature; the correct love of self by Prof. Jose Chadan.

The gathering of 25 people was presented with the first audio-visual of SK produced in Sao Paulo by Ricardo Gouvea and John Ali which is in process. The concluding talk was by Alvaro Valls on SK and Nietzsche.

The next meeting of SOBRESKI will be held in Fortaleza, Ceara, in 2006.

### **Establishment of Biblioteca Kierkegaard Argentina**

Announcement submitted by Maria Jøse Binetti

The Argentinian Kierkegaard Library is an independent organization founded in 2003 by a group of people interested in studying and reading Kierkegaard in his original language. The central aim of the Library is to promote and to spread abroad Kierkegaardian thought in a wide-range of philosophical, psychological, theological, literary, existential and social perspectives. It is located in the Danish Lutheran Church of Buenos Aires where the complete works and journals of Kierkegaard together with several commentaries and related texts have been gathered.

Throughout the year, the Library offers seminars and lectures presented by its members and other prominent cultural personalities. Seminars and lectures are open not only to academics and specialists but to the entire community and to anyone fond of Kierkegaard. In addition, the Library organizes between October and November an annual conference about an outstanding Kierkegaardian issue. In the last year, the annual conference was attended also by Brazilian and Chilean scholars. In the present year, it will be devoted to the political sources of Kierkegaardian thought.

The Library also sponsors a group translating materials from Danish into Spanish supervised by the Pastor of the Danish Church. This group has translated for the first time into Spanish *The Moment*, which will shortly be published by Trotta (Spain). The group is currently working on a Spanish translation of *For Self-Examination*.

As it looks to the future, Biblioteca Kierkegaard Argentina hopes to increase the size of its collection, to include new Kierkegaardian followers, and to strengthen its international links. For further information about the Library, please see the following website: [www.sorenkierkegaard.com.ar](http://www.sorenkierkegaard.com.ar).

### **Kierkegaard Collection in Slovakia**

Information from Roman Kralik

A Kierkegaard Collection has been established in Slovakia as part of the Public Library of the city of Sala. This library has been gathered together by Roman Kralik who was a summer fellow at the Kierkegaard Library in 2004. Help and support for this special collection has been provided by Mr. M. Demin.

The Kierkegaard Collection in Slovakia is open mainly for students and others interested in Philosophy and Theology. Its aim is to help students with their final diploma and dissertation work, considering the insufficient access to professional literature available. The Collection includes Kierkegaard's published work in Danish, Czech, and English and many monographs.

The Collection was established with the assistance of the Royal Danish Embassy in Bratislava, especially Ambassador Jorgen Rasmussen and Vice-Consul Carsten Krabbe. Grant help was also provided by the researcher Mr. Peter Sajda by supplying the Collection with Kierkegaard's writings in Danish. Other contributors to the library include the Royal Danish Ministry (Prague), Oxford University Press, the Hong Kierkegaard Library, the Soren Kierkegaard Research Center in Copenhagen, and a number of international Kierkegaard scholars and interested individuals. For further information, please see the following website: [www.kierkegaard.chalupkovci.com](http://www.kierkegaard.chalupkovci.com).



**"The day will come when not only my writings, but precisely my life—the intriguing secret of all the machinery—will be studied and studied."**

—Søren Kierkegaard



*New in paperback*

## **Søren Kierkegaard**

A Biography

JOAKIM GARFF

*Translated by Bruce H. Kirmmse*

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—Gordon Marino, *Wall Street Journal*

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## **Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks**

Volume I, Journals AA–DD

SØREN KIERKEGAARD

*Bruce H. Kirmmse, Chairman, Editorial Board; Editors, Niels Jørgen Cappelaere, Alastair Hannay, Bruce H. Kirmmse, George Pattison, and Jon Stewart, in cooperation with the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre, Copenhagen*

The first of an 11-volume series meticulously produced by the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre in Copenhagen, this volume represents the first English translation and commentary of Kierkegaard's journals based on up-to-date scholarship. In addition to the early drafts of his published works, the journals contain his thoughts on then-current events and philosophical and theological matters, notes on books he was reading, miscellaneous jottings, and ideas for future literary projects.

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# Kierkegaard's Conception of Indirect Communication in "The Dialectic of Ethical and Ethical Religious Communication" of 1847

By Noel S. Adams  
Marquette University

Abstract:

In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard posits a distinction between a doctrine/teaching/theory [*Lære*] and an existence-communication [*Existence-Meddelelse*]. He holds, without explaining why, that a doctrine can be communicated directly (and thus is an item of knowledge that can be understood), but that an existence-communication cannot (and thus is not an item of knowledge that can be understood). In a sketch of unpublished lectures written about two years after *Postscript* (*Pap.* VIII2, B79-B89), Kierkegaard provides a rough outline for the theory of communication that underlies that line of reasoning. He introduces a distinction between *Videns Meddelelse* (the communication of knowledge) and *Kunnens Meddelelse* (the communication of capability), holding the former corresponds to direct communication and the latter to indirect communication. I argue that the line of reasoning in these series of lectures is an attempt to account for the claim that Christianity, as an existence-communication cannot be understood as a knowledge [*Viden*], on the one hand, but yet that it can be communicated, on the other. I also argue that Kierkegaard abandons the lectures on account of an essential component of Christianity that does not lend itself to this analysis of communication: sin.

## I

The distinction that Kierkegaard first introduced through Climacus in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* — that Christianity is an existence-communication [*Existent-Meddelelse*], as opposed to a doctrine/teaching/theory [*Lære*]<sup>1</sup> — is introduced in conjunction with another distinction between two different kinds of communication. Corresponding to a doctrine/teaching is direct communication; corresponding to an existence-communication is indirect communication. In *Postscript* the working assumption is that these two kinds of communication are fundamentally different; one cannot be reduced to the other. In addition, each of these distinct kinds of communication takes place within a distinct kind of medium: the medium in which a doctrine/teaching is communicated directly is possibility; the medium in which an existence-communication is communicated indirectly is actuality.<sup>2</sup> Using this line of reasoning, Kierkegaard tries to establish that Christianity is of a nature to be misunderstood if it is approached either within the medium of possibility or if it is approached along the framework of direct communication (i.e., if it is approached as if it were a doctrine/teaching). Thus, there are many ways to go wrong but only one way to go right with regard to approaching not only Christianity but also any existence-communication.<sup>3</sup>

In *Postscript*, the issue of *how* it is possible for an existence-communication to be communicated is not of primary focus. Assuming that this issue was not directly relevant for his purposes in writing that text, there is a question that nonetheless arises naturally from taking seriously what he says about Christianity as an existence-communication. The question is this: what theory of communication is Kierkegaard working with in putting forth the claim that Christianity can be communicated, but cannot be communicated directly on account of its nature? This question received significant treatment by Kierkegaard in a series of journal entries that date from 1847. Kierkegaard apparently entertained the idea of giving a series of lectures on communication in which the distinction between direct and indirect communication would be at issue. Although never completed, these lectures serve as a bridge between the significance of the nature of Christianity and indirect communication first put forth by Climacus in *Postscript* (published in 1846) and later addressed by Anti-Climacus in *Practice in Christianity* (published in 1850). Clearly, since Kierkegaard presents the existence-issue of becoming a Christian as one that is properly framed *only* within a conception of indirect communication, it is a very worthwhile project indeed to attempt to make sense of the structure and framework of the indirect communication of an existence-communication. Only if this framework is coherent can the theme of becoming

a Christian — as Kierkegaard conceives of it — be coherent. This paper is written with the aim of clarifying that important aspect of Kierkegaard's writings.

## II

In the sketch of the lectures entitled “The Dialectic of Ethical and Ethical-Religious Communication,”<sup>4</sup> Kierkegaard proposes that all communicating consists of four elements: the object [*Gjenstanden*], the communicator [*Meddelelsen*], the receiver [*Modtageren*] and the communication [*Meddelelsen*].<sup>5</sup> It is on account of the way in which these four elements are conceived of and employed that Kierkegaard distinguishes the communication of knowledge [*Videns Meddelelse*] from the communication of capability [*Kunnens Meddelelse*]. Specifically, he points out three ways in which these two kinds of communication can be distinguished. The first distinction is the way in which the object is reflected upon; the second is the way in which the communication is reflected upon; the third is the way in which the communicator and the receiver are related.<sup>6</sup> These three distinctions will now be analyzed in the order that Kierkegaard brings them up.

The most straightforward way to see the difference between the communication of knowledge and the communication of capability is by reflecting upon the object [*Gjenstanden*]. In the communication of knowledge, the object is the exclusive matter of focus, whereas in the communication of capability, there simply is no object.<sup>7</sup> The communication of knowledge is direct communication precisely because there *is* an object. Kierkegaard maintains that in the communication of knowledge, when the object is reflected upon properly and successfully, the other elements — the communicator, the receiver and the communication — fall completely into the background. To say that they fall entirely into the background is what it means to say that this kind of communication is “objective”.<sup>8</sup> The objective way of communicating focuses exclusively on the object, which in turn tends toward the impersonal and away from personality [*Personlighed*].<sup>9</sup> In the communication of knowledge, it is presupposed that the receiver has a receptiveness [*Modtagelighed*],<sup>10</sup> but the emphasis is upon the matter of receiving the object [*Gjenstanden*], as opposed to the matter of receptiveness in the sense of inward deepening. It is in this way that the mathematical, the historical and the philosophical correspond to the objective, to direct communication — that is, to “the communication of knowledge”.<sup>11</sup>

The second distinction that Kierkegaard posits in distinguishing the communication of knowledge from the communication of capability is by reflecting on the communication [*Meddelelsen*] itself. In this context, he draws attention to the medium in which the communication is given. In the communication of knowledge, the medium in which the communication is given is that of imagination [*Phantasie-Mediet*] or possibility [*Mulighed*], whereas in the communication of capability the medium is that of actuality [*Virkelighedens Medium*]. It would appear from the outline of these lectures that it is on account of the distinction between these two media that the distinction between direct and indirect communication is based. It would seem that the very medium of imagination or possibility is what accounts for the communication's being given directly, whereas when the medium of actuality is what accounts for the communication's being given indirectly. After giving this analysis, Kierkegaard posits a further division of indirect communication of capability into three distinct types: aesthetic, ethical and religious. Of these three types of indirect communication within the medium of actuality, the communication is not indirect in the same way. Kierkegaard maintains that only in the ethical communication of capability is the communication unconditionally indirect; alternatively, it follows that neither the aesthetic nor the religious kinds of the communication of capability are unconditionally indirect.<sup>12</sup>

The reason that the three different kinds of communication of capability are not indirect in the same way is accounted for under the third distinction that Kierkegaard posits. This has to do with the way the communicator [*Meddelelsen*] and the receiver [*Modtager*] are reflected upon (i.e., the way in which they are related in the communication). When there is equal emphasis upon both the communicator and the receiver, this is aesthetic communication of capability; when there is emphasis mainly upon the receiver, this is ethical communication of capability; and when there is emphasis mainly upon the communicator, this is religious communication of capability.<sup>13</sup>

### III

Given the significant differences between the three kinds of the communication of capability, it is important to keep in mind that which unites them *as* kinds of indirect communication. Kierkegaard mentions two important features of all indirect communication that are essential in this regard: double reflection and the maieutic.<sup>14</sup> Double reflection is a necessary element in indirect communication on account of the fact that there is no object [*Gjenstand*]. This feature of the communication of capability is very different from the feature of the communication of knowledge, for in the communication of knowledge, the object of knowledge is either knowledge about something distinct from oneself or self-knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes in these lecture notes Kierkegaard says that this kind of communication — in which there *is* an object — can be found in science [*Videnskab*]. The alternative kind of communication — in which there is *no* object — can be found in art [*Kunst*]. And so it is that in the earlier sections of the sketch of these lectures, before settling on the terms “communication of capability” and “communication of knowledge,” Kierkegaard writes of the difference between communicating as an art and communicating as a science.<sup>16</sup> The three kinds of indirect communication (aesthetic, ethical and religious) are, in his view, closer to a kind of art than they are to science. That is to say, they have to do with a realization [*Realisation*]<sup>17</sup> rather than with an object [*Gjenstand*]. Kierkegaard elaborates on the way in which realization is to be understood by employing the story of the way in which a corporal, (who is a kind of teacher both with regard to having competence [*Færdigheden*] and with regard to having authority [*Myndigheden*]) makes a soldier out of a mere farm lad. The farm lad “has it in him,” so to speak, to become a soldier; but it takes the art of the corporal to “pound it out of him,” as opposed to “pounding it into him,” as is done in science.<sup>18</sup> According to Kierkegaard, this example of the corporal and the farm lad best illustrates the way in which the ethical is communicated. That is, the “corporal begins essentially by regarding the farm boy as a soldier, because he is that *κατὰ δύναμιν*.”<sup>19</sup> In the same way, every human being must be assumed to have the ethical within him. The communication of art (i.e., the communication of capability) presupposes this very thing, and has to do essentially with this kind of realization, whereas the communication of science (i.e., the communication of knowledge) does not.

It is this idea that all human beings are in some sense intrinsically capable of becoming a person, or taking on a personality [*Personlighed*] that leads Kierkegaard to settle upon the term “communication of capability” [*Kunnens Meddelelse*]. The communication of capability begins with the assumption that one is “capable of” realizing the task of becoming a person. This idea permeates much of Kierkegaard’s authorship, and was stated explicitly in *Postscript* in the following way: “Every human being must be assumed to possess essentially what belongs essentially to being a human being.”<sup>20</sup> Just because the communication of capability presupposes that every human being possesses the essential condition of realizing the task<sup>21</sup> of becoming a person does not, however, entail that the art of communicating this task is easy. It is here that the relevance of “the maieutic” is apparent in making sense of the communication of capability. For it corresponds to the lack of ease, so to speak, in pounding out of a person that which is essentially in him. After all, the maieutic presupposes that the task at hand is going to be a difficult one. The difficulty is always there, never to be ignored or overlooked; it is an essential component of the “bringing forth” or “pounding out.”

The element of double reflection in the communication of capability points to a kind of deception that is an integral part of the relationship between the communicator [*Meddeler*] and the receiver [*Modtager*]. This deception is there in all three kinds of the communication of capability (i.e., aesthetic, ethical and religious), but it is particularly pronounced, according to Kierkegaard, in ethical and religious communication. He describes the nature of this deception in the following way:

To “deceive” belongs essentially to the essentially ethical-religious communication. “To deceive into the truth.” That it is a deception is also the expression for the reduplication [*Reduplicationen*], in which the teacher and the learner are separated from each other in order to exist therein. Ethical communication in character always begins with placing a “deception” in between, and the art consists in enduring everything while remaining faithful to character in the deception and faithful to the ethical. But here again you will see the reduplication.<sup>22</sup>

As Kierkegaard had stated earlier in the drafts of these lectures, to speak about reduplication or double reflection is to speak of the existential [*det Eksistentielle*]: “to be what one teaches.”<sup>23</sup> His complaint throughout these lectures, just as it was in *Postscript*, is that the existential had completely gone away during his day and age.<sup>24</sup> In lieu of duplicity of the existential, “the age” offered the transparency of direct communication. But if an attempt is made to communicate the ethical and the religious within the framework of direct communication, where there is no deception possible on account of the transparency, the receiver will not be in the proper position to receive the communication in the right way. In one way or another, this is the argument that Kierkegaard keeps coming back to time and again in driving home the point that Christianity cannot be approached directly, cannot be approached according to the structure of the communication of knowledge. The duplicity of the deception in Christianity, of course, is the God-man’s incognito. The God-man is the epitome of both competence and authority, yet has the appearance of being the exact opposite.<sup>25</sup>

#### IV

Now that the three different kinds of the communication of capability have been delineated, attention will be drawn to the relevant differences between them so as to better illuminate the communication of the distinctively *Christian* capability. Even though aesthetic, ethical and religious capability have more similarities to one another as kinds of *capability* than they do as kinds of *knowledge*, it is important to note that religious capability has a feature that makes it unlike the other two kinds. According to Kierkegaard, this has to do with the fact that religious capability (or religious-oughtness capability) has an element of knowledge in so far as there is, after all, an object [*Gjenstand*]. He discusses this in the following way:

Here is an element of knowledge and to that extent an object. But it is only a first thing. The communication is still not essentially of knowledge but a communication of capability. That there is an element of knowledge is particularly true for Christianity; a knowledge about Christianity must certainly be communicated in advance. But it is only a preliminary.<sup>26</sup>

It is on account of this conception of Christianity that Kierkegaard maintains that its communication is not merely or purely indirect, but rather is “direct-indirect communication.”<sup>27</sup> The object [*Gjenstand*] of Christianity, of course, is the God-man; one cannot talk accurately or meaningfully about becoming a Christian, on Kierkegaard’s view, unless one is talking about relating properly to the God-man. But, again on Kierkegaard’s view, the God-man is to be taken as an object only as a preliminary step toward the actual carrying out of the capability that a person then (*but only then*) has of becoming a Christian. Kierkegaard seems to be conceiving of the matter of becoming a Christian as one that essentially involves a kind of *Indøvelse*, a matter of practice or exercise or training — just as the matter of becoming a soldier is a matter of a certain kind of training or practice via the competence and authority of the corporal. Indeed, this is exactly the line of reasoning that is followed up by Kierkegaard in *Practice in Christianity* [*Indøvelse i Christendom*]. The way in which the themes in these lectures on communication inform the themes of focus in his later authorship and the way they stem from his earlier authorship (especially *Postscript*) indicates just how important they are in the overall project of the Kierkegaardian *corpus*.

The kind of training that is not only relevant but requisite for becoming a Christian can be taken for what it is worth only if one can indeed do that — that is, only if it actually *means* something. But *what* it means to train oneself in Christianity (to become what one is capable of becoming) is a matter that follows from taking as its point of departure the first element of Christianity: the element of knowledge [*Viden*]. This element points to the fact that the object — the God-man — is, in a sense, everything; for only if the relation to this object is appropriated (or taken on or conceived of) correctly can one then go on to discuss meaningfully the question of whether or not the exercises one is going through correspond properly to the initial object that occasioned their being undertaken. Much, then, needs to be said about the nature of the object since, notwithstanding the fact that it is “only a preliminary,” it is still the very starting point, the point of departure.

#### V

Presumably such issues would have been addressed by Kierkegaard were he to have finished his lectures on communication, but alas he abandoned them. As he left them, these lectures point in yet another way to the gap between the actual carrying out (in actuality)<sup>28</sup> of the task of becoming a Christian (i.e., our own pounding out of us from within us by us of the inherent potential to become a Christian) and “the teacher” (who has not only competence but also authority with respect to the element of knowledge that is initially communicated).<sup>29</sup>

This gap is a broad, ugly theoretical ditch that is, I argue, impossible to cross on account of the way in which Kierkegaard presents the nature of the relation between a human being and God (not only in these lectures, but also throughout his entire authorship). In closing, I would like to indicate why this gap is of a nature not to be bridged. I will argue that Kierkegaard’s attempt at constructing a theory of the communication of Christianity is ultimately not even a possibly successful venture. The primary reason for the inevitable failure of Kierkegaard’s attempt to construct a theory of communication of Christianity is because of the way in which he conceives of sin. The moment sin is posited or taken seriously, the concept that a human being possesses the capability that corresponds to the task of becoming a Christian falls out. For taking sin seriously means that one begins with the assumption that a human being has forfeited the condition that is necessary condition for becoming a Christian in the first place.<sup>30</sup> Becoming a Christian is possible only after a relation to the god-man is posited; but sin precludes an initial capability of this kind. In order for a relation to the object, the god-man, to be established, sin must be removed. But if the obstacle of sin can be removed, this is not on account of the capability of a human being; rather, it is on account of the capability of the god-man.<sup>31</sup> The question of how all of *this* can be communicated on the framework put forth within the lectures on the dialectic of ethical and ethical-religious communication is an impossible one. For although the question is indeed coherent and meaningful, there simply is no way of answering it within the framework put forth within these lectures. If the question is to be answered, then, indeed, another framework is needed.

Perhaps it is on account of recognizing this problem that Kierkegaard abandoned the project of these lectures. If a solution to the problem of communicating *Christianity* exists, perhaps it exists for God, but not for us; perhaps it make sense from the point of view of eternity, but not for us.<sup>32</sup> Whatever this is supposed to mean, however, must be, I suggest, utterly baffling to us human beings if Kierkegaard’s conceptions of Christianity and of sin are taken seriously.

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<sup>1</sup> For textual evidence that Christianity is not a doctrine but rather an existence-communication, see (SKS, 7, p. 298 / KW XII.1, p. 326; SKS, 7, p. 337-339 / KW XII.1, p. 370-372; SKS, 7, p. 345, 346 / KW XII.1, p. 379, 380; SKS, 7, p. 508 / KW XII.1, p. 559; SKS, 7, p. 518 / KW XII.1, p. 570; SKS, 7, p. 532 / KW XII.1, p. 585).

<sup>2</sup> (SKS, 7, p. 287, 288 / KW XII.1, p. 315, 316; SKS, 7, p. 295 / KW XII.1, p. 323).

<sup>3</sup> For indeed there are different kinds of existence-communications discussed in *Postscript*; see, for example, (SKS, 7, p. 519, 520 / KW XII.1, p. 571-573).

<sup>4</sup> (Pap. VIII2, B79-B89 / JP1, 648-657).

<sup>5</sup> (Pap. VIII2, B 83 / JP1, 651).

<sup>6</sup> (Pap. VIII2 B 83 / JP1 651).

<sup>7</sup> Although Kierkegaard indicates several times in the sketch of these lectures that he needs to flesh out exactly what it means for there to be “no object,” he in fact never goes on to do so. See, for example, (Pap. VIII2, B 85:3 / JP1, 653:3; Pap. VIII2, B 85:8 / JP1, 653:8; Pap. VIII2, B 88 / JP1, 656; Pap. VIII2, B 89 / JP1, 657).

<sup>8</sup> (Pap. VIII2, B 85:1 / JP1, 653:1).

<sup>9</sup> (Pap. VIII2, B 84 / JP1, 652). Compare this idea to that put forth in Part One of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Although he does not say so explicitly, it can be inferred that Kierkegaard conceives of “the subjective” wherein the communicator, the receiver and the communication are in the foreground.

<sup>10</sup> I here depart from the Hongs’ translation of “predisposition” for *Modtagelighed* in (Pap. VIII2, B 85:2 / JP1 653:2).

<sup>11</sup> (Pap. VIII2, B 84 / JP1, 652). Although he does not say so explicitly, it can be inferred that “the subjective” corresponds to the communicator, the receiver and the communication being in the foreground.

<sup>12</sup> The reason that the communication of religious capability is not unconditionally indirect communication is, as stated in (Pap. VIII2 B 83, p. 159) that it begins with a communication of knowledge, but that it is nonetheless essentially indirect communication. (“religiøs Kunnsens Medd. er forsaavidt directe Medd. som der i et Først er en Videns Medd., men væsentligen indirecte Medd.” (Pap. VIII2 B 83, p. 159). The significance of this claim is important in establishing the relationship of these lectures to the claim made in *Postscript* that Christianity is an existence-communication

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whose object, the god-man, is to be related to in existence as actuality, not in possibility. In *Postscript*, there is indeed an object; but the god-man is an object of faith, not of knowledge, as is the case in these lectures.

<sup>13</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 83, p. 160 / *JP1* 651, p. 282).

<sup>14</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 81:21-24 / *JP1* 649:18-24).

<sup>15</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 81:8 / *JP1* 649:8).

<sup>16</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 81:5, 6 / *JP1* 649:5, 6; *Pap.* VIII2 B 81:12 / *JP1* 649:12).

<sup>17</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 81:13 / *JP1* 649:13, p. 272).

<sup>18</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 81:5 / *JP1* 649:5; *Pap.* VIII2 B 81:13-15 / *JP1* 649:13-15; *Pap.* VIII2 B 85:11 / *JP1* 653:11, p. 285).

<sup>19</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2, B 81:5 / *JP1* 649:5, p. 269).

<sup>20</sup> (*SKS*, 7, 325 / *KW* XII.1, 356). The context of the discussion of this very point in *Postscript* is the chapter on actual and ethical subjectivity. I suggest that the very same move is being followed upon on in these lectures. That is to say, the lectures meant to focus on the way in which subjectivity relates to communicating.

<sup>21</sup> Although there is no explicit discussion of the task of becoming a person in this section of the lectures on communication, it is clear that the idea of a task is being presupposed. The communication of capability perhaps makes sense even if no task is presupposed; but the presupposition of a task here is neither essential nor controversial.

<sup>22</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 85:24 / *JP1* 653:24, p. 288).

<sup>23</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 85:19 / *JP1* 653:19, p. 287).

<sup>24</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 85:31 / *JP1* 653:31, p. 289).

<sup>25</sup> With this incognito not only is there deception, but it is precisely on account of this deception that there enters in the element of offense.

<sup>26</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 85:29 / *JP1* 653:29, p. 289). “Her er et Moment af Viden og forsaavidt en Gjenstand. Men det er blot et Første. Meddelelsen er dog ikke væsentlig Videns men Kunnens Meddelelse. At der er et Videns Moment gjælder navnlig i Forhold til det Christelige, der maa jo foreløbigt meddeles en Viden om Christendom. Men det er blot et Foreløbigt.”

<sup>27</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 85:27 / *JP1* 653:27, p. 288).

<sup>28</sup> This is taken to stand in opposition to the idea of carrying out the task in possibility, which is what the communication of knowledge recommends.

<sup>29</sup> (*Pap.* VIII2 B 85:28 / *JP1* 653:28, p. 289).

<sup>30</sup> This notion, developed at length in both *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, is carried out through the entirety of Kierkegaard's authorship.

<sup>31</sup> The god-man cannot look upon a human being in the same way as the corporal looks upon the farm lad. The relevant difference is that the god-man must transform the human being, a step that is entirely unnecessary in the case of the corporal and the farm lad. It is the unique way in which the communicator and the receiver are related that accounts for this transformation, and which is the item of focus in both *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.

<sup>32</sup> This is, after all, the line of reasoning that was given in *Postscript*; that is, that the paradox is a paradox for a human being, but not from the divine point of view. See, for example, (*SKS*, 7, 194-198 / *KW* XII.1 212-216). It is also on these very pages of *Postscript* that the idea that Christianity contains an element of knowledge is discussed as well; but there the idea is offered up for ridicule.

# Martin Andic<sup>1</sup> and Søren Kierkegaard

By Dr. David Goicoechea  
Professor Emeritus, Philosophy  
Brock University, Ontario, Canada  
November 2005

I do not know how far  
into the religious life  
Martin Andic was  
before he met Søren Kierkegaard.  
But from the beginning and ever since  
Søren certainly spoke to him  
with both indirect and direct communication.  
And from the beginning and ever since  
Martin certainly responded to Søren  
in his own unique way  
as the single individual that he is.

Martin found in Søren a mentor,  
a guide, an inspiration and a witness  
with whom he could constantly hold fast  
to life's objective uncertainties  
in the appropriation process  
of the most passionate inwardness.  
The truth of this most passionate faith  
could call us out of the reactive negativities  
of taking offence at the absurdities of existence  
in our doubt, dread and despair  
into the proactive affirmations of,  
in ever new ways moment by moment,  
absolutely loving absolute love itself

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Martin F. Andic, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, died a year into his retirement of pancreatic cancer on Good Friday (March 25) 2005 at a hospital in St. Catharines, Ont. where he had recently moved to marry his new wife, Victoria.

Martin was a much loved, soft spoken, kind-hearted philosopher/teacher with a very broad range of interests. His interest and writing ranged from the early Greeks to the post-moderns, to animal welfare issues, but his main loves, however, were Kierkegaard and Simone Weil. He has written extensively on Kierkegaard, articles such as "Is Love of Neighbour the Love of an Individual?" (in *Kierkegaard: The Self in Society* ed. by G. Pattison and S. Shakespeare), "Love's Redoubling and the Eternal Like for Like" (in *Works of Love International Kierkegaard Community*, 16 ed. by Robert L. Perkins), and "Simone Weil and Kierkegaard" (in *Modern Theology* vol. 2, no. 1), to name but three. He is also the editor of *Simone Weil and the Intellect of Grace*.

In Canada he was a member of, and frequent speaker at the Brock University Philosophy Society in St. Catharines and the Kierkegaard Circle at the University of Toronto. The Brock University Philosophy Society Martin Andic Fund needs to raise an additional \$1500 to make it a permanently endowed fund with ongoing contributions welcome. This award will be given annually to an upper year philosophy student at Brock who has special interest in Kierkegaard and has financial need. Contributions to this memorial fund should be sent to: Ms. Irene Cherrington, Administrative Assistant, Dept. of Philosophy, Brock University, 500 Glenridge Ave., St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2S 3A1.

The University of Massachusetts at Boston has established the Martin Andic Memorial Fund. This fund provides each year the Martin Andic Prize to a graduating senior in Philosophy. According to Professor Nelson Lande, the Philosophy Department would like to make this fund permanent. This requires raising about \$5000 more in donations by June 30, 2008 to make this fund a permanently endowed fund. If you are interested in contributing to this memorial to Martin Andic, please contact Steven M. Ward, Director of Annual Giving, Institutional Advancement, University of Massachusetts at Boston, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125-3939.

Submitted by Johanna Tito, President of the Brock Philosophy Society



and thereby being enabled  
to relatively love the relative  
in upbuilding rather than  
self-destructive ways together.

Martin came to know Søren as a scientist  
of the aesthetic basement of our inner house  
as a sage of the ethical first floor  
as a subjective thinker of the religious second floor  
in the second immediacy of its infinite resignation  
and as a saint of religiousness B  
with whom he could freely live  
on all three floors of his interior castle at once.

We might reflect upon the “and”  
between Martin Andic and Søren Kierkegaard  
by considering the four articles that Martin wrote  
for the *International Kierkegaard Commentary*  
brought forth by Robert Perkins.

These articles on Socrates and Irony  
on the courage beyond cowardliness  
on reading the Bible as looking into a mirror  
and on the concept of reduplication  
in the *Works of Love* show us how  
Kierkegaard’s overall logic of opposites  
of the either/or, the neither/nor and the both/and  
provided Martin with the articulated viewpoint  
that was the crystal form of his personality.  
Kierkegaard’s philosophy which grew out of  
his logic of the leap into the mixing opposites  
provided Martin with a perspective of appreciation  
for the beautiful, the good, the true and the holy  
wherever they encountered him.  
For the both/and of both absolute value  
and of all relative values is the “and”  
that Martin and Søren share  
and it is the “And” of Andic  
that perhaps makes it the both/and.

#### SOCRATES AND THE IRONY OF SCEPTICISM

Martin Andic with his vast understanding  
of the history of philosophy  
and of human culture both Western and Eastern  
shows us why, in his article  
on Kierkegaard’s first book on *Irony* and Skepticism,  
he chose Kierkegaard’s theoretical paradigm  
of the double movement leap  
as the truest and the wisest.  
That is the case because Kierkegaard

was the first theorist to clearly explicate  
both the paradigm shift and the paradigm leap  
into the double complexity and the double contingency.

The Pre-Socratic philosophers in seeking  
to know the truth about the becoming of all things  
worked out cosmological theories of  
the one, the two, the few and the unlimited  
as being the source and the end  
of generation and corruption.  
In his mid-life crisis Socrates saw  
that they were dealing with  
such a complex excess of forces  
that all he could honestly do  
was to become a skeptic and teach:  
“I know that I know nothing  
but ironically I am, therefore,  
the wisest man in Athens.”  
In his paradigm shift from being  
a scientist of many complex theories  
to becoming an ironical skeptical sage  
he moved from pride to humility,  
from pretension to honesty,  
from ponderosity to humor,  
and from projections to health.  
He made the quantitative leap  
from being an aesthetic physicist  
to being an ironically ethical skeptic  
by seeing that the logic of logos  
could only collect the many  
into assumed but never verified  
colliding theoretical constructs.

However, what was terribly important for Martin  
was that he saw that already in the book on *Irony*  
Kierkegaard was well aware of the paradigm leap  
from the first complexity of modernity  
into the second complexity of postmodernity.  
Socrates got beyond the logic of  
the de facto and the de jure  
to the logic of the subjective thinker  
who followed the de exemplare witness  
to the infinite resignation of the neither/nor.  
By accepting neither Heraclites nor Parmenides  
as having the absolutely true theory  
it was possible to appreciate both  
in relative situations.  
Modern science and philosophy,  
as Hume showed, used the paradigm  
of the first complexity and contingency  
by having to constantly verify new hypotheses.

But already in *Irony* the qualitative leap  
into the second complexity and contingency was clear.  
For if Socrates lived and died as a philosopher  
then Jesus lived and died as the God-man.  
In his journal Kierkegaard put it this way:

“The greatest good, after all, which can be done  
for a being...is to make it free.  
In order to do just that omnipotence is required.  
This seems strange, since it is precisely omnipotence  
that supposedly would make (a being) dependent.  
But if one will reflect on omnipotence, he will see  
that it also must contain the unique qualification  
of being able to withdraw itself again  
in a manifestation of omnipotence in such a way  
that precisely for this reason that which  
has been originated through omnipotence  
can be independent. That is why one human being  
cannot make another person wholly free...  
only omnipotence can withdraw itself  
at the same time that it gives itself away,  
and this relationship is the very independence  
of the receiver.” JP 2. 1251

God’s stepping down from Himself in the Incarnation  
reveals how God can step back  
and let His creatures be free  
so that He can no longer know what they will do.  
Not only are things unknowable to humans  
but also the divine mind is not omniscient.  
That is the double complexity.  
As soon as they are created as free  
they have within them a lack of necessity  
that makes them contingent  
both for humans and for God.  
That is the double contingent.  
When this objective uncertainty  
is appropriated by the subjective thinker  
he and she in the logic of mixed opposites  
can affirm all of existence  
just as Martin does in his article on *Irony*  
when he shows how both Plato  
and Aristophanes can appreciate  
different aspects of Socrates’ skeptical irony.

#### ARISTOTELIAN, SOCRATIC AND KIERKEGAARDIAN COURAGE

Why Martin chose to be a Kierkegaardian follower  
of the God-man is made wonderfully clear  
in Volume 5 of *The International Kierkegaard Commentary*.  
There Martin wrote on the theme of cowardliness

taken up in Kierkegaard's 17<sup>th</sup> *Edifying Discourse*.  
We each live in fear and trembling  
before the threats of daily existence.  
We can each become paranoid  
in our anxiety before life's complexities  
and thus live very unhappy lives.

But Aristotle worked out a great ethical system  
which strongly influenced our Western tradition  
in cultivating virtues as means to happiness  
and thus moving beyond vice and its self-destruction.  
Aristotle showed us how to cultivate the habit  
of living in the golden mean of courage  
between the extremes of cowardliness and foolhardiness.  
With spiritual exercises we can become courageous  
before life's complexities and contingencies.  
We can calculate and find the golden mean  
in any sort of dangerous situation.

However, the Greek skeptics thought that Socrates  
gave a better example of courage  
than you could find in the calculations  
of Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics or Epicureans.  
Socrates with his skeptical irony became  
very courageous especially during his own dying.  
He was not in fear and trembling  
even before the definite threat of the hemlock  
because ironically death is so complex  
that he knew he could not know it  
so why should he fear the unknown.  
He was not in anxiety  
before the complexities he could not know  
because he had a good conscience  
and he trusted that his Divine sign  
would warn him what not to do.  
His honest humility gave him a healthy humor  
that let him be nobly courageous.  
Socrates comforted his friends  
as they came weeping to say "Good bye."  
In his infinite resignation before unknowable complexities  
he had the serenity that appealed to Stoics  
and the joy that appealed to Epicureans.  
He was a nobly realized man  
through his self-realization ethics.

Socrates ascended upwardly  
to the second floor of the house  
in his playful, humble self-realization.  
But the God-man descends downwardly  
to others in their suffering  
on the first floor and in the basement.

As the Good Samaritan He serves  
widows, orphans and aliens by  
welcoming them to his own with hospitality.  
As the suffering servant instead of the philosopher king  
he has no fear of suffering  
because with his suffering he loves others  
even those who make Him suffer.  
He gives a courageous answer  
to the problem of suffering  
by showing the value of suffering  
as an offering of love for others.

Martin with Kierkegaard's philosophy of courage  
shows how Simone Weil is loving  
with a similar suffering for others.  
He shows how Thomas Aquinas developed  
a similar theory of theological virtues  
that are given to us through the grace  
of the suffering of the God-man  
so that our moral virtues are transformed  
into a new kind of other-orientated  
courage, wisdom, strength and justice.

#### THE BIBLICAL MIRROR OF ST. JAMES' EPISTLE

By looking into Martin's article on the mirror  
in volume 21 of the IKC on self-examination,  
we can come to know Martin in the special  
biblical way, which James uniquely emphasizes.  
Martin's article is a masterpiece of  
the simplicity of the complexity of the double contingency  
which each of his articles reveals.  
Each is a work of love which shows us  
his finger print crystal form  
as it brings us face to face with him  
in the special hall of mirrors  
into which Kierkegaard first took him.

When Martin and Kierkegaard read the word of God  
they see the God-man giving  
what he has to the poor  
turning the other cheek  
being happy when God tries him  
and rejoicing always especially in dying.  
When they look into the mirror they see  
this example calling them to imitation.

Martin in being alone before God  
like Luther sees that two things  
are being revealed to him in the mirror:  
the God-man's Incarnation and his own sin.

He sees himself in the mirror  
of the face of Jesus and he sees  
how far he falls short of mirroring  
that face of Jesus in the mirror of his face.  
But all of his works can mirror  
the works of the God-man.  
All of his writing can be a suffering  
yet rejoicing service for others  
which mirrors the face and works of Jesus.  
Thus Martin's vast library  
is a mirror of Martin  
just as each paper he writes is a mirror.

Others who now take and read his books  
and who will read and write on his papers  
will mirror the God-man's works of love  
just as Kierkegaard imitated them in his works  
in striving always with earnestness  
to better and better mirror the face of Jesus.

#### LOVE'S REDOUBLING AND THE ETERNAL LIKE FOR LIKE

Martin's article is the first to appear  
in the IKC volume on *Works of Love*.  
This is so because it gives the simplest  
and clearest account of Kierkegaard's philosophy.  
With the three interrelated concepts of  
repetition, redoubling and reduplication  
Martin explains how each volume of  
Kierkegaard's entire authorship is  
a grace inspired work of love written  
in a very special way for Martin Andic  
and for each of Kierkegaard's readers.

In the double movement leap of repetition  
the God-man in the event of his birth  
in each new event of his life  
and in the event of his death  
lived out the double law of love,  
to love the Lord his God with  
his whole heart, mind and soul  
and his neighbor as himself.  
In Platonic recollection the fallen soul,  
by loving wisely here is able  
to move back up there and recover  
the eternal Form of the Beautiful-Good  
and thus to absolutely love the Absolute.  
In Hegelian Mediation the human spirit  
is able to move through human history  
in a process of progress  
by negating lower ways of knowing

and attaining ever higher ways  
until at the end of history  
we in our common personhood  
then in a fully explicit way  
will absolutely love the Absolute.  
Platonic recollection and Hegelian mediation  
thus perform the first movement of the God-man  
who started out absolutely loving the Absolute.  
But Plato and Hegel left the relative behind  
that the God-man comes down in  
his birth, life and death to re-fetch.  
This repetition is a movement forward  
that lets each moment be new  
as the God-man renews with his love  
the worth of each single individual.

But Kierkegaard worked out the ethics of redoubling  
as well as the metaphysics of repetition.  
He was called into his sacred task  
in everything that he did and  
in every word that he wrote  
to imitate the double movement leaping  
of the double law of love  
which the God-man revealed  
in the service and the suffering  
of his birth, his life and his death.  
Kierkegaard looked into the mirror  
of the living word of God  
and saw the God-man loving  
others in God and God in others.  
He saw that he too must not let  
his affection, friendship and Eros  
be only a self-loving preferential love  
that absolutized the relative.  
Kierkegaard in his life and works  
constantly practiced redoubling  
the God-man's double movement leap  
of love's repetition that makes all things new.

Søren not only redoubled  
the God-man's double movement leap  
of repetition, he also reduplicated it.  
His performing of the works of love  
was a mirroring of those works  
so that others could behold them  
and redouble them in themselves.  
This is what happened with Martin.  
He beheld Søren imitating the works  
of that humble suffering servant  
in all that he did and wrote as in  
a reduplicative mirror for others.

Martin looked into the mirror  
and he clearly saw the law  
of the eternal like for like.  
“What you do unto people  
you do unto God, and therefore  
what you do unto people  
God does unto you.”  
What can eternal life be  
but a continual loving  
in just the way we love here?  
Thus Martin is a mirror for us  
just as Søren was for him  
and as the God-man was for Søren.

And so, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
we can be confident that Martin  
together with Socrates and Jesus  
accepted his dying and death  
with a great courage and offered them  
as his departing gift for us.  
On the Good Friday that coincided  
with the day of Annunciation and Incarnation,  
that is, on the conception day and death day of Jesus,  
Martin was called home by the Lord.  
We believe that he is there now praying for us.  
He was a gentle and soft spoken man  
of good humor and loving disposition  
in whom all animals and the earth  
had a concerned and caring friend.  
As we remember him we pray  
and we know that he prays  
especially for his family  
and especially for his children.

Adieu Martin and Thank You!



## REVIEWS

### *Between Irony and Witness: Kierkegaard's Poetics of Faith, Hope, and Love*

By Joel D.S. Rasmussen

New York/London: T & T Clark International, 2005, 198 pp.

ISBN 0567028410

Reviewed by Janne Kylliäinen  
University of Helsinki, Finland

With an ease that stands in contrast to the complicated subject matter, Joel D.S. Rasmussen explicates what he calls Kierkegaard's "Christomorphic poetics," that is, Kierkegaard's appeal to poetry in his attempt to clarify Christian truth. While some (Louis Mackey, Roger Poole etc.) have read Kierkegaard's works as literature, others have taken him as just a theologian (Arnold Come, for example), but Rasmussen-, like Sylvia Walsch in her *Living Poetically* (1994), wants to do justice both to the poetical and to the ethical-religious character of Kierkegaard's work. His goal is a "constructive explication" of Kierkegaard's Christian poetics of existence-a faithful interpretation, but one that assumes enough distance from its subject to create, in the words of Paul Ricoeur, new possibilities of being-in-the-world for the actual lives of its readers. (1-9.)

In Rasmussen's view, the underlying assumption of Kierkegaard's poetics is that God is like a poet who, in Christ, introduces himself into his work (see *JP* 2, 1391 and 1445 / *Pap.* X 1 A 605 and XI 2 A 98). The task of human being is to receive the truth communicated by God through Christ and to imitate Christ. As a religious poet, Kierkegaard works for this existential assimilation with his literary mimesis.

According to Rasmussen, Kierkegaard constructs his Christomorphic poetics through a "creative correction" of the Romantic ironists and of his teacher Poul M. Møller. In *The Concept of Irony*, Kierkegaard criticizes these ironists for lack of ethical earnestness and in *Either/Or* he caricatures their aestheticism and sensualism. The former work, however, defends "controlled irony," while the latter uses it in negating both the position of the aesthete and that of the ethicist. Kierkegaard also appropriates from the ironists the ideal of "living poetically," it is not enough to project the ideal into works of art, the ideal should be actualized by living poetically, but in the ethical-religious way, not in the aesthetic way of the Romantics Rasmussen sees this idea of living poetically as implicit in Kierkegaard's criticism of P. M. Møller's notion that works of art anticipate eternal salvation by bringing the universal and the particular into harmony in human consciousness (*CA*, 153; *CUP*, 313 n. 1). Kierkegaard implies that the true reconciliation of the ideal and actual takes place only if existence itself becomes an art (*CUP*, 351). However, in Rasmussen's reading the problem turns out to be sinfulness, which makes it impossible for a human being to actualize the ideal in his existence. So is that the end of living poetically? (15-53.)

It would be, were it not for the intervention of the divine poet. Møller had considered the work of art as a point of departure for eternal consciousness. Rasmussen points out that in Chapter 3 of *Philosophical Fragments* the wonder of God's "poem" becomes such a point of departure. Through the poetic analogy of romantic love, Johannes Climacus describes the supposed historical event of incarnation. The intervention of the divine poet into his creation reconciles the ideal and actual. But why does Climacus call this alleged historical event a "poem?" Because there is an analogy between the event and a poem: both produce a kind of reconciliation and both seek to create anew. The difference is that only God's poem is true-in it the ideal really becomes actual. (55-84.)

This event, however, exists only for faith. Climacus again uses, poetical means to emphasize this point. Rasmussen notes that in Chapter 3 of *Philosophical Fragments* Climacus poetically describes human understanding's reaction to the wonder of God's poem. By using such "limit expressions (Ricoeur)" as "the absurd," "the incognito," and "the paradox," the pseudonym seeks to fracture the pretenses of the intellect and to discourage the attempt to explain that which is beyond all understanding. (85-105.)

If truth "is a being, a *life*," as Anti-Climacus claims in *Practice in Christianity*, then the task is not just to comprehend and admire it, but to imitate it (*PC*, 206). Rasmussen explains how Kierkegaard, having appropriated the movement of irony, returns back to the mimetic tradition that runs from the imitation of Homeric virtues in Greek education (*paideia*) to the medieval and Renaissance ideal of *imitatio Christi*. Like the Romantics, Kierkegaard uses irony to break both literary and social mimesis of conventional forms, but having negated these spiritless forms of life, he also posits Christ, the inimitable prototype, as the model for imitation. Rasmussen claims that in effect, if not also by intention, what Kierkegaard accomplishes is a retrieval of the mimetic tradition, both as literary and ethical-religious practice. As poet, Kierkegaard, like Homer and the gospel writers, sings the hero's praises to promote and foster existential imitation. Against both the Romantic ironists and the cultured Lutheran admirers of Christ, Kierkegaard reintroduces imitation as a way that leads to the "decisive place of rest at the foot of the altar." By receiving the Eucharist at the altar, the imitator, who through his imitation has become conscious of the extent of his sinfulness, symbolically participates in the holy story and receives the grace of Christ. Thus, there is a dialectic between the ethical imitation and liturgical assimilation of Christ, but mimesis is fundamental to both. (107-147.)

To conclude, Rasmussen does not accept Kierkegaard's claim that he would have set aside the poetic, when advancing to the religious. Kierkegaard's authorship implies a belief in a poetic production that may promote Christian imitation. Kierkegaard was indeed a kind of poet, namely, a religious poet whose songs were "to the glory of God, about faith, hope, and love (*WL*, 46)." As a religious poet, Kierkegaard was between a "witness to the truth," whose life would have expressed perfectly the ideal, and an "ironist," who just plays with imagined possibilities without striving to actualize any of them. (149-177.)

Rasmussen's book is elegantly written and forms a lucid whole. His analysis of how Kierkegaard "creatively corrected" the Romantic ironists and P.M. Møller seems quite plausible. Rasmussen offers fresh and illuminating readings of highly complicated texts. Take, for example his intriguing gloss on "Ultimatum," which makes one see all of *Either/Or* in a new light. Rasmussen has an ear for both the poetic force and the philosophical and theological meanings of Kierkegaard's terms. Bringing Kierkegaard's poetical practice in connection with ironic and mimetic traditions inspires further reflection and research. Taking the whole authorship to the foot of the altar reminds the reader of the concrete context of Kierkegaard's poetics. All in all, Rasmussen's book is an impressive and important contribution to the earnest study of Kierkegaard's thought and practice alike.

*Wisdom in Love: Kierkegaard and the Quest for Emotional Integrity*

by Rick Anthony Furtak

Notre Dame University Press, 2005. Pp. xii+236.

ISBN 0-268-02873-7

Reviewed by Michael Strawser

University of Central Florida

In his well-known letter written in Gilleleie, on August 1, 1835, Kierkegaard writes: “The first praise always goes to an author for having his own style—that is, a mode of expression and presentation qualified by his own individuality.” Such praise is to be given to Rick Anthony Furtak, for his engaging *Wisdom in Love: Kierkegaard and the Quest for Emotional Integrity*. Furtak’s voice is clear and genuine in the 141 pages that present his argument that the emotion of love is necessary for human integrity. His writing incorporates impressive research on the emotions, Stoicism, and Kierkegaard. The many sources do not detract from his own style, as is often the case, rather they are neatly woven into his own text and fully identified and explained in the 60 pages of notes that follow the main text. We must add this work to an already impressive list of 21<sup>st</sup> century texts emphasizing Kierkegaard’s vision of love.<sup>1</sup>

*Wisdom in Love* consists of three parts: “Stoicism and its Discontents,” “Structural Corrections,” and “Fundamental Questions.” Thus, Furtak’s comprehensive goal is threefold: first, to describe the ancient position of normative Stoicism, which promises a way to moral integrity, but results in an unsatisfactory dispassionate state of apathy; second, to show how Kierkegaard’s writings present a “passionate alternative” to the Hellenistic approach, and third, to develop, following Kierkegaard, an ontology founded on love that makes possible an “authentic moral life” that is both rational and passionate. Overall, Furtak presents an eloquent argument against Stoicism—a philosophy that, after all, is cited as a viable, albeit “purely human” example of a life-view in Kierkegaard’s early *From the Papers of One Still Living*—and a persuasive case for the necessity of love. In what follows, I shall explain select points more specifically and show where further considerations may lead to a fruitful dialogue with Furtak’s text.

Rather than sharply distinguishing emotion and passion, as Spinoza does, Furtak defines emotions as “perceptions of significance,” (6) in order to emphasize that emotions “ought to combine activity with passivity” (15). Nevertheless, he maintains that passivity is essential for an emotion, and it is of course this notion of emotion that the Stoics opposed, for it locates value in externals outside the self in a realm subject to confusion. Stoicism thus teaches “*apatheia*, or the absence of *pathos*,” as “necessary for emotional integrity” (23). In addition to apathy, Furtak shows how “orthodox Stoicism” involves disengagement, withdrawal, alienation, and meaninglessness, and he is certainly right to attack this position as lacking integrity. Furtak is aware that “Stoicism” is more nuanced than this, however, for he describes certain Stoic positions as “a departure from the party line” and “heterodox” (28). Consequently, readers may wonder whether “orthodox Stoicism” is somewhat overstated, and whether there remains a possible interpretation that does not portray a completely apathetic philosophy of indifference, but one which combines the sound practical advantages of eliminating the passive, negative emotions with a cultivation of the active, positive emotions, such as love. That Kierkegaard’s writings are relevant to a critique of the fundamental thesis of orthodox Stoicism is clearly demonstrated within Furtak’s text, but it remains an open question whether there could be some fruitful point of contact between a heterodox or modified version of Stoicism and Kierkegaard’s ontology of love.

In the chapter entitled “Love as Necessary Premise,” Furtak raises “the fundamental (or “transcendental”) question in the philosophy of emotion”: “What must be the case in order for emotions to be truthful, rather than false, perceptions of significance?” (92). Such a question indicates that there are essentially different kinds of emotion; ones that are “truthful” and ones that are “false.” The truthful emotions, if we follow Furtak’s

discussion of how Judge William undermines his own position, would be perceptions of significance in which the “real constituting element” of the emotion is determined or animated from within, rather than without (96). What must be the case for emotions to be truthful is that they must flow from the “enigmatic power at the base of the psyche, and the deepest ground of human existence,” i.e., love (97).

Furtak’s ontology of love is based on Kierkegaard’s *Works of Love*, which is quoted in an explanation of neighborly love—“essentially to will to exist equally for unconditionally every human being” (104). Furtak insightfully explains how such love is related to Aristotelian *philia* and that it involves always interpreting “reality in the best possible light” (106). “Love itself is not initiated by an act of will,” however, it is rather through “cognitive assent” or affirmation of “an unchosen dependency” that one cultivates a meaningful, “authentic emotional life” (106). Consequently, any “belief in the absolute freedom of the will” is untenable (107), for “love is not a product of the will” (120). This point, which would seemingly conflict with an existentialist interpretation of Kierkegaard as a strong proponent of radical freedom, is certainly worthy of deliberation.

Perhaps the most conceptually challenging chapter in Furtak’s book is “Suffering as Logical Consequence.” Why is it that Kierkegaard feels, and Furtak follows, that love and suffering are essentially related? How is it possible that God, being love, has to suffer? Why are Christians—or those who affirm of love as the ontological foundation of existence—expected to suffer the most? What about joy? Shouldn’t love lead to a reduction, if not an elimination of suffering? These are all complicated questions and require a closer look at what love is. Furtak’s explanation of the two kinds of love discussed in *Works of Love—Elskov and Kjærlighed*, or preferential (ego-based) love and unconditional (selfless) love, respectively—is significant. His controversial view is that these two apparently different kinds of love share a common origin and cannot be essentially separated (102). Such an intriguing interpretation might provide a reason why suffering is seen as a necessary consequence of love. If my love binds me to the world, then I am at its mercy. As Furtak writes, “A self that is built up by love is *thereby* rendered susceptible to *pathos*” (110). Examples are easy to find. We are familiar with the expression that to have children is to walk around with one’s heart outside one’s body, and thus at the loss of a child (an example Furtak uses) one suffers greatly. Now the crude Stoic view is that one should not have cared for the child in the first place because of the knowledge that such caring would cause considerable suffering, but is there another view of love in which suffering is transformed to joy? Such a view, I think, is to be found in Kierkegaard’s understanding of “eternal love” (*Kjærlighed*) or “eternity’s shall,” which secures one against all change and despair. Even when one has lost a loved one, the command “you shall love” is not abrogated, and it is this command, which arguably seeks to eliminate all ego-based love, that reduces the dimension of suffering. For in *Works of Love* Kierkegaard writes: “Christian consolation *is joy*. . . . As soon as this consolation comes, it comes with the head start of eternity and swallows up the pain” (WL 64).<sup>2</sup> Naturally, however, insofar as we fall short of “eternal love”—and we always fall short to some degree—we suffer. Insofar as we affirm our lot—whatever hand we have been dealt no matter how bad—as flowing from a positive source of love, we will not fall powerless to the torment of emotional suffering that ultimately leads to despair. Furtak does write of “a kind of joyful acceptance” of life, but it is not one that can “rise above suffering” (133). Surprisingly, Kierkegaard’s highest view of love expressed in *Works of Love* seems to bring us close to the result sought after in Stoicism. Relevant to this and earlier points of discussion is the philosophical position found in the *Ethics* of Spinoza, who was, after all, a kind of modern Stoic. It is surprising that Furtak does not address Spinoza’s position in his work, for it would inform many of his discussions. It would also present the alternative view that God cannot possibly suffer, and that joy is a logical consequence of love.

One final point to be identified for deeper discussion appears only in an endnote, where Furtak writes that “Kierkegaard’s ethic of love does, I believe, recommend care for other living creatures” (200). It is high time that this sound insight—which is in conformity with the fundamental ontological thesis that love is the foundation of existence—be developed and applied. Of course, this will require a hard and honest appraisal of the speciesism prominent in both Kierkegaard and Christianity, but it is the sole alternative in the selfless quest for eternal love.

While I have only been able briefly to discuss select parts of the text and identify a few areas where the dialogue can be taken further, it is evident that Furtak's work will engage a broad variety of readers. Considering its admirable style, *Wisdom in Love* is to be recommended to everyone who is interested in both love and wisdom.

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<sup>1</sup> The other works on this list are: M. Jamie Ferreira's *Love's Grateful Striving* (Oxford University Press, 2001), Amy Laura Hall's *Kierkegaard and the Treachery of Love* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), C. Stephen Evans's *Kierkegaard's Ethic of Love* (Oxford University Press, 2004), and Joel D.S. Rasmussen's *Between Irony and Witness: Kierkegaard's Poetics of Faith, Hope, and Love* (T & T Clark, 2005). See my forthcoming review of Hall's and Rasmussen's work in *Religion and Literature*.

<sup>2</sup> See also the section "Recollecting One Who Is Dead" in *Works of Love*, where Kierkegaard writes: "If, then, you wish to test yourself as to whether you love unselfishly, just pay attention to how you relate yourself to one who is dead.... Ah, if human beings were accustomed to love unselfishly, one would surely also recollect the dead differently from the way one ordinarily does when the first sometimes rather brief period is over, in which one loves the dead inordinately enough with crying and clamor" (WL 350-51).

## **Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kierkegaard and Fear and Trembling**

**By John Lippitt**

**London/New York: Routledge, 2003 (Routledge Philosophy Guidebook Series)**

**Pp ix + 218**

**ISBN 0-415-18046-5**

**Reviewed by Paul Martens**

**University of Notre Dame**

The back cover of Lippitt's text claims that the "Routledge Philosophy Guidebooks painlessly introduce students to the classic works of philosophy." If this is Lippitt's goal, he has failed...but he has failed brilliantly. In fact, the brilliance of Lippitt's text is that it exemplifies and articulates why one cannot painlessly introduce Søren Kierkegaard's complex and highly nuanced Fear and Trembling. In doing so, the Guidebook serves as a clear, well-written introduction to the challenges posed by the text and context of Fear and Trembling for general readers and undergraduate philosophy classes at any level.

Lippitt's Guidebook begins with a brief introduction to orient a reader to Kierkegaard and his most famous philosophical text. At the outset, Lippitt sketches a brief outline of Kierkegaard's life, self-consciously offering enough for the reader to sense Kierkegaard's complexity as an individual and author while withholding enough to foreclose, preemptively, interpretations grounded solely in his biographical idiosyncrasies.

Further, Lippitt introduces Kierkegaard's methodological and pedagogical strategy of pseudonymity, supplying a tentative point of view concerning Johannes de silentio in particular, that he revisits and develops in the concluding chapter. The final, much appreciated, inclusion in the introduction is a cursory examination of the story of Abraham and Isaac as it appears in Genesis 12, providing the necessary backdrop for illuminating Kierkegaard's idiosyncratic interpretations and appropriations of the story.

The structure of the text itself naturally breaks into two sections: the first five chapters trace the contours of the argument of Fear and Trembling while the final two chapters engage larger interpretive issues of meaning and authorial pseudonymity. Complimenting and illuminating the linear progression of the Guidebook, Lippitt provides frequent helpful subtitles to (re)orient readers to new and potentially unfamiliar aspects of the discussion. The only warning I want to include at this point is that the pagination of Lippitt's Guidebook utilizes Alastair Hannay's Penguin Classics translation, so use with the Howard and Edna Hong Princeton translation will be more difficult.

The obvious benefit of the Guidebook's structural imbalance is that Lippitt is able to introduce and carefully attend to the nuances of even the small segments of Fear and Trembling, such as the "Preface" and "Attunement." A further advantage is that the reader is exposed to Kierkegaard's text itself before encountering the encumbering and inexhaustible secondary debates surrounding authorial intention that hover over all of Kierkegaard's writings. The potential disadvantage is that Lippitt appears to lead his readers to a conclusion concerning the meaning of Fear and Trembling (its parts and its whole) before he seriously evaluates the status or character of Johannes de silentio.

Within this exceptionally effective structure, and building on the valuable introduction, the strength of the Guidebook lies in its succinct textual analysis. Lippitt vigilantly avoids interpretive extremes, conscientiously presenting and evaluating divergent contextual referents and secondary voices, in short, doing precisely what is necessary for readers new to Fear and Trembling. For example, he patiently illuminates the manner in which understanding "Problema I" depends on understanding the Hegelian distinction between Moralität and Sittlichkeit (85), yet he is also quick to push the conversation further, arguing later that Kant and Hegel do not "exhaust the range of possible views of ethics or 'the moral life'" (160). To cite a second example, he straightforwardly criticizes aspects of Edward Mooney's interpretation of the knight of faith and the knight of infinite resignation in his analysis of "The Preamble from the Heart" (57), while also acknowledging that "much of Mooney's interpretation is well worth serious consideration" (172). Throughout the Guidebook, Lippitt's evenhandedness is admirable, and one has to work hard to find lapses.

As a guidebook to Fear and Trembling, the first five chapters alone are worth the cost of this book. Nonetheless, it is in the concluding two chapters that Lippitt reveals his more developed position on a few overarching questions concerning Fear and Trembling – positions that ground the commentary on the first five chapters; positions that relate to broader issues in moral philosophy; positions that begin to serve as a guidebook to Kierkegaard and not merely *Fear and Trembling*; positions that will interest more seasoned readers of Kierkegaard.

In the penultimate chapter, after assessing the relative strengths and weaknesses of interpretations offered by Lévinas, Mooney, and Derrida, Lippitt turns to Green, and ultimately to Mulhall, to support a specifically Christian interpretation of the meaning of Fear and Trembling. Rejecting a strictly biographical (read Regine) or ethical interpretation, Lippitt argues that Kierkegaard reads the Abraham story anagogically. Therefore, the real "secret message" of the teleological suspension of the ethical "is to make space for a conception of the ethical that includes grace" (170). But, this conclusion may also suffer from Lippitt's own critical posture vis-à-vis some of his interlocutors, the posture that asks the question: "Why do we need the story of Abraham and Isaac specifically to make this point?" (159).

The concluding chapter then turns to assessing the relevance or importance of the critical distance that exists between Kierkegaard and Johannes de silentio. Lippitt, on the one hand, concludes that Johannes is fallible, and that he should not be taken straightforwardly as Kierkegaard's own spokesperson. Yet, on the other hand, he also concludes that Johannes' unreliability is neither deceptively calculated nor as significant a problem as some critics have made it out to be. Why not? Lippitt argues, leaning heavily on Nussbaum, that Johannes exemplifies neither impotent admiration nor ardent imitation of Abraham. Rather, Johannes illustrates the importance and possibilities of Aristotelian moral perception, perception dependent on "engaging our emotional and imaginative faculties *outside our practical engagement in our own lives*, owing to those major 'sources of distortion' that are 'obstacles to correct vision'" (Lippitt's emphasis, 193). Herein lies Johannes' – and Fear and Trembling's – ethical value.

For better or worse, Lippitt's conclusion virtually dissolves the Hegelian assumption that faith is the negation of the ethical (203); with this conclusion, Lippitt appears to have rescued a useful conception of the ethical from Fear and Trembling. The question remaining, however, is whether this normative conception of the ethical is

the distilled conception of the ethical described at the end of the sixth chapter that “includes grace.” As one who still vacillates on my own interpretation of *Fear and Trembling*, I wish Lippitt would say more about this issue, since Johannes, even with his great emotional and imaginative faculties, still falters in the face of faith, in the face of receiving Isaac back, in the face of God’s grace. Whether Lippitt’s account of Johannes’ account of ethics and grace can be reconciled with Aristotelian moral perception or not remains insinuated, but as I see, still unproven. Yet, even here, Lippitt’s greatest service is opening up avenues for further consideration and conversation. In fact, Lippitt’s enviable combination of passion for precision and humility permeates this entire text, making it both accessible and challenging for all readers of Kierkegaard’s Fear and Trembling. This, above all else, makes Lippitt’s text a truly excellent book.