

# Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter



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## Contents

	Page
<b>ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS</b>	2
<b>ARTICLES</b>	
<i>Marriage in Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers</i> Erik N. Lindland	12
<i>Dal concetto teosofico di angoscia al Begrebet Angest kierkegaardiano</i> - Un abbozzo di percorso storico-concettuale - Luca Maugeri	19
<b>REVIEWS</b>	
<i>Kierkegaard and Levinas: Ethics, Politics, and Religion</i> Edited by J. Aaron Simmons and David Wood Jeffrey Allan Hanson	27
<i>Kierkegaard and Japanese Thought</i> Edited by James Giles Esben Lindemann	29

Editor: Gordon D. Marino

# ANNOUNCEMENT

## The 6<sup>th</sup> International Kierkegaard Conference

### CALL FOR PAPERS

#### “Why Kierkegaard Still Matters”

The Hong Kierkegaard Library will hold its Sixth International Kierkegaard Conference June 27-30, 2010. As in the past, the conference will include a dissertation panel. The topic of the conference is “Why Kierkegaard Still Matters.” Not coincidentally, this is the same issue that will be explored in the *Festschrift* for Robert Perkins to be published by Mercer University Press in November of 2010. Scholars interested in presenting papers should send an abstract to Gordon Marino by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 and a completed paper by April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. A reading length of 20 minutes will again be strictly observed. People willing to serve as commentators on papers should contact Gordon Marino. There will also be a workshop pegged to the question, “What is the relevance of Kierkegaard to the clergy today?” People interested in guiding or participating in that workshop should email Gordon Marino at [marino@stolaf.edu](mailto:marino@stolaf.edu).

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#### REGISTRATION INFORMATION FORTHCOMING

Information will be sent to [kierk-emails@stolaf.edu](mailto:kierk-emails@stolaf.edu) and posted on the Kierkegaard Library website. Or contact Cynthia Lund for further information at [lundc@stolaf.edu](mailto:lundc@stolaf.edu). For housing, airport transportation, or housing details only, please contact Teresa Lebens, Internal Conferences Director, at [lebens@stolaf.edu](mailto:lebens@stolaf.edu). Further information will be posted soon on our website and sent out to [kierk-emails@stolaf.edu](mailto:kierk-emails@stolaf.edu).

#### PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

##### SUNDAY, JUNE 27

1-5 Registration  
6:00 Opening Dinner  
7:30 Opening Remarks and Plenary Lecture  
Speaker: Professor Jamie Ferreira, University of Virginia

##### MONDAY, JUNE 28

9:00-12:00 Dissertation Panel  
1:45 –5:00 Paper Sessions  
5:00-7:00 Dinner Break  
7:00-8:30 Paper Sessions

##### TUESDAY, JUNE 29

8:45 – 12:00 Paper Sessions  
1:45 – 5:00 Paper Sessions  
5:00 – 7:00 Dinner Break  
7:00-9:00 Workshop for Pastors  
Kierkegaard Library Open

##### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30

8:45-12:00 Paper Sessions  
12:30 Closing Lunch  
Afternoon sessions if needed.

Ongoing book sales will take place for new books in the St. Olaf Bookstore and used books in the Hong Kierkegaard Library during the conference.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS

### **Friends of the Kierkegaard Library Fall Meeting, November 5, 2009**

The Friends will meet in conjunction with the Julia Watkin Memorial Lecture. A business meeting will take place in the Kierkegaard Library at 3:30 PM which will include a presentation of the recently published Mercer University Press *Festschrift* for Edna and Howard Hong edited by Jamie Lorentzen, Chairperson of the Friends. (see [www.mercer.com](http://www.mercer.com)). A dinner will be served in the Sun Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Buntrock Commons at 5 PM in advance of the 7 PM lecture. RSVP if you wish to attend the dinner to Jamie Lorentzen at [jalorentzen@redwing.k12.mn.us](mailto:jalorentzen@redwing.k12.mn.us).

### **4<sup>th</sup> Julia Watkin Memorial Lecture – November 5, 2009**

**Professor Andrew J. Burgess** will give the lecture this year to be held in Dittman Center 305, Lecture Room at St. Olaf College at 7:30 PM on November 5. The title of the lecture is: **“Bonhoeffer to His Fiancée: ‘Take a Strong Dose of Kierkegaard’!”**

A 1958 graduate of St. Olaf College, Professor Burgess has submitted the following information regarding his upcoming presentation:

“Andrew Burgess is Professor of Philosophy at the University of New Mexico where he specializes in Kierkegaard studies, philosophy of religion, and history of Christian thought. He also served for twenty-five years as chair of the university's Religious Studies Program. Before joining the Philosophy Department at UNM in 1978 he taught in the Department of Religion at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. He has served as president of the Søren Kierkegaard Society, and he is currently Co-Chair of the American Academy of Religion "Kierkegaard, Religion, and Culture Group." He has published extensively about Kierkegaard's use of irony and humor and about the concept of the upbuilding in the religious writings.

Burgess is an Ole and a Minnesotan. He had his introduction to Kierkegaard from Professor Hong, in a seminar at the top of Rolvaag Library, and he remains strongly indebted to both Howard and Edna Hong. Having started his own study of Scandinavian languages at St. Olaf's "Oslo Summer School," he now regularly sends his UNM graduate students to the Danish course at the Hong Kierkegaard Library each summer. His Minnesota roots go deep as well. He was raised in St. Paul by missionary parents and graduated from St. Olaf summa cum laude in 1958. From there on he took degrees in philosophy from the University of Minnesota and in theology from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, before going on to Yale University for a PhD in philosophical theology.

Burgess's interest in the relationship between Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer grew out of his current research about the part of Kierkegaard's religious upbringing within the Moravian tradition. While looking into the Moravian understanding of martyrdom, Burgess came across a German dissertation that mentioned a book of extracts from Kierkegaard's late journals in which Bonhoeffer was making marginal notes at the same time as he was finishing "The Cost of Discipleship." (That dissertation was available at only one place in the US--at the Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf--where else?) Although Bonhoeffer's marked copy of the book turned out to be at the state library of Berlin, the trips there were well worth it, because close study of Bonhoeffer's notes has shown that Kierkegaard's reflections about the individual and discipleship profoundly influenced Bonhoeffer's thinking during his last years as he was facing execution, even more than he could have anticipated when he made those marginalia in about 1935.”

### **5<sup>th</sup> Julia Watkin Memorial Lecture- Fall 2010**

**Vanessa Rumble** (Professor of Philosophy, Boston College) will give the Julia Watkin Memorial Kierkegaard Lecture in November of 2010. Date and title to be announced.

### **Summer Fellows and Young Scholars Programs– 2009**

The following college students, or recently graduated college seniors, participated in the Young Scholars program working daily with Gordon Marino from July 6-July 31: Tom Ball (University of Georgia), Jeffrey Challberg (St. Olaf), Christina Danko (Clark), Justin DiFelicianantonio (Swarthmore), Michael Lenczewski (St. John's, Minnesota), Hector Ramos (Macalester), Elliot Smith (Prairie Bible College, Canada), Matthew Sorenson (Southern Connecticut State),

James Sponsel (St. Olaf ), Maria Squadroni(St. Olaf ), Seth Thomas (Lincoln Christian), Brantley Walden (Georgia State), and Jacob Zillhardt (St. Olaf ). These scholars also worked on their own research projects.

The following scholars participated in the Summer Fellows Program in 2009:

Leslie Ballard, Prof. Brian Barlow, Dr. Maria José Binetti, Prof. Michael Bollenbaugh, Emily Budwill, David Coe, Julie Dahlof, Robin Elie, Jacob Erickson, Roe Fremstedal, Dr. Jose Garcia Martin, Dr. Timothy Golden, Julian Gonzalez, Rev. Joseph Holt, Noreen Khawaja, Prof. Roman Kralik, Dr. Jose M. Miranda Justo, Elizabeth Musselman, Timothy O’Nan, David Scroggins, Dr. Elisabete Sousa, Prof. David Vessey, Daniel Wanless, and John Westbrook.

The Summer Fellows and Young Scholars came this past summer from 7 countries and 14 states in the US.

### **Kierkegaard-Danish Course - 2009**

Professor Sinead Ladegaard Knox again taught the Kierkegaard-Danish course from June 29 – July 24. The following scholars were students in the course this past summer: Tom Ball, Jacob Erickson, Dr. Timothy Golden, Noreen Khawaja, Timothy O’Nan, Hector Ramos, David Scroggins, Matthew Sorenson, Maria Squadroni, and John Westbrook.

### **Summer Fellows Program - 2010**

Applications are invited from scholars interested in participating in this program for Summer 2010. To apply, please send your materials by email or in print to Professor Gordon Marino including a proposal for research in the Kierkegaard Library, your CV, and 2 recommendations. Please check our website for current deadlines and further information. [www.stolaf.edu/collections/kierkegaard](http://www.stolaf.edu/collections/kierkegaard). Professor Marino may also be contacted at [marino@stolaf.edu](mailto:marino@stolaf.edu). Accepted Summer Fellows are invited to come from 2-9 weeks between June 3 and August 21 and to receive housing on campus as well as a small stipend to assist with board.

### **Young Scholars Program - 2010**

The Young Scholars Program will be modified for 2010 to be for private research projects only rather than daily seminar meetings. Please contact Gordon Marino if you have interest in applying for this program as a college student or recent college graduate. See our website for further information.

### **Danish-Kierkegaard Course - 2010**

Professor Knox will again be offering this beginning course in Danish for Kierkegaard scholars interested in approaching Kierkegaardian texts in the original language. Dates for the course this year are likely to be July 5 –July 30. Please contact Cynthia Lund if you wish to sign up at [lundc@stolaf.edu](mailto:lundc@stolaf.edu). Places are reserved in advance by sending a \$300 deposit to the Kierkegaard Library. Full cost of the course is \$1200 with reduction in cost for Summer Fellows. For specific information about the content of the course, please contact Professor Knox at [knox101@vip.cybercity.dk](mailto:knox101@vip.cybercity.dk). and check our website for updates.

### **Kierkegaard House Foundation Fellowships - 2009 and following**

The Foundation is offering fellowships which include housing near St. Olaf College and a stipend of \$1500 per month for more advanced Kierkegaard scholars. Fellowships are awarded for periods of 4 months to 1 year. Fellowships have been awarded for the next 2 years to the following scholars:

- Dr. Jamie Turnbull (UK) - January - December, 2009
- Dr. Antony Aumann (US) - July, 2009 - June, 2010
- Dr. Richard Purkarthofer (Austria)- January-December, 2010
- Prof. Varughese John (India)-May, 2010-April, 2011
- Dr. Ingrid Basso - January - December, 2011

To apply for a House Foundation Fellowship for stays starting in May 2011 and later please contact Gordon Marino at [marino@stolaf.edu](mailto:marino@stolaf.edu).

### **Visiting Scholars Program**

Students and scholars as well as any other interested people are welcome to use the resources of the Hong Kierkegaard Library at any time of year either for short-term visits or for long-term study projects if they have their own funding. Please contact Cynthia Lund at [lundc@stolaf.edu](mailto:lundc@stolaf.edu) if you would like to visit the Hong Kierkegaard Library.

## **Donors to the Kierkegaard Library since February 2009**

Books, articles, and financial gifts were given to the Library by the following people:

Sylvia Walsh, Robert Oh, Donald Fox, Elisabetta Basso, Hak Chul Kang, Antony Aumann, Umberto Regina, Timothy Wilder, Louise Griffin, Andrew Burgess, Richard Purkarthofer, Patricia Huntington, Ingrid Basso, Roe Fremstedal, Janne Kylläinen, Roman Kralik, José García Martín, David Coe, Hugh Pyper, Miriam Eytan, and Joan Olson.

Special donations in memory of George Utech were given by the following:

Eugene and Dorothy Hanson, Milford and Leslie Apetz, Philip and Margaret Davidson, Sterling and Jean Weaver, Louise Wu, Roland and Beatrice Van Der Beck, William J. Trebelhorn, Jane W. Bryan, Marilyn and Ron Furman, William and Brenda Colby, Patsy and Walter Gilges, Carol Verrone, Glenn I. Nelson, Kate N. Flynn, and John D. Balk.

## **Kierkegaard Library on Facebook**

Søren Landkildehus has brought us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by starting a page on Facebook called “Hong Kierkegaard Library”. This is an open page if you wish to join. Anthony Aumann together with Eleanor Helms and Shannon Nason are administering a group on Facebook called Kierkegaard Camp. This is an open group for those who have spent summers at the Hong Kierkegaard Library.

Also please note the Facebook site for *Acta Kierkegaardiana* created by Jamie Turnbull, our current House Foundation Fellow and former Summer Fellow.

## **Kierkegaard Classic Studies Series**

The *Kierkegaard Classic Studies Series* has been launched by Wipf & Stock Publishers with three initial reprints:

*Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion* by Reidar Thomte

*Søren Kierkegaard and the Common Man* by Jørgen Bakdahl (translated by Bruce Kirmmse)

*Kierkegaard's Psychology* by Kresten Nordentoft (translated by Bruce Kirmmse)

This reprint project is being done in partnership with series forward writer Gordon Marino at the Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf.

Books can be ordered for the normal 20% off retail price through Wipf & Stock Publishers via [orders@wipfandstock.com](mailto:orders@wipfandstock.com) or 541-334-1528 or [www.wipfandstock.com](http://www.wipfandstock.com).

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **SØREN KIERKEGAARD SOCIETY (U.S.A.)**

For more complete information, consult the Society's website at [http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/SK\\_Society.htm](http://lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/SK_Society.htm) and <http://www.fordham.edu/philosophy/davenport/skconferences.htm> for information on upcoming APA conference sessions.

### **SKS at the AAR, Montreal, November 2009**

The Society will hold its annual banquet on Friday, November 6, prior to the AAR annual meetings in Montreal. President Lee Barrett will speak on “**Undecidability and Doctrine**” and Hans Møller of McGill University will also be honored. A tour of the Malantschuk collection at McGill's McLennan Library, instituted in part by Hans Møller, will take place on Monday, November 9, from 3:00-5:00 PM. For further information about the dinner or for reservations, please contact the Secretary-Treasurer of the Soren Kierkegaard Society, Louise Carroll Keeley, at [lkeeley@assumption.edu](mailto:lkeeley@assumption.edu).

The Society will sponsor another session at the AAR on Saturday November 7 from 9-11:30. The theme will be “**Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks and Kierkegaard's Engagement with Nineteenth Century Traditions**”. Panelists will include Niels Jørgen Cappelorn, Brian Soderquist, George Pattison, Heiko Schulz, David Possen, and Abraham Khan.

The SKS will sponsor a session at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Languages in New Orleans on **“Kierkegaard’s Use of Scripture”**. This will take place on November 21, 2009 from 9-11:30 AM. Papers will be presented by Lee Barrett, Glenn Kirkconnell, Rebecca Skaggs, and Andrew Lewis. See the SBL website for further information at <http://www.sbl-site.org>.

### **APA SKS Sessions**

The Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association will take place in NYC December 27-30, 2009 on the theme **“Kierkegaard and Authenticity”**. Papers will be given by Adam Buben, Noreen Khawaja, Noel Adams, and J. Aaron Simmons.

The 2010 Eastern Division meeting SKS session will be on the theme of **“Kierkegaard and Gender Relations”**. Celine Leon will keynote the session. Submit papers to George Connell by June 1, 2010.

The Central Division Meeting of the APA will take place in Chicago in February 2010. The SKS will sponsor a session on the theme of **“Kierkegaard and Time”**. Participants include John Davenport, Grant Julin, and Nathan Carson. Jason Mahn will comment.

### **AAR KIERKEGAARD, RELIGION AND CULTURE GROUP**

The group will sponsor additional sessions at the AAR Sunday morning, November 8, from 9-11:30. The session will have the theme of **“Irony, Authorial Intention, and Point of View in Kierkegaard’s Writing”**. Participants include Mark Tietgen, Carl Hughes, Martin Matustik, Joseph Westfall, and W. Glenn Kirkconnell. A business meeting will follow led by Andrew Burgess and Marilyn Piety.

A second session of the Kierkegaard, Religion and Culture Group will meet Sunday, November 8, from 1:00- 2:30. This will be in cooperation with the Scriptural/Contextual Ethics Consultation Group on the theme of **“Kierkegaard, Violence, and the Sacred: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Interpretations of the Near Sacrifice of Abraham’s Son”**. Participants will include Yvonne Sherwood, Jonathan Malesic, and Timothy Dalrymple.

A third session of the Kierkegaard, Religion and Culture Group will meet in cooperation with the Study of Judaism Section on Monday, November 9, from 9:00-11:30. The theme will be **“Kierkegaard and Judaism”**. Participants include Dustin Feddon, Heather C. Ohaneson, and Daniel Weiss. Jerome Geldman will respond.

### **INTERNATIONAL KIERKEGAARD COMMENTARY (IKC)**

#### **From Professor Robert L. Perkins, Editor**

“Finishing the index corrections for International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Moment on 16 October enabled the editor to mail it to the publisher, Mercer University Press, with the hope that at least a mock-up will be at the American Academy of Religion. The editor thanks the contributors and the Advisory Board for making their important contributions to the secondary literature possible. This is the twenty-third of the twenty-four volume project begun in the early 1980’s with the first volume, IKC: Two Ages. The series has more or less followed the sequence of the appearance of “Kierkegaard’s Writings” edited by Howard V. and Edna H. Hong, who are memorialized in the name of the Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College. Plans for the last volume, International Kierkegaard Commentary: Point of View are underway and a dozen essays have been received. This publisher of IKC, Mercer University Press, expects the contributors and the editor to have the final draft, evaluated, revised, rewritten in their office on 15 April 2010. This is the first dated schedule ever from Mercer, but the editor thinks all contributors to this volume who will plan to make that date.”

### **KIERKEGAARD’S JOURNALS AND NOTEBOOKS (KJN)**

Bruce Kirmmse reports that KJN has received its 4<sup>th</sup> NEH grant as well as funding from the Danish government which will carry the project forward for the next three years. The 3<sup>rd</sup> volume is expected to be published soon and will be guided through the final stages of publication by Brian Soderquist in Copenhagen.

### **SØREN KIERKEGAARD RESEARCH CENTER, COPENHAGEN**

#### **I.Submitted by Bjarne Lauerberg Olsen, Secretary**

The *SKS 13* will be published on October 9 – ISBN 978-87-12-04490-1, DKK 525 – more information: [http://www.gadsforlag.dk/product\\_detail.aspx?productid=390&ReturnUrl=/kierkegaard.aspx](http://www.gadsforlag.dk/product_detail.aspx?productid=390&ReturnUrl=/kierkegaard.aspx).

Thomasine Gyllembourg, *Twee Tijdperken: Søren Kierkegaard – Een Literaire Recensie*, translator: Annelies van Hees & Frits Florin, postscript: Annelies van Hees & Frits Florin will be published autumn 2009 at the following publishing house: Uitgeverij DAMON - <http://www.damon.nl/home.php?usrid=12559622504adc768a0da277>.

## **II. Submitted by Professor Pia Søltøft, Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre and the University of Copenhagen, October 22, 2009**

### **Announcement**

As of February 2010: The Søren Kierkegaard Research Center has been incorporated into the University of Copenhagen on a permanent basis.

The Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre was founded on January 1, 1994 as an independent research institute funded by the Danish National Research Foundation. Since its inception, The Kierkegaard Centre has been an international gathering point for global Kierkegaard scholarship. It has been housed at the Vartov building in central Copenhagen and has functioned as an independently financed entity (FSKC), that has also been responsible for the publication of *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, (*SKS* [Søren Kierkegaard's Writings]).

FSKC and the employees responsible for the philological work on *SKS* will continue their work until the all the volumes – and the foreign language translations of *SKS* – are completed. At the same time, the research scholars at the Centre (SKC, [The Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre]) will be formally incorporated into the theology department at the University of Copenhagen, though the Centre will continue its aim to cultivate interdisciplinary scholarship.

SKC will oversee interdisciplinary Kierkegaard research on a national as well as international basis. As a part of this mission, the SKC will offer courses and workshops at the university, and will sponsor national and international conferences and seminars each year.

Throughout the years, Ph.D. students and post-doctoral fellows have been in residence at the Kierkegaard Centre, which has supported these scholars with access to the Søren Kierkegaard Library, advising, seminars, and the international environment that has emerged in central Copenhagen. This aspect of the Centre's mission will remain unchanged with the incorporation of the Centre into the University of Copenhagen. New partnerships with foreign universities and a series of courses taught in English, including summer courses, will establish an even stronger international profile, however.

During the next five years, the SKC will concentrate on courses and research within the following areas related to Kierkegaard's authorship:

- \* The Phenomenology of Love
- \* The Classical Education: *Bildung*
- \* The Concept of Self in a Contemporary Context
- \* History of Reception
- \* The Critical Analysis of Religion
  - Philosophy of Religion

The new course offerings by the SKC are the most important recent developments with the incorporation into the university. Beginning in 2010, the Centre will offer research-based courses at the upper division undergraduate and graduate level. We wish hereby to extend a warm welcome to everyone to participate in Kierkegaard courses in the heart of Copenhagen. We hope to see you!

The following courses will be offered in 2010:

### **Spring 2010**

(15 ECTS) Identitetsdannelse og dannelseskritik -- Joakim Garff.

(15 ECTS) Kollokvium over første del af Enten – Eller -- Joakim Garff (at the Vartov building).

(15 ECTS) (Compact August seminar) Coaching og teologi -- Pia Søltøft.

(15 ECTS) The Making of the Modern Self -- Brian Söderquist.

(15 ECTS) Introduction to Kierkegaard -- Brian Söderquist.  
(15 ECTS) Philosophy and Religion in Golden Age Denmark -- Jon Stewart.  
(15 ECTS) The Kierkegaard Seminar -- A lecture series by permanent and visiting scholars at the SKC.

#### Autumn 2010

(15 ECTS) Hovedlinier i Kierkegaards forfatterskab filosofisk og teologisk set -- Pia Søltoft.  
(15 ECTS) Værkgennemgang af Frygt og Bæven -- Joakim Garff.  
(15 ECTS) Kollokvium over anden del af Enten – Eller -- Joakim Garff (at the Vartov building).  
(15 ECTS) The Other and the Making of the Modern Self -- Brian Soderquist.  
(15 ECTS) Introduction to Kierkegaard -- Brian Söderquist.  
(15 ECTS) Religion in Crisis: Nineteenth-Century European Conceptions of Religion -- Jon Stewart.  
(15 ECTS) The Kierkegaard Seminar -- A lecture series by permanent and visiting scholars at the SKC.

A master's degree with a focus on Kierkegaard scholarship is currently under development. These courses are part of the foundation for that degree.

#### **ACTA KIERKEGAARDIANA**

Submitted by Jamie Turnbull

The next volume, volume IV, *Kierkegaard and the Religious Crisis of the Nineteenth Century*, is expected to be published at the end of 2009 or early 2010.

#### **KIERKEGAARD CIRCLE-UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

Submitted by Abraham Khan

Upcoming session Friday, October 30, 2009, 7:30-10:00 PM, Combination Room,  
Trinity College, University of Toronto. 6 Hoskin Avenue. 416-978-2522 (for directions)  
“**Beyond Zizek with Kierkegaard**”, speaker **Marko Zlomisljic**, Professor, School of Liberal and Media Studies,  
Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, Kitchener, Ontario.

Marko Zlomisljic holds a doctorate from Collège Dominicain de Philosophie et de Théologie. His interest areas include Existentialism and Comparative Philosophy and Comparative Religion. He has written the introductions to several of Derrida's books and is the author of two books. The most recent is *Jacques Derrida's Aporetic Ethics* (2007). For further information contact Professor Khan at [khanah@chass.utoronto.ca](mailto:khanah@chass.utoronto.ca).

#### **SØREN KIERKEGAARD SOCIETY OF THE UK**

Submitted by Dr. Matthew Kirkpatrick, Conference Organiser, Tutor in Philosophy and Theology, University of Oxford: The Oxford Centre for Theology and Modern European Thought, in conjunction with the Søren Kierkegaard Society of the UK, is pleased to announce its forthcoming International Conference on the topic of Kierkegaard's *Upbuilding Discourses*. This is an exciting opportunity for graduates and academics to hear a number of high-profile speakers from around the world, but also to present papers of their own. For further information see [www.kierkegaard.org.uk/](http://www.kierkegaard.org.uk/) events. Dr. Kirkpatrick's announcement will be sent also to the kierk-emails list.

#### **SOBRESKI – KIERKEGAARD SOCIETY OF BRAZIL – AND BIBLIOTECA KIERKEGAARD ARGENTINA**

Submitted by Marcio Gimenes de Paula and Maria José Binetti

First Argentinian-Brazilian Kierkegaard Conference:

#### **"The Influence of Kierkegaard in Contemporary Thought"**

November 9th.-10th. / Buenos Aires (Argentina) - November 12th.-13th./ Sao Leopoldo (Brazil)  
Organizers: : Biblioteca Kierkegaard Argentina - Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos de Kierkegaard

#### **Jornada Argentino-Brasileira de Estudos de Kierkegaard - Parte Brasileira - 12 e 13 de novembro de 2009**

## **Realização:**

Inicio 009\Término: 13/11/2009

Dias: 12 e 13 de novembro de 2009 (quinta e sexta-feira)

Horário/local: Das 10h às 12h, das 14h às 18h - Sala 1A 202 (Unidade de Ciências Humanas). Das 19h30min às 22h - Auditório Maurício Berni (Unidade de Ciências Jurídicas)

## **Objetivo:**

- Aprofundar o conhecimento da obra de Kierkegaard, num nível acadêmico, atentando para sua atualidade, especialmente numa perspectiva latino-americana;
- Incentivar a leitura dessa obra, ainda relativamente pouco explorada em nossos países, evidenciando sua presença no pensamento filosófico contemporâneo;
- Motivar a realização de novas traduções que permitam ao público de nossos países penetrar no pensamento desse fascinante pensador;
- Aproximar os pesquisadores que estudam temas conexos da filosofia desse importante pensador em seus respectivos países;
- Integrar os estudos kierkegaardianos dos dois países, aproximando os investigadores argentinos e brasileiros entre si e de colegas dos centros internacionais de pesquisa;
- Consolidar as duas instituições recentemente oficializadas no Brasil: a Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos de Kierkegaard (SOBRESKI) e o Grupo de Pesquisa sobre a Obra de Kierkegaard (certificado pela Unisinos, cadastrado no CNPq).

## **KIERKEGAARD IN SLOVAKIA**

The following information on the upcoming conference was submitted by Roman Kralik:

## **Ethics and Existentialism: The Stimuli and Challenges for Us Contemporaries. Date: September 23-24, 2010**

### **Organizers:**

University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra (Slovakia), Toronto University (Canada), Baylor University (USA), University of New Mexico(USA), Charles University (Czech Republic), Slovak Philosophical Union (Slovakia), Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (Poland).

### **Directors:**

Prof. Dr. Zdenka Gadušová, Prof. Dr. Cyril Diatka and Doc. Dr. Roman Králík

### **Sessions:**

1. Moral Questions about Human Freedom in the Works of Existential Philosophers (Prof. Dr. Cyril Diatka CSc, Doc. Dr. Peter Korený, PhD.)
2. Existential Motifs in Culture, Literature and Art (Prof. Dr. Dalimír Hajko, DrSc. Doc. Dr. Slavomír Gálik, PhD.)
3. Human Existence in Confrontation with the Problems of the Contemporary World. (Doc. Dr. Dušan Špirko, CSc., Doc. Dr. Vladimír Manda, CSc.)
4. Existentialism and religion – being, faith, existence. (Guarantee: Prof. Dr. Abraham Khan, Prof. Dr. Ján Liguš, Ph.D.)
5. The Ideas of S. Kierkegaard: Stimuli, Challenges and Responses (Prof. Dr. Andrew Burgess, Prof. Dr. Stephen Evans, Doc. Dr. Roman Králík, ThD.)

### **Sponsors:**

Vice-chancellor of UKF Prof. Dr. Libor Vozár, CSc. Dean of FF UKF Prof. Dr. Zdenka Gadušová, CSc.

## **SØREN KIERKEGAARD BICENTENNIAL BUST PROJECT**

Reverend Ronald F. Marshall, First Lutheran Church of West Seattle, has sent the following update on this project which is trying to raise \$6,000 to fund the creation of a bust in honor of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Soren Kierkegaard in 2013. This sculpture will be created by Rita Kepner.

1. There have been 12 donors for far.
2. \$3,500.00 has been received -- towards our goal of \$6,000.00. The completion date is the bicentennial in 2013.
3. The sculptor has been searching for a model to sit for the drawings for the bust and has finally found a good look-alike. Her model is for the famous 19<sup>th</sup>-century Hanson profile drawing of Kierkegaard with the broad rimmed hat. She has also found a hat in an antique store to match that drawing.
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## ARTICLES

### **‘Marriage’ in Kierkegaard’s *Journals and Papers***

**Erik N. Lindland**

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

#### I. Introduction

Kierkegaard maintains a variety of positions about the status of marriage in the *Journals and Papers*. Nevertheless, his entries on this topic in 1854-5 appear to represent his considered view. In addition, the determination he arrives at seems to be the logical culmination of his thinking on this matter over time.

Kierkegaard’s ultimate conclusion is that Christianity and marriage are incompatible. Of course, this runs contrary to the important work of scholars such as Ferreira<sup>1</sup>, Krishek<sup>2</sup> and Walsh<sup>3</sup> all of whom have tried to open a space for marriage in Kierkegaard’s work. Indeed, it runs contrary to some of Kierkegaard’s own avowals perhaps the most famous being, “If I had faith, I should have remained with Regine. Thanks to God, I now see that.” (IV A 107) [5664]

What I intend to do in this paper is articulate Kierkegaard’s view of marriage circa 1854 and try to reconstruct the argument that Kierkegaard offers for his position, appealing to earlier entries when appropriate. His argument can be broken down into two distinct, though related, sub-arguments. The first argument is essentially an argument based on the authority of Scripture. The second argument stems from Kierkegaard’s analysis of the distinction between Christian love and preferential love found in *Works of Love*.

#### II. The Status of Marriage

Kierkegaard’s considered view of marriage is that Christianity is opposed to marriage and requires the single state. Here are four representative entries from 1854-5:

Christianity says: Refrain from marrying; this is pleasing to God and is a natural consequence if you are really a Christian. (XII A 153) [2623] **1854**

The New Testament presents the matter in such a way that if a person reads the gospels with only the slightest primitivity or openness, he will get the impression that even if there were no other hindrance to marriage on the part of Christianity, the Christian does not have time to marry. A Christian is committed to God to such a degree that there can be no thought of time for delay because of marriage. (XII A 231) [2628] **1854**

Read the New Testament primitively and you will get the impression very plainly that Christianity does not want you to marry. (XII A 364) [2917] **1854-5**

At the time the Pope ordered that the clergy should remain unmarried, the Christian view had already been long lost and a confusing accommodation or accord with the world had set in. It is not a matter of the priest having to be unmarried; no, the Christian is to be unmarried. (XI. 1 A 313) [2621] **1854**

It should be pointed out that Kierkegaard doesn’t begin talking this way in 1854. As early as 1839 Kierkegaard writes, “Marriage is a physical unity, not a unity in spirit and truth; therefore it says in Genesis of man and woman that ‘they are

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, M. Jamie Ferreira, *Love’s Grateful Striving: A Commentary of Kierkegaard’s Works of Love* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 90-94.

<sup>2</sup> Sharon Krishek, “Two Forms of Love: The Problem of Preferential Love in Kierkegaard’s Works of Love,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 36 (4): 595-617, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Sylvia Perkins Walsh, “Forming the Heart: The Role of Love in Kierkegaard.” In *The Grammar of the Heart: Thinking with Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein*, edited by Richard H. Bell, 234-256. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1988.

to be one flesh.” (II A 469) [2581] Eight years later, in the year *Works of Love* was published (1847), Kierkegaard favorably references this entry:

Oddly enough, I find an especially good observation in my old journal for 1839 (E.E. [Pap., II A 469]), which on the whole does not have much that is really felicitous or thorough: Marriage is not really love, and therefore it is said that the two become one flesh—but not one spirit, since two spirits cannot possibly become one spirit. This observation would have lent itself very well for use in “Works of Love”. (V III. 1 A 231) [2598]

In this same year Kierkegaard begins to describe how the marriage ceremony would have to be altered in light of his observations. He states that if he were “to be scrupulous about the scriptural teaching concerning marriage and use it as the basis for a wedding, the bride and groom and others would become so embarrassed and embittered that they would like to massacre me.” (V III 1 A) [2598] In 1854 he fills in the details of how he envisions a properly Christian wedding ceremony in the following extended entry:

The pagan ranked it as the greatest happiness to fall in love, to be happily in love; humanly speaking, the most happy of all happy sights is a pair of happy lovers. But Christianity! Christianly, it is a wake—if there must be a celebration, it must be as if at a funeral. How tragic, declares Christianity, that once again there are two who want to be united in this way in order to belong more firmly to this sinful world...

With the New Testament instructing him, the clergyman must conduct himself as follows. He must first of all call the lovers into his presence, admonishing them that the solitary life is more pleasing to God, is a truer life for the Christian, whose life, after all, is to be a crucifixion. Then he can read aloud to them

Paul’s words that nevertheless it is better, consequently more pleasing to God, to marry than to burn. This then becomes the wedding text—and from a Christian point of view a quiet sorrow ought to be the keynote for this sorrowful occasion. (XI 1 A) [2908]

To reiterate, Kierkegaard does entertain other positions with regard to the status of marriage, the weakest being that it is simply an “over-rated” institution but not inherently objectionable (and hence, is permitted).<sup>4</sup> But also to reiterate, by 1854 a certain trajectory of this thought on this issue seems to have “won out.” Indeed, in an entry from that year Kierkegaard reflects on his own life and states that “I almost shudder when I think how far I went in this direction [the direction of marriage] and how amazingly I was halted and turned back to the single state.” [my insertion] (XI2 A 154) [2624]

### III. The Argument from Scripture

The first set of reasons that Kierkegaard offers for his position stem from his analysis of scripture, so I will now turn to a consideration of the passages that are of interest to him. We should note from the start that Kierkegaard’s interpretation of the Bible hinges on two commitments on his part. The first is that Christianity is not best understood as a “doctrine” but rather as a *demand* or *duty* to live one’s life in the imitation of Christ (what Anti-Climacus calls “Christ as prototype” in *Practice in Christianity*). The second is his view that the New Testament and its teachings have literally superceded the Old Testament, at least with respect to this particular topic. Hence, any apparently relevant discussions of marriage from the Old Testament are jettisoned with one fell swoop. His reason for thinking that the Old Testament can be safely disregarded, at least with respect to this topic, is that Judaism and Christianity are fundamentally opposed on this issue. Let us listen to an entry in 1854 from the *Journals* to substantiate this claim:

It cannot be made clear enough that Judaism is linked to Christianity in order to make Christianity negatively recognizable—negatively, that is, by the repulsion...

That Jesus is born of a virgin—this would not decisively scandalize pagans, but to Judaism this must be really offensive. Judaism culminates in the deifying of marriage; indeed, God himself has established it. Judaism

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<sup>4</sup> Kierkegaard also maintains two other theses: (1.) that marriage ought to be a matter of *indifference* to a Christian (a sub-variant being that this “indifference” gives expression to the fact that marriage is a “duty”) and (2.) that *at this historical moment* marriage is an institution that a Christian ought not participate in (as it is tantamount to endorsing a secular mentality).

culminates in the conception of the continuation of the race as a kind of divine worship—and then to be born a virgin! Fundamentally this negates the whole Old Testament or deprives it of its power. (X1. A 184) [2227]

In terms of the New Testament, the excerpts that are central to Kierkegaard's argument are the places where Christ apparently instructs his followers to sever all connections with family. However, before turning to a consideration of Kierkegaard's treatment of those excerpts, we will consider three other passages that he mentions in connection with marriage. In what follows, unless I state otherwise, all of the quotations come from the years 1854-5.

The first passage is Luke 14:18 which Kierkegaard interprets as setting the overall tone of the New Testament towards the institution of marriage. The context for Jesus' remarks is a description of several individuals' excuses for not attending a banquet that they had been invited to attend:

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore cannot come.' (NOAB, 105NT)

During a discussion of this excerpt Kierkegaard writes in a parenthetical remark (in 1851), "note in passing: it hardly corresponds to our grandiloquent phrases about marriage when the gospel offhandedly parallels getting married with buying a pair of oxen." (X.3 A 784) [1482]<sup>5</sup>

The second passage Kierkegaard considers is John 2 where Jesus attends the wedding at Cana.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman what concern of that to you and me? My hour has not yet come." (NOAB, 126NT)

Of course, Jesus nevertheless proceeds to perform the miracle of turning water into wine. This selection historically has been used to support the conclusion that Jesus himself endorsed marriage, so it is an excerpt Kierkegaard has to deal with. Essentially, he thinks that John 2 does not demonstrate anything about marriage in particular.<sup>6</sup> The following entry is from 1850.

Christendom has been so terribly preoccupied with this marriage, but I do not know what it has proved by it. In the first place, the circumstance that Christ was present at the wedding proves nothing at all about marriage. It was his task as a teacher to be present everywhere, always looking for the opportunity to instruct. For indeed he was not a professor who with a manuscript lectures from a podium at certain hours. Consequently nothing is proved by this. Otherwise, from the fact that Christ was more often present at banquets and with Pharisees it could also be proved that Christ was an advocate of banquets and the Pharisees.

But he changed the water into wine to enliven the party. True, yet we observe that it was his mother who had to prompt him to do it and who first of all had to take a reprimand--therefore he was not particularly disposed to do it. (X.3 A 113) [2611]<sup>7</sup> **1850**

The third passage Kierkegaard quotes is from Paul in I Corinthians 7:9. "To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion." (NOAB, 235-6 NT) Kierkegaard initially uses this excerpt to buttress the claim that Christianity prefers the single state. The context for the following quotation is an attack on the justification of marriage in terms of procreation (a topic we will return to below). "Christianly, marriage is merely better than burning. No more. Therefore stand back Mother, stand back good Mrs.!" (XI.1 A 169) [2618] **1854** However, by 1855

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<sup>5</sup> See also an indirect reference in 4998.

<sup>6</sup> This is not quite correct. Kierkegaard interprets this passage as providing evidence for the thesis that the proper relationship between Christianity and marriage is one of indifference.

<sup>7</sup> See also 2621 (especially in connection with the fourth set of passages discussed below) 2625, 4171 and 5047.

Kierkegaard is willing to go further and argue that Paul watered down Christ's message in what amounts to a concession to an "offended" humanity.<sup>8</sup>

But the human aggregate of "Christians" exercises its power over the apostle; he gives in: After all, "it is better to marry than to burn. It is better, for to burn is something unpleasant; so it is better to marry, in a pinch it is better to marry." ... This is not Christ's proclamation of Christianity. His unconditioned proclamation (as in Matthew 5:28: "Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart") does not really concede in the remotest way a consultative voice to the immediacy of human nature, does not really change a jot for its sake; on the contrary it is precisely this which he, in a rescue (so that man may become spirit), wants to slay; he does not tolerate a syllable of reasoning such as this: I cannot restrain my lust; ergo, to satisfy it in this human, most inoffensive manner gets to be Christianity. No, this reasoning, containing the seeds of the destruction of Christianity, this reasoning to him is scandalous, the impulse of Satan. (XI.3 B 175) [3213] **1855**

The final set of passages Kierkegaard is concerned with, as mentioned above, all revolve around Jesus' instruction to abandon all familial relations. Though he does not specifically name what excerpts he has in mind it is likely that Luke 14:26 (which is discussed by Silentio in 'Problema II' of *Fear and Trembling*), Matthew 19:29 (which Kierkegaard explicitly refers to), Matthew 10:21 and Matthew 10:34 are all candidates. Luke 14:26 states, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple." (NOAB, 105NT)

Kierkegaard regards this command as "indirect" evidence that Jesus would require the Christian not to marry.

That Christ meant that the Christian obviously would not marry is discernible even more clearly in the following indirect way than in all that is said directly.

When Christ points out the degree in which he wants to be loved by the Christian, he puts the collision in this way: He who loves father, mother, sister, brother and so on more than me is not worthy of me. (XI.1 A 169) [2619]<sup>9</sup> **1854**

How does this constitute "indirect evidence" that Christ forbids marriage? Is he merely attacking familial relations as such, and thus marriage as a sub-set of those relations? A hint of what Kierkegaard is thinking about comes from another entry.

In the New Testament the matter is put this way: "Let all those trivialities, those egotistical trivialities with which men generally fill their lives--job, marriage, having children, getting to be somebody in the world--let them all go, break with them completely, and let your life be dedicated to loving God, to being sacrificed for the human race. Be salt!" This what our Lord Jesus Christ calls Christianity. When a man is intending to get married, the invitation (see the Gospel) comes to him: Let it go--and become a Christian, etc. (XI. 1 A 141) [4998] **1854**

Obviously, one aspect of what is going on here is that marriage is being conceived as a *distraction* from one's Christian duty to imitate Christ. Indeed, yet another journal entry, cited previously, confirms this:

The New Testament presents the matter in such a way that if a person reads the gospels with only the slightest primitivity or openness, he will get the impression that even if there were no other hindrance to marriage on the

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<sup>8</sup> Kierkegaard reiterates this charge in *The Moment* 7 (TM, 239).

<sup>9</sup> This passage continues, "Generally he does not say: One who loves his child more than me--he does not think of the Christian as married, for otherwise he might have aimed in quite another way at precisely this collision." Though it may be true that Christ does not think of the Christian as married, it is not clear to me that Christ does not mention love of child in the passages where he discusses renunciation of family ties.

In any event, this apparent complication is irrelevant. As Kierkegaard himself points out in a marginal note appended to this passage, "Note. Insofar as mention (for example Matthew 19:29) is made of forsaking 'wife and child for Christ's sake,' it must always be remembered that there is a great difference between married men with wife and children who want to be Christians and Christians who want to marry and have wife and children."

part of Christianity, the Christian does not have time to marry. A Christian is committed to God to such a degree that there can be no thought of time for delay because of marriage. (XI.2 A 231) [2628] **1854**

However, I don't think that this alone provides the basis for understanding why passages like Luke 14:26 are so important to Kierkegaard.

I think the point here goes much deeper. We must now turn to the theoretical underpinnings of Kierkegaard's attack on the institution of marriage. Lacking time, I can only sketch an argument that I have developed elsewhere. We shall see that his attack is so radical that, if it were universally adopted, it would result in the elimination of the human species.

#### IV. Christian Love and Preferential Love

The core of Kierkegaard's attack on marriage is that it is a case of self-deception. Marriage, according to this view, provides a disguise for an immoral lust and is a form of self-love. As Kierkegaard says at one point, in marriage "we are merely clothing our lust in pompous platitudes." (XI A 169) [2618] **1854** The most common form of self-deceptive justification according to this view is that marriage is necessary for procreation, a justification that Kierkegaard completely rejects.

What evidence do we have that Kierkegaard thinks that marriage is a case of self-love? Consider the following entry from 1847 (again, the year of *Works of Love's* publication):

Erotic love [Elskov] and marriage are really only a deeper confirmation of self-love by becoming two in self-loving. For this very reason married people become so satisfied, so vegetatively prosperous--because true love does not fit into earthly existence [Tilvær] the way self-love does. Therefore the solitary lacks self-love; married people express this by saying: He loves himself--because married people presume that marriage is love [Kjerlighed]. (VIII.1 A 190) [2596]

This discussion dovetails nicely with the discussion of preferential love in *Works of Love*. "[I]n his impetuous, unlimited devotion the lover is actually relating himself to himself in self-love" (WL, 55).

Just as self-love selfishly embraces this one and only *self* that makes it self-love, so also erotic love's passionate preference encircles this one and only beloved, and friendship's passionate preference encircles this one and only friend. For this reason the beloved and the friend are called, remarkably and profoundly, to be sure, the *other self*, the *other I* . . . But where does self-love reside? It resides in the *I*, in the *self*. Would not self-love then also start loving the *other I*, the *other self*? (WL, 53)

We now may have our answer as to what Kierkegaard thinks Christ was "indirectly" telling us about marriage in excerpts like Luke 14:29. Consider yet another quotation from *Works of Love*:

The same holds true for friendship as of erotic love, inasmuch as this, too, is based on preference: to love this one person above all others, to love him in contrast to all others. Therefore the object of both erotic love and friendship has preference's name, "the beloved," "the friend," who is loved in contrast to the whole world. The Christian doctrine, on the contrary, is to love the neighbor, to love the whole human race, all people, even the enemy, and not to make exceptions, neither of preference nor of aversion. (WL, 19)

Luke 14:29 and other such excerpts are telling us not only to sever familial relations of preference, but *all* relations of preference and not merely because they distract us from our duty to love thy neighbor, but because such relations are cases of self-love (usually self-deceptively disguised).

The case of marriage is particularly insidious, if this interpretation of what Kierkegaard is saying is correct, because it enshrines *both* self-love and lust. Again, this is usually masked through the claim that marriage is necessary for procreation. Consider the following entry from 1850:

The lie is focused on this point about the propagation of the race; if sin comes thereby, the lie really becomes fully operative at the same time. The mere fact that we have embellished the satisfaction of the most powerful lust--which is practically life for the majority of men--the mere fact that we have also embellished the gratification of this lust as the greatest benefaction, a benefaction for the child, for society, an enrichment of existence, in short,

the most exceptionally sublime, moral, and extremely beneficial act possible--just this shows what a scoundrel or what a henchman a man is. (XI.2 A 202) [3970]

Indeed, the case of marriage gets even worse for Kierkegaard once procreation is brought in as a justification. Kierkegaard claims that procreation is a substitute for the Christian belief in the immortality of the soul, a lapse back into Paganism and a display of profound egotism standing in direct contradiction to Christ and his teachings.

By nature man centers existence around the propagation of the species; this constitutes all his egotism qua animal creature or here it culminates. Christianity would decentralize this relationship--and what a battle it has been! How frightfully true, just in this connection, Christ's words to the apostles: I am sending you as a sheep among ravening wolves--yes, ravening wolves are what men become, all right, as soon as someone touches this point in earnest and in earnest wants to wrench from them what for them is the whole content of life. (XI.2 A 150) [2622]  
**1854**

Or again:

To create is reserved for God, and this, if one dares speak of such things, is the highest autopathetic satisfaction. The giving of life is a weak analogy to this and is conceded to man--human egotism culminates at this point. As the nerve ends lie under the nails, so human egotism is concentrated in the sexual relationship, the propagation of the species, the giving of life.

According to Christian teaching, God wants only one thing of us human beings--he wants to be loved. But in order that a human being may love God he must give up all egotism foremost the intensified egotism: propagation of the species, the giving of life.

That sexuality is the center of human egotism God knows too well, of course, and therefore this became the locus of attention. A person does not have to look very hard to be convinced that here human egotism is total.

So God demanded the renunciation of this egotism--then God pointed to immortality. As I have often discussed in these journals [i.e., XII A 150], propagation of the species was a substitute for immortality (which both Plato and Aristotle explicitly state) both in paganism and in Judaism. ...

The single state, says Christianity. No, replies man, but I would like to make arrangements for a wedding ceremony. Charming! It is ad modum: Refrain from murder!--No, and I would like to have you consecrate the dagger.  
(XI.2 A 154) [2624] **1854**

Of course, the obvious consequence of this doctrine, were it to be followed, would be the elimination of the human species. Kierkegaard recognizes this consequence, and believes that it can be theologically justified on at least two grounds. The first justification is that it would also lead to the elimination of earthly sin (both original and subsequent).

According to Christianity the world is a world of sin, the consequence of a fall.

Christianity is salvation, but it is also a cessation; it wants to stop all the perpetuation which is oriented toward the prolongation of this world. (XI.1 A 295) [2620] **1854**

Or again:

For Christianity this world is a sinful world; a child is conceived in iniquity and born in sin. Christianity wants to stop, atone for the past, but it does not then actually want to start all over again right away. When someone pays another's debts, he makes one stipulation--no more debts again--so it is with being unmarried in relation to being Christian.

But in Christendom married people are consecrated, and the consecration sanctifies this relationship. Charming! In the same way bandits in the South sanctify their murders by kneeling in advance at the altar. ...

Generally speaking, the conception of the propagation of the race is decisive for every religion. Either the world is essentially a splendid world and it is very pleasing to God that its being is perpetuated or--and this is New Testament Christianity--God is very opposed to the existence [Tilværen] and being of this world. Christianity has been introduced to call a halt, and therefore propagation also is immediately blockaded. (XI.1 A 313) [2621] **1854**

The second justification is that is would leave what he calls “immortal souls” pure and unsoiled.

Even if Christianity otherwise had nothing to say against propagating the race, one of the old Fathers of the Church would probably speak as follows: Refrain from propagating the race, control your drives and lust, for remember that every time this drive is satisfied, Governance must give an immortal soul to the animal-creature which is the fruit, thus you are dragging one more immortal soul down into this misery, down into this enormous danger, from which, it is true, he possibly may be saved through Christianity, but where he can also be lost eternally. (XI.2 A 202) [3970] **1854**

### III. Conclusion

I do not pretend to have fully fleshed out the relation between marriage, lust, self-love and self-deception in this paper, but I hope I have pointed to a fruitful way for understanding what Kierkegaard was up to. It is my belief that in the *Journals and Papers* we are seeing what only appears as the tip of the iceberg in Kierkegaard's published work—and what a startling conclusion we have come to! If this interpretation of Kierkegaard's view of marriage in the *Journals and Papers* is correct, then in Kierkegaard's considered view the Sacrament of marriage is no Sacrament at all.

## Dal concetto teosofico di angoscia al *Begrebet Angest* kierkegaardiano. - Un abbozzo di percorso storico-concettuale -

Dr. Luca Maugeri  
Bologna, Italy

Se solo raramente ci si riferisce alla comune trattazione del problema dell'angoscia in Schelling e in Kierkegaard facendo menzione delle sue radici nella tradizione teosofica, non mi sembra invece un'esagerazione affermare che all'interno degli studi kierkegaardiani vi sia un vero e proprio "caso Baader", ancora aperto e pochissimo trattato<sup>10</sup>. Ciò a maggior ragione se teniamo conto del fatto che forse vi è da considerare un "caso Baader" più vasto all'interno della storia del pensiero moderno, anch'esso non del tutto chiarito. Tuttavia non è evidentemente questa la sede per cercare anche solo di immaginare delle soluzioni a problemi così vasti, sebbene interessanti e degni di essere approfonditi; ciò nonostante reputo possibile tracciare alcuni percorsi concettuali che congiungono Schelling, Baader a Kierkegaard limitatamente ad alcuni punti specifici (ben lontani dal fornire un'interpretazione univoca dei concetti stessi presi qui in considerazione). Percorsi tutti riconducibili in origine alla tradizione teosofica boehmiana, filtrati dai due pensatori tedeschi e infine accolti, meditati, criticati e rielaborati da Kierkegaard. La base per stabilire queste linee consiste nel trovare una continuità concettuale tra autori diversi seguendo rimandi testuali espliciti o comunque riscontrabili entro confini filologici, storici e filosofici: ovviamente, in un contesto di questo genere c'è sempre un ispiratore e un recettore (Kierkegaard, in questo caso), e quest'ultimo è colui che in qualche modo "trasforma" il messaggio iniziale rielaborandolo secondo le proprie personali inclinazioni filosofiche (e teologiche).

Nella consapevolezza di star posando una prima pietra c'è solo la certezza che è molto di più il da fare rispetto a ciò che è stato fatto. In questo articolo si confida dunque sulla solidità del terreno più che sulla prima posa presa per se stessa, nella speranza che esso possa costituire una buona base per approfondimenti futuri.

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Franz Xaver Benedikt von Baader (1765 – 1841), personaggio poliedrico e avventuroso, nonché pensatore estroso e a tratti misterioso, cattolico di formazione<sup>11</sup> ma piuttosto eterodosso in alcune sue posizioni e uno dei più convinti promotori della Santa Alleanza, è secondo Ernst Benz "il grande ispiratore di questa riscoperta della mistica tedesca all'inizio del XIX secolo"<sup>12</sup>, riscoperta che, come già visto, coinvolgerà in pieno il pensiero degli idealisti e, difatti, sarà lo stesso Baader a leggere per la prima volta testi di Eckhart (rimasti "oscurati" agli studiosi per un lungo periodo di tempo) a Hegel. Ma il passaggio decisivo per la riflessione di Baader è la conoscenza del pensiero teosofico di Jakob Böhme (1575 – 1624), il "*Philosophus Theutonicus*"<sup>13</sup> invece ben noto agli idealisti, che egli conoscerà attraverso le edizioni francesi

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<sup>10</sup> Sui rapporti fra Kierkegaard e Baader rimando ai "classici" studi di Maria Mikulová Thulstrup e al più recente articolo di P. Koslowski, *Baader: the Centrality of Original Sin and the Difference of Immediacy and Innocence*, in AA. VV., *Kierkegaard and his German Contemporaries*, «Kierkegaard research: sources, reception and resources» vol. 6, ed. by Jon Stewart, Aldershot 2007, tomo I.

<sup>11</sup> A partire dal 1781 Baader frequentò l'università di Ingolstadt. Fu profondamente influenzato dal pensiero di Johann Michael von Sailer (1751-1832), teologo di formazione gesuita nominato nel 1822 vescovo titolare di Germanicopoli e in seguito vescovo di Regensburg. Sailer si adoperò molto per risollevare le sorti intellettuali del clero cattolico e tentare un primo avvicinamento ecumenico in nome di una comune pietà fra i diversi *credo* cristiani.

<sup>12</sup> Ernst Benz, *Les sources mystiques de la philosophie romantique allemande*, Paris 1987<sup>2</sup>, p. 11 (trad. mia).

<sup>13</sup> Di Jakob Böhme e del suo misticismo teosofico scriverà Émile Boutroux nel 1908: "Mantenere l'ideale spiritualista e ottimista dei mistici, pur guardando alla natura dal punto di vista pessimista di Lutero e, più in generale, da un punto di vista realista, questo è il compito che Böhme si è imposto. [...] mentre per i mistici si trattava di sapere come Dio poteva nascere in ciò che non è Lui, Böhme si domanda come può rinascere in ciò che si è separato da Lui con violenza", cfr. E. Boutroux: *Jakob Boehme o l'origine dell'idealismo tedesco*, Milano 2006 (Paris 1908), p. 27. Di Böhme Kierkegaard possedeva i seguenti titoli: *Beschreibung der drei Principien Göttliches Wesens*, Amsterdam 1660 (*Auktionsprotokol over Søren Kierkegaards Bogsamling*, a cura di H.P. Rohde, København 1967, n. di catalogo 451 [d'ora in poi semplicemente *Aukt.*]). *Hohe und tiefe Gründe von dem dreyfachen Leben des Menschen*, Amsterdam 1660 (*Aukt.* 452), *Christosophie oder Weg zu Christo*, 1731 (*Aukt.* 454), *Mysterium magnum*, Amsterdam 1682 (*Aukt.* 453). La prima citazione di Böhme nel *Journal* si trova in un appunto di Kierkegaard del 1839: "E così bello e così vero e anche sgorgato dal cuore quanto dice Böhme: «Nell'ora in cui la tentazione minaccia, non si tratta di avere molti pensieri ma di poterne tenere ben fermo uno». Dio me ne conceda la forza" (in *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, a cura di N.J. Cappelørn, J. Garff, J. Kondrup et

tradotte e commentate da Louis Claude de Saint-Martin<sup>14</sup>, di cui Baader fu un appassionato ammiratore, al punto che, insieme al già citato Böhme, il pensatore francese diventerà il punto di riferimento costante di tutta la sua opera, alla pari (e forse con un occhio di riguardo in più) di Tommaso d'Aquino, Eckhart e Taulero.

In ambito teosofico – un ambito a prima vista così distante dagli interessi di Kierkegaard – le basi di riflessione fondamentali vertono su tre punti ben precisi, dai quali poi eventualmente si diramano altri sottoargomenti: 1) l'autogenerazione di Dio (il passaggio dall'Unità alla Trinità di Dio), 2) la creazione (il passaggio dalla *a-seitas* dello Spirito alla Natura, l'esistenza del male e la caduta dell'uomo), e 3) la Redenzione e il fine ultimo dell'uomo (la generazione divina nelle creature nonostante la corruzione di quest'ultime). Sia in Böhme che in Baader questi tre punti, che di fatto racchiudono *in nuce* tutto lo scibile, sono concepibili per l'uomo proprio in virtù della stessa presenza divina che egli stesso porta in sé, la quale “accende” la scintilla che permette all'anima di essere “illuminata” su questi misteri e in qualche modo di rinascere “vivendo” la sapienza divina stessa nel suo estrinsecarsi e autoalienarsi da Dio stesso, seppur con tutti i limiti – invero spesso sottaciuti o dati frettolosamente per scontati in questi autori – della creatura<sup>15</sup>. Lo Spirito, libero dalla Natura, ma di cui la Natura stessa è *essenza*, agisce internamente a essa, facendola in qualche modo progredire verso lo Spirito stesso che è Dio e che mediante sette “spiriti organizzatori” che nascono successivamente l'uno dall'altro fa sì che vi sia un contatto fra Natura e Dio stesso, ovverosia la sopraccitata “scintilla” [*der Blitz*] che darà via libera alla Luce e all'Amore divini all'interno del creato e in particolare nell'uomo.

Nella fattispecie, in questi due autori è molto marcato il riferimento all'*angoscia* come uno degli “spiriti divinizzatori della Natura”: introdotta come il movimento incessante di un'anima che non trova il proprio bene in se stessa e non sa dove cercarlo, l'angoscia è come un “limite superiore” della Natura, la quale, elevatasi sino al porsi di fronte all'infinito esterno con alle proprie spalle l'infinito interiore, li percepisce entrambi come “vuoti” sotto la determinazione del corpo-materia, e dunque ha bisogno della mediazione spirituale. Per dirla con Baader:

“Il *Philosophus Teutonicus* esprime questa legge della mediazione per il compimento della vita della creatura con tali parole: ogni vita nasce in natura nel tormento dell'angoscia (nelle strettoie e nell'angustia dell'origine della natura) e non ha luce in sé; se poi entra in ciò che ha causato la natura, là riceve la luce”<sup>16</sup>.

Di fatto, l'angoscia in Böhme e in Baader genera nell'uomo la consapevolezza della propria miseria, ed è proprio questa conoscenza di sé a renderlo meno misero<sup>17</sup> e a introdurlo in qualche modo alla vita nuova, donando la propria volontà “naturale” alla volontà *originaria*. L'angoscia è dunque la forza spirituale che conduce la Natura all'“impatto” con lo Spirito rappresentato dal *Blitz*, dal lampo che genera la Luce come una seconda nascita nella libertà, o meglio ancora, accentuandone i toni kierkegaardiani, essa stessa è per l'uomo la *possibilità dello spirito*, come del resto lo stesso Kierkegaard sottolinea ne *Il concetto dell'angoscia*:

“L'angoscia si può paragonare alla vertigine. Chi volge gli occhi al fondo di un abisso, è preso dalla vertigine. Ma la causa non è meno nel suo occhio che nell'abisso: perché deve guardarvi. Così l'angoscia è la vertigine della libertà, che sorge mentre lo spirito sta per porre la sintesi e la libertà, guardando giù nella sua propria possibilità, afferra il finito per fermarsi in esso”<sup>18</sup>.

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al., København 1997, v. 19, p. 12 [Not7] – d'ora in poi indicato semplicemente come *SKS* – trad. di C. Fabro con modifiche). Il passo citato si trova in J. Böhme, *Christosophie oder Weg zu Christo*, p. 387 e ss. nell'edizione posseduta da Kierkegaard.

<sup>14</sup> Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803), anch'egli teosofa, costruì la propria dottrina sugli scritti di Böhme revisitandoli sulla scorta degli insegnamenti esoterico-massonici ricevuti in gioventù.

<sup>15</sup> Scrive Böhme: “Considera te stesso, cerca te stesso, trova te stesso: ecco la chiave della sapienza. Sei l'immagine e il figlio di Dio. Questo è lo sviluppo del tuo essere, questa è, in Dio, la nascita eterna”, in E. Boutroux, *op. cit.*, p. 30. Il concetto di *imago Dei*, oltre ad avere un evidente richiamo biblico (Gn 1,26), è stato spesso richiamato da molti autori mistici cristiani (ad esempio Eckhart, del cui pensiero si sente in Böhme una presenza marcata), anche nella tradizione spirituale protestante. Baader ne farà oggetto di ampie esposizioni nelle *Vorlesungen über Speculative Dogmatik*, Münster, 1828-38 (*Aukt.* 396) e in altre opere.

<sup>16</sup> Fr. V. Baader, *Speculative Dogmatik*, vol. V, trad. di L.P.Xella da F. Baader, *Filosofia erotica*, Milano 1982, p. 593.

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. E. Boutroux, *op. cit.*, pp.45-46.

<sup>18</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *Begrebet Angest*, *SKS* 4, 365 (trad. di C. Fabro con modifiche, corsivo mio).

Ora, se è possibile stabilire un punto fermo nel pensiero di Kierkegaard – e in questo punto particolare egli è fedelissimo alla propria formazione luterana – questo è proprio il rifiuto *apriori* della possibilità di una tale compenterazione sostanziale tra Dio e l'uomo, al punto da poter “sovrapporre” in maniera indiscriminata l'autogenerazione divina alla creazione e alla Redenzione (o seconda nascita). Cionondimeno, questi temi non risulteranno affatto indifferenti al pensatore danese e lo stimoleranno a trovare una propria soluzione a tali problematiche tipiche della tradizione teosofico-speculativa, immettendole in un percorso di pensiero più circoscritto al problema dell'esistenza e dell'essenza dell'uomo. Del resto, quello di Baader è un modo di intendere il contenuto del pensiero che si pone ben al di là delle mete raggiunte dai grandi autori dell'idealismo, vuoi per la sua forte componente teosofica, vuoi per la struttura ontologico-metafisica che in qualche modo rispecchia ancora il tomismo della sua formazione cattolica, infine anche per la radice *spiritualistico-volontaristica* della sua stessa speculazione che riflette fedelmente l'impostazione data da Böhme alla propria teosofia e che per ciò stesso pone l'accento sul problema della *personalità*<sup>19</sup> in quanto divinità e in quanto costituente l'uomo stesso e il proprio essere. Ed è proprio soffermandosi su questo modo implicitamente antropologico (che Kierkegaard chiama *antropomorfo* per le sue manifeste ambiguità) di intendere la questione teologica che il pensatore danese troverà spunti di studio, di critica e di ricerca.

Al centro della discussione, come già detto, c'è il problema dell'intrecciarsi di creazione, libertà, caduta e redenzione:

“Von Baader non afferma che il male è più antico dell'uomo, purtuttavia egli pensa che il male è penetrato nel mondo attraverso l'uomo, cosicché la corruzione della natura è posta attraverso il peccato dell'uomo e che l'uomo ritornando a Dio porterà il Creato con sé, però qui (p. 84) sembra che egli affermi che il male sia penetrato nel mondo attraverso altre entità, non umane.

La produzione divina deve essere chiamata immanente o emanante? La creazione dell'uomo può senz'altro essere considerata emanante, e se essa presuppone un fondamento [*en Grund*] come il *locus* (p. 87), dov'è dunque? Non mi sembra forse che qui la domanda sulla creazione della materia diventi urgente?”<sup>20</sup>.

L'argomento in discussione nelle pagine di Baader è la libertà umana e il suo rapporto con Dio, e nella citata p. 84 delle *Vorlesungen* troviamo questa citazione da Saint-Martin che può aver destato la perplessità di Kierkegaard: “Le mal ne peut jamais prendre nature”, e in nota a questo passo la seguente glossa di Baader:

“Si può dunque dire che in Dio ha luogo un'eterna redenzione della natura ma non una conciliazione”.

Il *locus* di cui si parla è il *centrum naturae*, l'Eterna Natura divina presente nella natura e in particolare nell'uomo e a cui egli tende non solo per propria costituzione ma anche per la propria *volontà*, come Baader stesso dice alle pp. 87-89 dello stesso libro:

“Per la volontà e dalla volontà, dice J. Böhme, è stato fatto questo mondo, e tutto si rigenera nella volontà, nell'appetito e nel desiderio. Nel desiderio occorre distinguere la funzione positiva da quella negativa [...] La volontà dell'uomo non potrebbe riuscire a produrre questa doppia sottomissione [cioè la sintesi e l'unione delle tendenze alla *sovrapposizione* al centro e allo *sprofondamento* al di sotto di esso, *ndr*] se non si rendesse conto della duplice facoltà che ha in se stesso: la facoltà di allontanarsi, se vuole, dal centro e di spingersi nell'una o nell'altra direzione [...] Si potrebbe perciò dire, nel linguaggio della mistica, che se il centro divino o la vergine celeste, che attira a sé la volontà dell'uomo per generarsi in lui e per suo mezzo come creatura, cioè per farsi uomo, si potrebbe dire che questa vergine pretende dall'uomo in dote la vittoria su quelle due facoltà o potenze e che egli rinunci ad entrambe e alle loro seduzioni”.

Kierkegaard cercherà di isolare dalle argomentazioni baaderiane i punti che destano il suo interesse, tracciando sulla base di questi il proprio autonomo percorso filosofico. Se, come già mostrato, lo scopo della teosofia è rendere conto dei processi divini partendo da un'unica intuizione fondamentale, in modo da contenere in un unico processo

<sup>19</sup> “La filosofia degli antichi era soprattutto una classificazione, quella di Boehme sarà una costruzione. Il problema della genesi si è sostituito a quello dell'essenza delle cose, e poiché l'essere di cui si cerca la genesi e il cui movimento interno deve spiegare la natura è espressamente la persona cosciente, libera e agente, il sistema che ci avviamo a studiare ci appare come l'aurora di una filosofia nuova, che può essere chiamata «filosofia della personalità», considerata in se stessa e in relazione alla natura” (E. Boutroux, *op. cit.*, p. 28).

<sup>20</sup> *Søren Kierkegaards papirer*, a cura di P.A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr, E. Torsting (con aggiunte a cura di N. Thulstrup e N.J. Cappelørn), København 1968-78 [d'ora in poi semplicemente *Pap.*]. I C 31, (trad. e corsivo miei).

l'autogenerazione di Dio, la creazione, il male e la redenzione, Kierkegaard da parte sua si sente coinvolto solo in alcune particolari questioni che definisce "urgenti". Egli stesso, due anni dopo la prima lettura delle *Vorlesungen* ritroverà un appunto "volante" riferentesi in particolare a *Die idee der Persönlichkeit und der individuellen Fortdauer* di I. H. Fichte<sup>21</sup> ma con un esplicito richiamo a Baader, che ricopierà per intero nel diario, di cui riporto un frammento:

"...Fr. Baader[...] in nome dell'umanità rifiuta l'onore di essere stato il primo a scoprire il peccato, e si scaglia contro la teoria di Kant sul male radicale<sup>22</sup>.

[...] La prima creazione dà la coscienza immediata (questa è l'impressione ma, come del vento, non si sa né donde venga né donde vada [cfr. *Gv* 3, 8 *ndr*]); al di là di questa non si può arrivare. Il Cristianesimo è la seconda creazione (perciò Cristo nasce da una Vergine immacolata, ciò che a sua volta è una creazione dal nulla; perciò lo Spirito di Dio adombra la Vergine Maria come la volta prima spirava sulle acque [cfr. *Lc* 1, 35; *Gn* 1, 2 *ndr*]; un nuovo momento, l'audizione della parola – la Fede come la coscienza immediata del II stadio"<sup>23</sup>.

Abbiamo a questo punto strumenti sufficienti per capire l'urgenza di cui parlava Kierkegaard: il nodo focale del suo interesse ruota attorno al problema della creazione nel suo rapporto con il peccato dell'uomo e della Redenzione, e infatti sarà sotto questa specifica determinazione che il filosofo danese affronterà il problema dell'angoscia.

Uno dei passi di Baader a cui certamente Kierkegaard si riferisce è all'inizio della XIV lezione della *Dogmatica speculativa*:

"La trattazione della libertà di scelta dell'uomo ci conduce ad un'analisi dell'essenza della tentazione, giacché solo da questa scaturisce il bene o il male creaturale; un tal bene creaturale non può essere poi confuso con la bontà innata, non ancora messa alla prova né confermata, così come la sorte di cui la creatura gode prima della tentazione (per esempio, l'uomo nel paradisiaco stato d'innocenza) è ancora qualcosa di *immeritato*, perciò di *non necessario*, anzi di fortuito e di precario: tale precarietà corrisponde alla prima possibilità di caduta che l'uomo deve ancora annientare, cioè alla labilità della creatura"<sup>24</sup>.

Come noto, questo sarà uno dei nodi fondamentali nello sviluppo della trattazione del *Concetto dell'angoscia* – in cui la presenza di Baader e Schelling è a dir poco schiacciante, sebbene sapientemente diluita nel testo – e che vedrà Kierkegaard proprio alle prese con molte posizioni teologiche del pensatore tedesco, e il concetto di tentazione sarà una di queste posizioni che verranno messe in discussione, ad esempio, nella famosa nota a fondo pagina in cui Kierkegaard dice per bocca di Vigilius Haufniensis:

"Tutto ciò che Baader, con la solita energia e autorità, ha esposto in diversi scritti sull'importanza della tentazione per il consolidamento della libertà [...], è quanto naturalmente deve consocere chiunque voglia riflettere sull'argomento. Ripeterlo qui non è necessario perché ci sono i libri di Baader. Qui non è neanche possibile svolgere più oltre il suo pensiero, perché mi pare che Fr. Baader abbia trascurato delle *determinazioni intermedie*. Se il passaggio dall'innocenza alla colpa si compie soltanto mediante il concetto di tentazione, Dio viene messo quasi in una relazione di sperimentatore nei confronti dell'uomo [*i et næsten eksperimenterende Forhold til Mennesket*]"<sup>25</sup>.

E più avanti, nel testo:

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<sup>21</sup> I. H. Fichte, *Die Idee der Persönlichkeit und der individuellen Fortdauer*, Elberfeld 1834 (*Aukt.* 505).

<sup>22</sup> Con una distinzione ancora non del tutto chiara fra male e peccato, probabilmente dovuta anche alla arditezza di certi ragionamenti baaderiani, Kierkegaard legge questa nota a p. 93 della *Dogmatica* di Baader: "Vedremo in seguito come la prima scelta dell'uomo non sia stata più quella primitiva che genera in sé per la prima volta il male, perché egli lo incontro già generato in modo creaturale, cosicché l'uomo deve rifiutare l'onore, riservatogli da Kant, di essere il primo inventore del male".

<sup>23</sup> *Pap.* II A 31 del 19 Marzo 1837.

<sup>24</sup> F. v. Baader, *op. cit.*, p. 86 (corsivo mio).

<sup>25</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *op. cit.*, *SKS* 4, 346.

“Fr. Baader ha protestato spesso contro l’affermazione che la finitezza, la sensualità siano come tali la peccaminosità. Tuttavia, se non si sta attenti, si cade nel pelagianesimo da tutt’altra parte. Fr. Baader, infatti, non ha tenuto conto della storia della specie”<sup>26</sup>.

Come si vede, il problema della tentazione in Baader si intreccia fatalmente con il problema del peccato in Kierkegaard, e la soluzione che il pensatore danese sembra intravedere è quella di concentrarsi sull’individualità umana e sulla sua libertà, così da isolare ciò che *realmente* descrive l’uomo nella storia e nell’economia della salvezza. Tralasciando qui il problema se Baader fosse pelagiano o meno, è sicuro che per Kierkegaard la Creazione è per l’uomo immeritata tanto quanto la Grazia, e la libertà umana non può essere (almeno non in maniera così diretta) legata allo sviluppo dell’azione divina, piuttosto essa – la libertà – entra in gioco in una maniera più “interiore” rispetto ai grandi schemi teosofici, ma soprattutto rappresenta per Kierkegaard uno di quegli anelli fondamentali per mettere in luce la portata antropologica del problema della libertà, vale a dire la *costituzione* dell’uomo stesso. Come scrive R. Garaventa:

“Il merito de *Il concetto dell’angoscia* sta proprio nell’aver affrontato il tema del peccato da un punto di vista antropologico, fenomenologico e psicologico, superando una concezione meramente (o principalmente) moralistica di esso”<sup>27</sup>.

Il concetto di *angoscia* diventa così una di quelle “determinazioni intermedie” che Kierkegaard cercava, atte a ricostruire la reale storia dello spirito sotto la determinazione dell’esistenza, ed è a mio avviso sotto questi auspici e sulla scorta del boehmenismo di Baader e Schelling, che egli si decide di affrontare la questione in maniera diretta nella sua “semplice riflessione per una dimostrazione psicologica in direzione del problema dogmatico del peccato originale”.

Valga a titolo di conferma la seguente nota a margine del manoscritto del *Begrebet Angest*:

“Jakob Böhme, Schelling. «Angoscia, Collera, Appetito, Sofferenza». Queste cose andrebbero sempre trattate con cautela: ora esse sono la conseguenza del peccato, ora invece il negativo di Dio – tŌ ʔteron [tò èteron]”<sup>28</sup>

che nel testo pubblicato diverrà la seguente nota a piè di pagina:

“Lo stesso Schelling parla molto spesso di angoscia, ira, tormento, patimento e via dicendo. Ma tali parole si devono sempre prendere con un po’ di diffidenza per non scambiare le conseguenze del peccato con quelle che esse pure significano in Schelling, cioè stati e sentimenti di Dio. Con queste espressioni egli descrive, se così si può dire, *le doglie creative della divinità*. Con espressioni figurate egli indica quel che in parte fu chiamato anche da lui stesso il negativo e che Hegel, colla stessa parola, determina più precisamente il dialettico [tŌ ʔteron]. [...] Un *antropomorfismo* vigoroso e sovrabbondante ha un valore notevole. L’errore è un altro, è un esempio che dimostra a che strani risultati non si arriva quando, trattando la dogmatica metafisicamente e la metafisica dogmaticamente, si travisa l’una e l’altra”<sup>29</sup>.

Rispetto all’appunto originale, scompare il riferimento esplicito a Böhme (ma non quello implicito, benchè l’espressione böhmiana “doglie creative della divinità” sia mutuata in questo caso da Schelling), ma traspare in maniera sempre più evidente quale sia l’operazione che Kierkegaard, qui quasi al vertice della propria maturità di scrittore, vuol compiere, e cioè *disambiguare* l’orizzonte semantico dei concetti che fino a quel momento aveva incontrato nei suoi studi e nelle sue letture filosofico-teologiche, da quelle sovrapposizioni “mistiche” di dogmatica e metafisica, tipiche dell’ambiente dei pensatori speculativi, in favore di una *risemantizzazione* degli stessi concetti – di cui non rigetterà a priori ma ridimensionerà l’afflato metafisico e misticeggiante nelle proporzioni più a lui congeniali – sotto la determinazione di quella categoria la cui “scoperta” egli stesso si auto-attribuirà: il *singolo*:

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<sup>26</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *op. cit.*, SKS 4, 363.

<sup>27</sup> Roberto Garaventa, *Angoscia e peccato in Søren Kierkegaard*, Roma 2007, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> *Pap. V B 53:18*, del 1844. Cfr. anche Karl Rosenkranz, *Schelling, Vorlesungen, gehalten im Sommer 1842 an der Universität zu Königsberg*, Danzig 1843, pp. 303-304 (*Aukt.* 766), in cui Rosenkranz scrive che Schelling condivide con Böhme “l’aspirazione a concepire il negativo come un momento in sé immanente all’assoluto, ma da lui stesso tolto come un eterno non-essere” (cit. in R. Garaventa, *op. cit.*, p. 73, nota 128).

<sup>29</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *op. cit.*, SKS 4, 363-364.

“Kierkegaard insiste sul carattere protologico, prototipico e paradigmatico della storia di Genesis 3, quale raffigurazione o anticipazione della storia di ogni singolo uomo. [...] Il concetto dell’angoscia non è altro che il tentativo di descrivere la libertà in modo da rendere comprensibile la tentazione come suo momento interno”.<sup>30</sup>

Il riferimento a Schelling ci porta ad approfondire alcuni passaggi delle sue lezioni sulla Filosofia della Rivelazione, a cui – come noto – Kierkegaard assisterà solo in parte, fin quando cioè non deciderà di andarsene, oppresso dai *nonsense* – come egli stesso scriverà all’amico E. Boesen – della nuova dottrina schellinghiana. Negli studi kierkegaardiani esiste già una codifica piuttosto consolidata delle reazioni del filosofo danese alle lezioni berlinesi di Schelling, basata su presupposti esclusivamente filosofico-teoretici che mettono giustamente in risalto l’antagonismo di Kierkegaard con l’idealismo; ciò a mio avviso non esclude a priori la possibilità di ipotizzare che le motivazioni che portarono Kierkegaard, successivamente alla trasferta tedesca, a riproporre certi temi provenienti dalla tradizione mistico-teosofica in una veste più *concreta*, agiavano già prima del periodo berlinese certe sue inquietudini teoretico-esistenziali, e contribuirono in qualche modo al brusco distacco dalle tesi schellinghiane. Si prenda dunque quanto segue come una ricostruzione che presuppone la verisimiglianza di quanto affermato fin qui e la non contraddittorietà con la spiegazione standard dell’evento generalmente accettata.

La partenza di Kierkegaard per Berlino era animata dalla speranza che la *Philosophie der Offenbarung* di Schelling si sviluppasse come una *filosofia della realtà*, ma tale speranza andò ben presto delusa: non è questo il luogo per soffermarsi sulle ragioni specifiche di tale delusione<sup>31</sup> ma una delle chiavi per leggere tra le righe del disappunto di Kierkegaard sulle lezioni berlinesi è proprio considerare il punto di vista specificamente teosofico-religioso: la cristologia positiva di Schelling, annunciata dallo stesso pensatore tedesco come dipendente dalla fede propria vissuta e dunque slegata da vincoli dogmatici oggettivi, lo porta a rielaborare i contenuti dogmatici in maniera molto personale, al punto di oscillare fra diverse posizioni, specialmente tra quelle trinitarie e quelle riguardanti la caduta dell’uomo<sup>32</sup>, in cui egli sembra non possedere la stessa lucidità di Baader nel riportare i contenuti teosofici böhmiani (il *Philosophus Theutonicus* è ovviamente citato durante le lezioni) applicati al discorso filosofico, né ha di Baader – non solo per l’esplicito rigetto del dogmatismo, ma forse anche per un differente orizzonte teologico – quella struttura ontologica proveniente dal tomismo per sorreggere il suo ragionamento teosofico e filosofico.

Un esempio può essere riscontrato in un paio delle ultime lezioni a cui Kierkegaard assistette, il 29 e il 31 Gennaio 1842, in cui Schelling introduce la questione della creazione dell’uomo e dell’allontanamento di questi da Dio a causa del peccato, argomento al quale, come già visto, Kierkegaard era divenuto particolarmente sensibile già durante i suoi studi universitari. Ebbene, la concezione di Schelling del famoso *Divino Quaternario* Padre, Figlio, Spirito e *Sophia* (l’autoalienarsi di Dio, quella che Böhme e Baader chiamano la Vergine Eterna o Celeste e che Kierkegaard, come abbiamo mostrato, sembra associare sotto suggerimento baaderiano alla Vergine Maria<sup>33</sup>) racchiude completamente la relazione Dio-Uomo prima del peccato, ovvero si tratta dell’uomo stesso incluso integralmente con la creazione in questo “quarto” in cui Dio si autoaliena e che in Schelling è una sorta di *Dio divenuto*<sup>34</sup>, la cui disobbedienza e superbia aprono le porte della creazione a ciò che era rimasto fuori e cioè il male, negativo di Dio, minando così le fondamenta della creazione stessa.

Mi sembra evidente che se Kierkegaard era in cerca di “movimenti intermedi” che descrivessero il peccato dell’uomo nell’economia della creazione e della salvezza, qui trovava esattamente il movimento opposto, cioè una concezione più speculativa, astratta e immanentistica di quella di Baader. Di lì a pochi giorni, ascoltati i primi accenni al paganesimo e alla mitologia intesi come “tempo del Figlio”, Kierkegaard abbandonerà le lezioni di Schelling.

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<sup>30</sup> R. Garaventa, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> A questo proposito vedere *Appunti delle lezioni berlinesi di Schelling sulla «Filosofia della rivelazione» (1841-1842)*, a cura di I. Basso, Milano 2008. Per gli influssi della teosofia di Böhme in Schelling, cfr. ad esempio K. Leese, *Von J. Böhme zu Schelling*, Erfurt 1927; R. Schneider, *Schellings und Hegels schwäbische Geistesahnen*, Würzburg 1938; H. Fuhrmans, *Schellings Philosophie der Weltalter*, Dusseldorf 1954; E. Benz, *Schellings theologische Geistesahnen*, Zurich 1955 e *Schelling. Werden und Wirken seines Denkens*, Mainz 1955.

<sup>32</sup> Cfr. Xavier Tilliette, *Filosofi davanti a Cristo*, Brescia 1991<sup>2</sup>, alle pp. 170-172.

<sup>33</sup> Vedi *supra* e a nota 13.

<sup>34</sup> Prendo questa espressione da X. Tilliette, *op. cit.*, p. 172. Ciò che si vuole affermare con essa è che Schelling non volle o non riuscì ad allontanarsi da un panenteismo piuttosto marcato e difficilmente compatibile con il dogma cristiano.

Appare chiaro perciò, perché nel *Concetto dell'angoscia*, come abbiamo già visto sopra, Kierkegaard pretenderà dalle dottrine schellinghiane chiarezza e distinzione: ben venga "l'antropomorfismo" spirituale, se riesce a spiegare qualcosa dell'uomo, ma proprio quando si parla dell'uomo, sotto la determinazione dell'angoscia e del peccato, *ipso facto* non si sta parlando di Dio<sup>35</sup>.

Se questo tracciato concettuale è ben fondato, si può ipotizzare che nel *Concetto dell'angoscia* Kierkegaard cerchi di chiudere alcuni conti in sospeso con dei punti del pensiero della sua epoca che risultavano essere sfuggenti e pericolosi per l'arditezza e allo stesso tempo per la leggerezza con cui, sempre secondo il pensatore danese, venivano trattati temi fondamentali della metafisica ma soprattutto dell'uomo. A poco a poco il *focus* di Kierkegaard si sposta dal maestoso – ma sovente discontinuo e torbido – impianto teosofico-ontologico di Böhme-Baader – verso il più sentito problema della coscienza individuale dell'Assoluto, del male, del peccato e del perdono divino, portando però con sé nel teatro di una modernità forse per la prima volta veramente consapevole di sé quelle tematiche che in qualche modo introducono alla conoscenza della concreta vita individuale intesa come "sintesi di infinito e finito" (il problema antropologico, la singolarità, l'angoscia, il peccato e la fede come "seconda immediatezza"). Egli cercherà anzi di ritradurre in termini esistenziali interi concetti ed espressioni provenienti senza dubbio da quella tradizione così distante nelle forme e probabilmente anche negli scopi ma allo stesso tempo gravida di spunti di riflessione e di approfondimento della conoscenza se non di Dio, quanto meno dell'uomo *davanti a Dio*. Come giustamente afferma R. Garaventa:

“Si tratta invece di stabilire una connessione tra questa idea (l'uomo è peccatore) e l'idea moderna di autodeterminazione (l'uomo è un soggetto autonomo, libero, responsabile)”<sup>36</sup>.

Battendo la strada delle influenze concettuali in Kierkegaard provenienti dalla tradizione mistico-teosofica – nella loro originalissima rielaborazione – si può intendere forse ancora meglio perché il *Concetto dell'Angoscia* rappresenta uno dei capisaldi del pensiero kierkegaardiano nella strada che porterà il pensatore danese a separare, con un esperimento maieutico effettuato con precisione chirurgica, il singolo dalla massa nella sua esistenza *concreta* sotto la determinazione *religiosa*. Un'esistenza di cui questa determinazione è parte costitutiva e annuncio, un annuncio che nella migliore tradizione paolina viene compiuto “per la necessaria edificazione giovando a quelli che ascoltano”<sup>37</sup>, e che troverà nella *Malattia per la morte* il suo più maturo sviluppo e compimento cercando di svelare i retroscena antropologici ed esistenziali dell'*attualità* del peccato.

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<sup>35</sup> Da notare che nello stesso passo del *Begrebet Angest* Kierkegaard si mostra con Schelling più benevolo di Marheineke, prendendo le distanze dalle aspre critiche del teologo di Hildesheim alla filosofia della Rivelazione presenti nel suo *Zur Kritik dek Schellingschen Offenbarungsphilosophie*, Berlin, 1843 (*Aukt.* 647).

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Ef 4,29. Vedi anche 2Cor 12,19: “Noi parliamo *davanti a Dio*, in Cristo, e tutto, carissimi, è per la vostra edificazione” (corsivo mio).

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## REVIEWS

### ***Kierkegaard and Levinas: Ethics, Politics, and Religion*** **edited by J. Aaron Simmons and David Wood**

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008. xiii + 185 pp.  
ISBN 978025322020 (pbk) \$24.95

### **Reviewed by Jeffrey Allan Hanson** **Boston College**

*Kierkegaard and Levinas: Ethics, Politics, and Religion*, edited by J. Aaron Simmons and David Wood, is an important addition to the growing literature on Kierkegaard's reception into 20<sup>th</sup>-century French thought and a timely one at that. Coming on the heels of Merold Westphal's collected essays on the same two thinkers, *Levinas and Kierkegaard in Dialogue*, and Samuel Moyn's *Origins of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas between Revelation and Ethics*, which ably chronicles from the point of view of intellectual history the influence of Kierkegaard and other turn of the century trends on the formation of Levinas' key themes, this volume greatly expands the number of voices contributing to the ongoing discussion as well as the topics of shared concern to both Kierkegaard and Levinas.

Six such shared topics are outlined by Simmons and Wood in their orienting introduction to the volume. Despite many surface divergences, Kierkegaard and Levinas are first and foremost both preoccupied with religious questions that they nevertheless engage in a manner that is in neither case straightforwardly theological. Both work with the inheritance of Scripture, a broader canon for Kierkegaard of course as a Christian thinker, but given the primacy ascribed to the Abraham story in *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard ambivalently appealed to Levinas and remains a major force in Jewish intellectual life.

Similarly Simmons and Wood second argue that both thinkers explored and tested the limits of language in an effort to express and convey the elusive meanings they pursued. Indeed, Kierkegaard and Levinas both regarded the available resources of the philosophic tradition as somewhat impoverished when tackling questions of alterity, transcendence, and ethico-religious commitment. From my perspective, Levinas was less subtle than Kierkegaard on this score, but the point remains valid, and future scholarship might do a bit more to talk about Levinas as a thinker of engagement, as he shares with Kierkegaard a frustration over the traditional emphasis on speculation and detachment.

Both too were clearly resistant to schemes of totality and the privilege of imperialistic "reason," a third theme of tremendous importance to contemporary discussions of the limits of philosophical speculation and one that Levinas re-interpreted over the course of his career, though not to my mind with any fundamental infidelity to his original insights.

Fourth, the two mount in their respective manners critiques of established ethical and political structures, averting to more dynamic conceptions of tradition and institution. This thematic has drawn more attention in late Kierkegaard scholarship and rightly so, though their remark that Kierkegaard's notion of repetition expresses the "ineliminable task of hermeneutics in the political realm" may raise an eyebrow. While it is certainly true that the effort of reflection (if we can assimilate the "hermeneutic" project into the Kierkegaardian category of reflection) for Kierkegaard cannot be foregone, it is also not an insurmountable effort, one that must be concluded by the leap of choice and commitment. I doubt the editors meant to imply that institutions or traditions could be constituted according to Kierkegaard on the cornerstone of reflection instead of transcendent leap, but an incautious reader could receive that impression.

Fifth, both re-imagined the central concept of truth. On this score Levinas was particularly indebted to Kierkegaard and admitted as much forthrightly, though as the editors note, not in a way that was wholly complimentary to the Dane. In one of Levinas' few direct references to Kierkegaard he congratulated his forebear on his discovery of a conception of truth that was not triumphant but "persecuted" (and even, though the editors do not note this provocative term, "crucified").

Finally, the two share the experience of crisis in their respective eras and a sense of alienation from their immediate social contexts. While Simmons and Wood concede that not too much weight should be placed upon these or any thinker's biographies, there are nevertheless tantalizing parallels that ought to inform our understanding of them both.

Given these substantive parallels, the editors announce their intention not merely to catalogue the points of contact between Kierkegaard and Levinas nor to simply evade the discussion that the two provoke on the grounds of their fundamental divergences (which are real) but to allow the collision of their powerful points of view to contribute to a rethinking of the issues that they both orbit. The editors write, “By bringing these two ‘neighbors’ into conversation, the goal is much more than one of historical interest and philosophical novelty. It is an attempt to re-invigorate the contemporary philosophical dialogue by inviting us, as Wittgenstein once said, ‘back to the rough ground.’ The rough ground on which Levinas and Kierkegaard both stand is the space in which ethics may be thought without guarantees, faith may be appropriated without rigid apologetics, truth may be embraced without certainty, justice may be championed along with humility, and objectivity reconceived in the light of subjectivity.”

The essays in this volume largely succeed in the task appointed by the editors (I will highlight some I take to be of special import with no slight intended to those I pass over). Part One, on Levinas’ reading of Kierkegaard, includes two important studies. The first, by Merold Westphal, is a model of his usual clarity, care, and insight. Westphal, who has done more scholarship in this area than anyone else, concedes from the outset that Levinas was not always a good reader of Kierkegaard, hampered as he was by a limited familiarity with the entire corpus (he seems only to have read *Fear and Trembling*) and an arguably overhasty dismissal of Kierkegaard’s complex theory of the relationship between what he calls the ethical in that work and the religious sphere. Nevertheless, Westphal reconstructs the important insights that arise from a multi-faceted encounter between them. Simmons’ own contribution follows, and it advances a highly valuable and original consideration of Jean Wahl’s powerful influence on Levinas and the overall reception of Kierkegaard into French thought. Few scholars have the knowledge of Wahl that Simmons does, and he admirably documents the themes that Wahl prioritized and how these unavoidably influenced Levinas’ appropriation of Kierkegaard.

Part Two is on love and transcendence, and here M. Jamie Ferreira and Jeffrey Dudiak’s essays stand out. Ferreira performs an elaborate and sensitive analysis of how Kierkegaard and Levinas understand the biblical commandment to love the neighbor, a matter of crucial import to *Works of Love* and the edifying discourses. Dudiak’s piece is a worthy contrast and companion to Westphal’s essay.

Part Three, on time, alterity, and eschatology, contains a contribution from John Davenport that distinguishes three possible readings of Kierkegaard’s “higher ethics” and argues for the indispensable component of Kierkegaardian faith, namely, the lived appropriation of the eschatological promise of God, a missing dimension of Levinas and Derrida’s readings.

The fourth and final part is devoted to ethics and politics, which carries special interest for those who are developing a more political reading of Kierkegaard. Martin Beck Matustik in particular is afforded the opportunity in this section to continue his important work on the promise of Kierkegaard’s thought for an existential politics and ethics of engagement.

Taken together, these essays form a remarkably profitable series of meditations on the issues that surround the current state of Kierkegaard scholarship and will be of special value to any scholar with an interest in the impact of Kierkegaard’s thought on contemporary issues in continental philosophy, theology, ethics, and politics.

**James Giles (edit.), *Kierkegaard and Japanese Thought*  
Palgrave Macmillan: St. Martin Press, 2008  
xiv + 250 pgs.**

**Reviewed by Esben Lindemann  
University College of Copenhagen**

As a Western student of the work of Søren Kierkegaard, as a scholar ignorant of Eastern philosophical traditions in general and of the relation between Kierkegaard and Eastern philosophy in particular, the collection of articles that comprises *Kierkegaard and Japanese Thought* appears to have been conceived with me in mind. Let me start by stating that I appreciate this intention; more importantly, I am persuaded by James Giles' arguments offered in the preface that there are many insights into Kierkegaard and the history of philosophy to be garnered by a comparative study of this nature.

Most of the chapters in the book "*...are based on papers that were presented at the First International Conference of the Kierkegaard Society of Japan, which was held at the University of Melbourne, Australia in December 2005.*" (ix). The thirteen articles are written by eleven contributors, whose academic background is either from Japan or USA. Philosophical, literary, and theological approaches are all at work in the text.

In the book's introductory chapter Giles observes that, despite the fact that Japanese philosophy has contributed to the understanding of Kierkegaard, this relation has been "*...all but ignored by Western Kierkegaard Scholars.*" (1). According to Giles, this indifference is part of a larger tradition in Western philosophy "*...that disregards Eastern philosophy in general.*" (2). This is a problem, as it obstructs Western understanding of and interaction with Asian culture, and thus the development of Western thinking, as it does not seek inspiration from different approaches to the same basic philosophical problems. This is precisely the motivation for this collection, because "*...an examination of Japanese thought and its relation to Kierkegaard's ideas can provide us with new approaches to understanding what Kierkegaard is saying.*" (2). Giles further shows how Japanese thought can be considered an amalgamation of Shintoist, Taoist, Confucian, and Buddhist ideas, and how Kierkegaard and Japanese thinking share central themes such as subjectivity, freedom, anxiety, death, and despair.

That Japan has a long tradition for reading Kierkegaard is evident from the fact that Japanese translations of Kierkegaard appeared several years before English translations (1). In chapter 2, Kinya Masugata sketches Kierkegaard's reception in Japan. He reports that Kierkegaard's thought entered Japan in the late 1880s through two main routes, namely, the Danish philosopher Harald Høffding, who was one of the main sources for modern Japan's understanding of Western Philosophy (32), and through the Danish historian of literature George Brandes, whose writings on Henrik Ibsen were popular among the Japanese intelligentsia (33). Masugata divides the history of Kierkegaard's reception into six periods. He concludes that the reception of Kierkegaard in Japan is complex and differs from that of other Western thinkers. Masugata holds that this has something to do with the fact that "*...to read Kierkegaard is to read about ourselves.*" (51).

But Masugata also suggests that the vectors of influence between Kierkegaard and Japan ran in both directions. It was not just Kierkegaard influencing the Japanese way of thinking; rather, Kierkegaard might also have been influenced by Japanese philosophy. This is a possibility which is often ignored (31), perhaps due to the fact that - as Giles mentions in the preface - Kierkegaard himself knew nothing of Japanese culture (vii). In chapter 6, Ian Mills aims to show that the affinity between Kierkegaard and Japanese thought is not merely coincidental, but that a historical connection can be drawn from Japanese thinking to Kierkegaard's thoughts (106). Mills draws his line from the thirteenth-century Japanese Zen master Dōgen through the notion of "*... 'aeterno modo', the practice of 'viewing things from the perspective of eternity'*" (107). In his reference to Spinoza's use of *aeterno modo*, Kierkegaard, according to Mills, "*...is, unwittingly, making Spinoza pivotal as a link between his own writings and that of Dōgen...*" (108). According to Mills, it can be documented that Buddhist-type dialectic was adopted in Europe in the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth century (107); moreover, he contends that it is likely that Spinoza's use of *aeterno modo* was inspired by Dōgen through Ibn al-Arabi (1165-1240).

As we know, Spinoza is associated with a non-dualistic way of thinking. In chapter 9, Eiko Hanaoke explores how this non-dualistic view of reality is expressed in Kierkegaard's work, and in this context also makes some historical remarks.

Hanaoike compares Kierkegaard and the Japanese philosopher Nishida (1870-1945), and begins her article by stating: “*European philosophy from the ancient Greeks to Hegel is a philosophy that has as its centre the idea of a substantial absolute.*” (159). This way of reasoning ordains the human self as a substance and thus promotes the subject-object dichotomy. According to Hanaoike, Kierkegaard, through his existential way of thinking, was the first Western philosopher seeking to overcome this subject-object approach to reality (162) in a way similar to that of Nishida (169).

In chapter 11, Makoto Mizuta makes illuminating comparisons between Kierkegaard and the Japanese writer, Hideo Kobayashi (1902-83). This essay provides a useful example of how Kierkegaard might have influenced modern Japan. According to Mizuta, it is important for the Japanese to read Kierkegaard, because of “...*the significance he attaches to the individual and because of what he calls the ‘untruth’ of the crowd...*” (185). Mizuta is here referring to the fact that the Japanese are often accused of conformity. In their emphasis on the subject, Kobayashi and Kierkegaard have something in common, and though Kobayashi hardly discusses Kierkegaard, the connection between them is, Mizuta contends, remarkable (185).

This historical trajectory of the book is enlightening. History is viewed from many different perspectives and the chapters support each other in a way which underscores the arguments. This is accomplished by synthesizing the two views of influence “...*not using one to judge the other, but dealing with both sides on equal terms...*” (31) This opens new possibilities for interpreting Kierkegaard, and in that sense this volume fulfills the objectives outlined by Giles in the introduction.

An example of a new interpretation, which this synthesized history gives rise to, is a non-dualistic Kierkegaard. This interpretation seems to be shared by all contributors.

For instance, in his investigation of the similarities between Kierkegaard’s Christian existential thought and Zen Buddhism, Eshin Nishimura, points to the idea of identity between mind and body. Nishimura refers to the well-known passage from *The Sickness unto Death*, where Kierkegaard defines the self as “...*a relation which relates itself to its own self...*”<sup>38</sup> and states that what Zen Buddhism and Kierkegaard have in common is that for both, human suffering should be overcome through both body and mind. To Kierkegaard, despair occurs precisely when the one element is separated from the other (75).

Mills uses as his point of departure a well known quotation from the “Diapsalmata” of *Either/Or* which states “...*I am constantly Aeterno Modo...*”<sup>39</sup> and he asserts that Kierkegaard here is proposing a non-dualistic perspective on reality. Mills continues with references to *Fear and Trembling* showing that being *aeterno modo* is a certain kind of awareness distinct from reason. In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard is, according to Mills, specifically identifying *faith* with this kind of awareness, and in this sense also shows great similarities to Spinoza and Dōgen (113). In *faith*, both the aesthetic and ethical of *Either/Or* are suspended, thus leaving the individual in a position in which he views existence from the perspective of eternity, i.e. viewing himself as inseparable from all other beings, beyond right and wrong (122).

Like Nishimura, Hanaoike refers to the often quoted passage from *The Sickness unto Death*, where Kierkegaard defines the self as “...*a relation which relates itself to its own self...*” and asserts that Kierkegaard understands the self as a relation, not as a substance. This relation is constantly attempting to synthesize two opposing poles (finite and infinite, freedom and necessity, temporal and eternal, 163) and the self is living in oneness with God, because God is the condition for the existence of the relation (164).

According to Mizuta, Kierkegaard’s *faith* entails faith in the historical God-man, which hints at a tendency toward a Christian absolutism (198). However, Mizuta suggests that by carefully considering the concept of God-man in Kierkegaard, we might tone down this absolutism. For Mizuta, the relation between human beings and God is the essential point of Kierkegaard’s Christian way of thinking. This relation is of a more universal character and precedes “...*the holy history...*” (198). Even though the individual doesn’t know “...*the holy history...*” (198), he is still in a relationship with God, and thus has “...*a chance to participate in salvation...*” (198). Mizuta defines this relationship to God, as an individual’s original oneness with God.

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<sup>38</sup> “... *et Forhold, der forholder sig til sig...*” (SKS 11, 129)

<sup>39</sup> “... *jeg er bestandig æterno modo.*” (SKS 2, 48)

These interpretations outlined above seem to contradict Kierkegaard's own views. He is critical of a Spinoza-like non-dualism and in several passages, he explicitly argues against both the concept of *aeterno modo* and the notion of viewing reality from the perspective of eternity – especially in *Concluding unscientific Postscript*<sup>40</sup>. The interpretations might still be justifiable, but they would have been strengthened had the authors reflected on these obvious objections from Kierkegaard himself. This is particularly significant since Spinoza seems to be viewed as a crucial historical link between Japanese thought and Kierkegaard.

Mills further attempts to grasp the meaning of A's claims in *Either/Or* that, "...I am constantly *Aeterno Modo*..." Though a valiant effort, this interpretation would have been even more convincing if he demonstrated how it is possible to escape the obvious fictive elements of *Either/Or*. This is all the more important, as his entire interpretation seems to rely on this singular quotation from "Diapsalmata".

Mills could thus have bolstered his position by referring to more than just one passage, where lack in textual evidence. Mizuta, for instance, bases his argument on just one sentence, which Kierkegaard wrote during his last years. Nishimura and Hanao both draw on the well-known passage from *The Sickness unto Death*, which again seems to form the basis for their argument for non-dualism in Kierkegaard. The affinity between Kierkegaard and Japanese thought thus remains merely insinuated, not yet fully established.

In the introduction Giles, insists that in the writing of both Kierkegaard and Japanese thinkers, Christianity plays no essential role (10). *Pace* Giles, Kierkegaard's concern is not with God, but with "...to believe..." (8). However, other contributors do not seem to share Giles's opinion.

Nishimura seems to be dealing with a real existing God in Kierkegaard, when he stresses the similarity between what in Zen Buddhism is known as the "...ball of doubt..." (77) and in Kierkegaard as "... 'untruth' in the awareness of sin before God." (78). Similarly, Hanao implies a real existing God when she defines Kierkegaard's existentialism as a partly non-substantial way of thinking because the subject, according to Kierkegaard, is dependent on God in acquiring the truth (163). Finally, Mizuta more than hints Christianity plays an essential role for the Dane when he writes that Kierkegaard's: "... main concern was how to lead the pagan within Christendom to genuine Christian faith." (198). But then again, there is, of course, no need for unanimity of opinion in a collection such as this.

In conclusion, this collection offers up a nuanced and complex picture of the relationship between Kierkegaard and Japanese thought. As Giles promises, seeing Kierkegaard in the mirror of his Japanese interpreters brings a fresh perspective both to the study of Kierkegaard and the history of philosophy. One can only hope that this comparative study will entice other scholars into developing this ambitious approach.

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<sup>40</sup> Ex.: SKS 7, 158/206/ 274

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