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Truth and Normativity in Kierkegaard and Heidegger

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I. Introduction

Anyone who speaks about Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's understanding of truth and normativity may understand their ideas in two ways:

1. What kind of ethics—if any—do we find in Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's writings? Which ethical norms—if any—do they defend?
2. What kind of theory—if any—do they have concerning the epistemological status of ethics? What is the relation between norms and truth?

The first question asks what kind of *normative ethics* we may or may not find in Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's writings, whereas the second one is a *metaethical* question about how the two thinkers understand the function of ethical norms in human life—including our language. In both cases, it is difficult to decide whether or not Kierkegaard and Heidegger actually provide answers to these questions. Even assuming that they do have something to say about these topics, it is hard to say what their contributions amount to.

In this paper, I will focus on the second (*metaethical*) question and my answer to this question has as its implication, that one should not expect to find in either of these two philosophers a solution to the first question about *normative ethics*.

II. Johannes Climacus

Metaethics addresses the question of whether or not our actions and ways of life are good or bad independent of how we and others evaluate these actions and ways of life. More succinctly stated: Do these evaluations have a truth-value? Assuming they do have a truth-value, the next question looms: How do we come to know what is right and wrong? Or more generally formulated: Do the norms that we assume govern our lives in some true way, and how do we acquire a knowledge of these norms? The way we approach these questions will be deeply influenced by our conception of truth.

In his famous discussion of truth in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Climacus contends that whether

truth is defined more empirically as the agreement of thinking with being or more idealistically as the agreement of being with thinking, the point in each case is to pay scrupulous attention to what is understood by being and also to pay attention to whether the knowing human spirit might not be lured out in the indefinite and fantastically become something such as no *existing* human being has ever been or can be, a phantom with which the individual busies himself on occasion, yet without ever making it explicit to himself by means of dialectical middle terms how he gets out into this fantastical realms, what meaning it has for him be there, where the entire endeavor out there might not dissolve into a tautology within a rash, fantastical venture.¹

This polemical claim is, of course, aimed at the traditional correspondence theory of truth according to which “Truth” is “the agreement of thinking with being” or “the agreement of being with thinking”.² This theory might apply to eternal entities like mathematical objects but according to Climacus, it cannot deal with empirical objects perceived by empirical subjects because neither the object nor the subject is finished.³ The empirical object changes as time goes on, as does the subject, who thinks about the object. Since both the empirical object and the empirical subject are continually in process, we will not find a point in time in which there is a finished empirical object corresponding to a finished empirical subject. The correspondence theory of truth is, in short, a

fantasy. It is especially inadequate when the empirical subject makes his own life an object of thought, which perhaps raises three questions:

1. What *is* this life?
2. How *ought* it be?
3. How do I come to be, what ought I be?

These questions all emerge within the life about which they are concerned. The highly inconclusive character of this life, including the individual reflecting upon himself as an object of reflection, renders the traditional correspondence theory inadequate for grasping the truth in empirical matters in general, and in existential matters in particular. Instead Climacus suggests two approaches:

1. *The objective reflection* in which the subject is accidental. This is an appropriate approach if we are dealing with questions concerning (for example) the natural sciences, where our goal is to substantiate a hypothesis by collecting information and conducting experiments, which at best may give us an approximation to the truth.⁴
2. *The subjective reflection* in which the result is critical to the subject in question. Because the result is essential for the subject, one cannot wait years for an answer nor can one be satisfied with an approximation to the truth. Instead one stakes everything on one's own subjectivity, in perfect accord with Climacus' definition of truth: "*An objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness, is the truth, the highest truth there is for an existing person.*"⁵

This "subjective" understanding of truth has exercised considerable influence on modern existential philosophy, but what is the best way to interpret this pivotal concept?

First, it is obvious that Climacus' assumes that truth deals with *totalities*, not just states of affairs. He would not deny that we may have a correspondence between a sentence like "Kierkegaard was born in 1813" and the fact that Kierkegaard was born in that year. Once again, the goal of *objective reflection* is not to present a theory about the truth of singular sentences, but instead of comprehensive theories. Similarly, with *subjective reflection* Climacus is not concerned with questions about whether or not I am allowed to tell a lie in a particular situation, but about my encompassing problems such as *what I ought to choose as my main goal in life* given that I do not know what person I will be and what preferences I may have after twenty years. For instance, is it true that marriage transforms love into "weakness and habit"⁶ as Johannes the Seducer suggests, or does the Seducer restrict him from the real love as Judge Wilhelm claims? Is an ethical life always possible, as Judge Wilhelm seems to think, or are Johannes de silentio and Johannes Climacus correct in claiming that repentance cannot reestablish the truth of a man's life once he has destroyed it? Or again, are they right to refrain from choosing to be religious? To reiterate, because these questions involve the individual's whole life, he cannot wait years for the solution, nor can he be satisfied with an approximation to the truth. Therefore, Climacus stresses an "*objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness, is the truth [...]*"⁷

Second, a close reading of the text reveals that Climacus is not interested in an alternative *definition* of truth; instead he is concerned with our *criteria* of truth and our *capacity* to realize the truth. In *objective reflection* the correspondence theory of truth or rather the idea of truth is taken for granted. Climacus advocates a modest kind of epistemology that may or may not conflict with some early nineteenth century idealistic ideas of absolute knowledge. However, the same epistemology is uncontroversial in mainstream philosophy of science in the twentieth century, but this epistemology does not present a new theory of truth. On the contrary, in order to speak about an approximation it assumes the correspondence of being and thought or facts and theories, as a regulative ideal.

More importantly *the subjective reflection* presupposes another theory of truth other than the subjective one, which Climacus advocates as the existential alternative to the correspondence theory. After having defined "truth" in the subjective mode as "*objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness*", he notes that this kind of truth is "the highest truth which is given for an existing being" indicating that there may be another perspective other than the one of an existing being. Therefore,

Climacus does not think that every individual may arbitrarily create values without an external measure that decides whether his values are true or false. Thus, it is more appropriate to interpret this subjectivity as the best (or only) *criteria* available when it comes to existential questions, as well as the best (or only) way one is able to bring truth into one's life. At another point, Climacus explicitly states that he is not denying that truth is the identity of thinking and being, but only that this identity is available to the existing and ever changing individual. Strictly speaking, Climacus should *not* have written that “*objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness*”, but that it is the highest criteria of truth.

That this interpretation is the most apt is evident when, a few pages later, Climacus mentions an even higher version of the dictum that “Subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth”, namely the claim that “Subjectivity is untruth”.⁸ This untruth, which Climacus soon proposes to label “sin”,⁹ is a proposal he introduced two years earlier in *The Philosophical Fragments*.¹⁰ It should now be clear that Climacus never assumes that one is the creator of the values according to which one's life ought to be judged. Instead Climacus assumes that humankind has two options. One is “in the truth”, i.e., one is both able through *the most passionate inwardness* to get to know what one ought to do and one is able to realize these goals in one's own life. One is “in the untruth”, i.e., one is neither able to get to know what one ought to do nor has one the capacity to realize it, if one had otherwise known. In the latter case one is in need of a helping hand from the outside, which both gives one the capacity to *know* and to *realize* what one ought to do. However, whether one is “in the truth” or “in the untruth”, “truth” and “untruth” are not *created* by the subject, but rather are *determined* by something outside one's own subjectivity.

When Climacus informs us that there is more truth in the life of a pagan who passionately worships an objectively false God than in a man who prays without passion in the church of the true God,¹¹ this only tells us that the passionate relation is a *necessary condition* for abiding in the truth. If one was *not* already “in the truth”, i.e., one did not have the potential for reaching the truth, one's passionate relation to the world would not help. It is not one's passion, which creates one's true way of living rather it is the other way around—*only if one is already in the truth, can one's passion grant one's actions valuable, which is higher than any dispassionate behavior*.

The example of the pagan who worships a false god also reveals that passion is not a criteria for the truth of “the what” to which you relate, but only a criteria of whether or not *your relation to something* fulfills *the necessary conditions for being in the truth*. This includes the necessary conditions for being *capable* of realizing the truth. For example, even if your relation is deeply passionate it is still an open question, regardless of whether or not the object of your passion is something totally wrong. Climacus explains that one may relate passionately to fascism, liberalism, socialism, or some pre-modern political ideal like absolute monarchy without having the slightest clue of whether fascism, liberalism, or socialism is the right ethical orientation in life. But to the extent that you are in the truth from the outset, your passion secures the truth of your relation. The passion-criterion does not tell us exactly *what* we ought to do, but it reveals *how* we should do it, namely with passion (inwardness).¹² Formulated more technically, Climacus has no *first-order criteria* telling us what the first order values are, but he introduces passion as a *second-order criteria* for *how* we can and ought to relate to first-order values. However, passion does not establish the truth or falsity of the first-order values. According to Climacus, we simply do not have any access to these truth-values and it does not matter as long as we express the right attitude at the second-order value level, a level which Climacus assumes we have a knowledge of and a capacity to fulfill.

Using the terminology of the modern Anglo-American philosophical tradition, one may conclude that whereas Climacus does not tell us what kind of *normative ethics* we ought to follow, he clearly defends a *cognitivist position* within metaethics. In contrast to normative ethics, which tells what we ought to do, metaethics deals first and foremost with the question of whether or not our actions and way of life are good or bad independent of how we and others evaluate these actions and way of life. Putting it in another way: Do these evaluations

have a truth-value? The so-called cognitivists believe they do whereas the noncognitivists deny it. Although Climacus' famous dictum "Subjectivity is Truth" seems to imply a non-cognitivist position as the one which is later found in the existential tradition in the twentieth century, it has now become clear that he presupposes a cognitivist position.

Nevertheless, Climacus' kind of cognitivism is not only original, but it is also controversial. It becomes controversial because it is combined with an epistemology according to which we do not have knowledge about first order values whereas (unless I am in the untruth and in need of a revelation) my "passionate appropriation" gives me a second-order criteria of the truth of how I ought to relate to first-order values. This is a very radical position. First, it fails to acknowledge the principle, that "ought" implies "can", which normally implies that an obligation to first-order values presupposes some *knowledge* of first-order values. Second, and even more importantly, it gives up all attempts to use intersubjective criteria in order to distinguish between private and non-private first- and/or second-order values. Of course, one may relate passionately to a first-order ethics of a universalistic kind, but *Climacus' theory does not entail that I have to relate to any universals*.

III. Johannes Climacus and Johannes de silentio

To illustrate the complexity of this position consider Johannes de silentio's discussion of Abraham in *Fear and Trembling*. Abraham lives happily with Isaac and his wife Sarah. Then one day he receives a message from God that he should take his son and go to the mountain of Moriah and sacrifice Isaac. Abraham obeys, goes to the mountain and draws the knife to sacrifice Isaac when an angel of God appears and instructs him to sacrifice a ram instead. This is not the end of the story for Johannes de silentio. To focus on the happy ending is to forget the fear and trembling or anxiety that Abraham must have experienced on the road to Moriah. It was impossible for him to talk with Sarah about the sacrifice simply because Abraham would not have had any *intersubjective criteria* by which to appeal to Sarah in order to convince her that his action was the right one. It was not demanded by the universal ethics that they both accepted. On the contrary, it was in radical opposition to that ethics. What kind of evidence could Abraham have used to support his claim that the sacrifice was commanded by God? Would Sarah not have responded, "Oh Abraham, have you been drinking again?" or "Oh Abraham, your depression becomes more and more dangerous!" More devastatingly than the lack of intersubjective criteria, Abraham did not have a criterion that he could refer to in order to convince himself that he should draw the knife. Abraham's faith is a paradigmatic case of an "*objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness [...]*."

But Johannes Climacus seems to be even more radical than Johannes de silentio and Judge Wilhelm in *Either/Or*. However, Johannes de silentio accepts the idea that as soon as you have a certain kind of universal ethics you can dialogue with others sharing that ethic, but why should you be obliged to accept this ethic and not another ethic or perhaps none at all? These fundamental questions are not addressed in *Fear and Trembling* because this text takes the ethical as a given. This is in line with Johannes Climacus' idea of the subjective criteria of truth within which a universal ethics also belongs. It is an "*objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness [...]*."¹³

IV. Heidegger

It is clear that Kierkegaard in general and Climacus in particular, focus upon existential normativity, but this is not quite as evident in Heidegger. Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes that the analysis in *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*) is a purely ontological one without any normative implications. It is even debatable whether his analysis is a part of a philosophy of existence at all. The problem arises in the beginning of *Being and Time* where Dasein is presented as a being which in its being is concerned with its being.¹⁴ At first, this claim echoes Anti-Climacus' famous definition of man as a self, a relation that relates itself to itself.¹⁵ But Heidegger's Dasein is not a Cartesian consciousness, it is a being who is occupied with practical activities based upon an

openness to the world. Early Heidegger tells us that Dasein's relation to itself and its openness to the world are at an equal level.¹⁶ In the posthumously published lectures from the twenties—and of course by the late Heidegger—he goes further and declares that both Dasein's relation to itself and its grasp of the world presuppose a general understanding of being: "eine Seinserschlossenheit". If we compare this claim with the opening passages of *Being and Time* where we are told that the analysis of Dasein functions as a preparation for the more fundamental analysis of the meaning of being, we can sincerely question whether *Being and Time* belongs to the existential philosophy canon at all—a critique the older Heidegger levels against Sartre's use of *Being and Time*.¹⁷ On the other hand, if we accept the impossibility of reducing *Being and Time* to existential philosophy, we become free to return to Heidegger and ask what *ontological status* evaluations, norms, and values have within his ontology. Heidegger only hints at an answer to this question; therefore, it is the work of interpretation to develop his hints.

One clue can be found in Heidegger's early lectures where he criticizes the so called philosophy of values (*die Wertphilosophie*). His main target is neo-Kantian philosophy, but his critique has a much broader scope and includes Plato, the metaphysical tradition, and contemporary phenomenology—e.g., Hartmann, Scheler, and even Husserl. Heidegger vehemently denies that values exist as independent entities (or more generally, as independent constraints on evaluations). For him, it does not matter whether these values are understood as transcendent, platonic ideas, or as part of a transcendental framework or special phenomenological stratum since all these views assume a fantasy world of norms that prescribe an evaluation of our actions and lives independent of actual evaluations. Thus, it makes no sense to speak about an epistemic access to these norms since there is nothing to which we can have access. Instead norms do not exist independently of the explicit or implicit individual evaluations embodied in our actual choices, whatever those choices may be.

In the end, Heidegger's metaethical position seems to amount to a form of voluntarism. This conclusion is supported by an analysis of truth in *Being and Time*. This analysis can be reconstructed in three steps:

1. Similarly to Husserl, Heidegger surrenders the classical correspondence theory of truth and replaces it with a theory of evidence, according to which an intentionally given sense is true when we have an experience which fits that sense. For instance, I believe my purse is in my left pocket, and when I put my hand down in the pocket I have an experience that fits the sense of my intentional belief.
2. Husserl's intentionality is seen as a special case in our practical occupation with our surroundings and with our relations to other Daseins. As an inclusive label for all practical occupations (including classical examples of intentionality like perception) Heidegger introduces the term uncovering (*Entdeckung*) and he maintains that the truth of a sentence must be understood as "entdeckend-Sein".¹⁸
3. Thereafter, he shows how our "Entdeckungen" presupposes an openness "eine Erschlossenheit" and concludes, that this openness is the original truth.¹⁹

Heidegger's point is not as controversial as it appears. The term "truth" traditionally denotes certain sentences, ways of life, or true things. Heidegger's discovery of an original meaning of the term boils down to a redefinition of the term "truth" so that it comes to denote *the necessary conditions* of truth in the traditional sense. A sentence like "the hammer is heavy" is true, if our use of the hammer uncovers (*Entdeckt*) the fact that the hammer is heavy. This connection is not questioned by Heidegger. Still uncovering (*Entdeckung*) is impossible, if we do not understand the framework in which it makes sense to talk about hammers as being heavy or not heavy. Heidegger insists that the original meaning of the word "truth" refers to our openness (*Erschlossenheit*) for the framework or rather the instrumental world, which is a necessary condition for any uncovering (*Entdeckung*). His way of talking is confusing in that he gives the reader the impression of presenting an entirely new conception of truth. Nonetheless Heidegger can be reconstructed as saying that he wants to focus upon the necessary conditions of certain phenomena and suggests that we hereafter redefine our words in order to let them refer to the necessary conditions of the phenomena to which they normally refer. This reconstruction does negate Heidegger's basic points. It certainly robs his theory of its mystery and presents it in a manner that may have been too modest for Heidegger.²⁰

This reading is confirmed when we look into his lectures on logic delivered a few years before the publication of *Being and Time*. Heidegger reports on Aristotle's distinction between the ways in which a sentence like "the flower is red" and "red" are given to us.²¹ We know that the sentence is true when we experience that the sense of the sentence corresponds to what we see, that is, when we look at the flower and see that it is combined with the red color. This of course, amounts to Husserl's idea of truth as evidence, which is generalized by Heidegger when he speaks about uncovering (*Entdeckungen*). Compared to this experience of a correspondence, our understanding of the term "red" is neither a correspondence nor an experience of a connection; the concept of red is either given to us or it is not. Since we do not comprehend the sentence "the flower is red" without the understanding of the term "red", we may say that this openness to the concept of red is a necessary condition for the truth (as well as for the possible untruth) of the sentence. More generally, our uncoverings (*Entdeckungen*) are grounded in a more basic disclosedness (*Erschlossenheit*) of the world and in the end it is also an openness to being in general: "Erschlossenheit vom Sein überhaupt".

This brief overview of Heidegger's understanding of truth brings us back to our main question, namely where the norms do fit in according to Heidegger's ontology? Using Heidegger's terminology we may say that the tradition assumes that we have a special kind of "Entdeckungen" of norms. Of course, philosophers differ in the way they think we uncover norms using the whole epistemological spectrum of pure reason (e.g., Plato and Kant), feelings (e.g., Husserl, Hartmann, and Scheler), special moral sense (e.g., Hutcheson), tradition (e.g., Aristotle and Hegel), or revelation (e.g., Thomas, Scotus, and Ockham). Whatever the epistemological source may be all these philosophers assume that we may uncover norms by remaining open to a framework according to which norms are understood independently of my personal moral evaluations. However, this is precisely the point that Heidegger denies. The world, which is open for Heidegger, is devoid of norms existing independently of my decisions. Instead Dasein is uncovered as the creator of norms through its implicit or explicit decisions (*Entwurf*). Of course, these decisions are always embedded within a thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) that present itself as emotions, but in contrast to Scheler for instance, Heidegger denies that these emotions unveil any objective hierarchy of norms. Using Heidegger's language we may say that the ontological truth of norms is that there are no norms outside of Dasein's creation. Put in Anglo-Saxon terminology, the metaethical truth about norms is that normative evaluations are neither true nor false.

Existing in a world with others, Dasein will always already have accepted certain evaluations, insofar as Dasein, considered from a normative perspective, begins as being a part of "das Man". Dasein may continue to live within this inauthentic (*uneigentlich*) way of life or it may in an authentic (*Eigentlich*) way make its own decisions about what is right and wrong. There is no doubt that Heidegger *privately* prefers the authentic way of life (that he unfortunately conveys in the terminology used in *Being and Time*, which therefore, often gets the flavor of a "Jargon der Eigentlichkeit"), but this private preference ought to be separated from the *ontological* claim that strictly speaking it does not make sense to ask which of the two ways of life is best. Not only *what* we ought to do depends on Dasein's decisions, but so does *how* we ought to do it.

V. Climacus and Heidegger

To my knowledge, Heidegger never compared his own voluntarism with Climacus' metaethical position. Nevertheless, given our former presentation of Climacus, it seems obvious that Heidegger would have rejected that position as merely another kind of philosophy of values. If Heidegger is correct in denying the existence of action-independent values, it makes no sense to speak about somebody as being or not being in the truth independently of his or others evaluation of his actions and way of life. Nor is it reasonable to promulgate passion as a criterion of existential truth. In short, Heidegger's voluntarism represents a kind of *noncognitivism* which is incompatible with Climacus' *cognitivism*. Therefore, Climacus would have been compelled to denounce Heidegger's position as belonging to the aesthetic stage, that is, below the ethical and religious stages.

This fictitious dialogue between Climacus and Heidegger invites a rethinking of Climacus as well as Heidegger. On the one hand, Climacus would be right to classify Heidegger as an aesthete, but on the other hand, there are many features of *Being and Time* which are analogous to Climacus' understanding of existence. Both Climacus and Heidegger assume that every human/Dasein arrives at an authentic understanding of himself on the background of an inauthentic understanding. For Climacus this inauthentic existence is referred to as "spiritlessness" whereas Heidegger talks about Dasein living in "das Man". Both Climacus and Heidegger focus upon human/Dasein as a *totality*, and both maintain that this totality is only given in the moment in which human/Dasein has a specific relation to past and future. Climacus refers to this specific relation as "passion" whereas Heidegger talks in terms of resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*).²² Still, the difference is evident. Climacus (and later Anti-Climacus) describes the moment as a unity of time and eternity. In contrast, Heidegger's Dasein stays within its limitation, its "Endlichkeit" and realizes its "Ganzseinkönnen" as a being unto death ("Sein zum Tode")²³ that does not involve any reference to eternity. The difference becomes even more blatant, if we supplement Climacus' understanding of existence with Anti-Climacus' abovementioned definition of man as a self, a relation that relates itself to itself. Anti-Climacus' comments are crucial. He claims that such a self is either posited by itself or posited by another, another which Anti-Climacus is quick to identify as God.²⁴ Later on Anti-Climacus identifies God with the Christian theistic god, but this is not decided in the opening pages of *The Sickness unto Death*. In these opening pages, the term "God" may refer to a theistic god (including Christ), but the term may also denote some pantheistic god or principle, which among other things posits man as being obliged to fulfill certain values. Given this minimal understanding of the term "God" we are warranted in saying that not only Climacus, but also Judge Wilhelm in the second part of *Either/Or* would assent to Anti-Climacus' claim that man is posited by God. But it is exactly this claim that Heidegger calls into question in *Being and Time*. Dasein relates itself to itself, but it does *not* relate itself to a third that has posited Dasein. As a human being by Anti-Climacus Heidegger's Dasein is a combination (a "synthesis" in Anti-Climacus' terminology) of existential *possibility* and existential *necessity*, and therefore Heidegger talks about Dasein as being "in die Seinsart des Entwerfens geworfen".²⁵ But Dasein's "Geworfenheit" or existential necessity does not imply that Dasein is posited, just as the limitation of man according to Anti-Climacus does not imply his being posited. Therefore, Heidegger's Dasein, in Anti-Climacus' terminology, is a self which has posited itself or rather a self which has posited its own goals and values. Or to use Heidegger's vocabulary, Dasein is concerned with itself on the basis of a general understanding of being which indicates that all evaluations of Dasein's way of life are products of Dasein's own "Entwurf" and nothing else.

Given this difference between Heidegger on the one hand, and Climacus and Anti-Climacus on the other (which also includes Judge Wilhelm, Johannes de Silentio, Vigilius Haufniensis, Frater Taciturnus and other pseudonyms), Climacus would classify Heidegger as an *aesthete*. However, given the many similarities between Heidegger and Climacus (and other of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writers as well) one may ask, whether Climacus' understanding of the aesthete in the first volume of *Either-Or* is too narrow-minded.

VI. Climacus' Theory of Stages

In his appendix in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* concerning a contemporary endeavour in Danish literature, Climacus reveals a thorough acquaintance with Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship and classifies the different authors according to what has later been known as *the theory of stages*. Unfortunately, generations of Kierkegaard scholars have taken this appendix to be the clue to Kierkegaard's authorship instead of just one interpretation of Kierkegaard among others. In this appendix and in the rest of *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Climacus creates a hierarchy of different ways of life which he refers to as "stages". As anyone familiar with Kierkegaard will know, the three main stages are the aesthetic, ethical, and religious with irony as a so-called "continuum" between the aesthetic and the ethical, and "humor" as a continuum between the ethical and the religious stage, which is divided into religiousness A and B, where B is Christianity. The hierarchical organization means that the aesthetic stage is the lowest one whereas the Christian stage is the highest. The theory is problematic and below I will present what I take to be three flaws.

First, the theory creates an internal problem for Climacus, who defines himself as a humorist, which is below both religiousness A and B. Of course, this is a contradiction. Climacus would not have involved himself in a contradiction. However, after understanding himself as a Christian, it was later revealed that not only did he not fulfill the Christian demand to love his neighbor, he was also often in conflict with the Christian faith as such. This is revealed in the works of Anti-Climacus, but Climacus is not Anti-Climacus. When Climacus says that he is only a humorist whereas a Christian is at a higher level, he is as confused as someone would be if one said that one was only a Christian whereas a Muslim is at a higher level. Of course, by saying this one would have recognized the truth of Islam, which would exclude one from Christianity. In the same way, by asserting that Christianity is at a higher level than humor, Climacus has located himself outside the stage of humor. However, by being a humorist he may judge himself using a value-scale *within* the humoristic stage, but he cannot choose a standard *outside* the humoristic stage and evaluate the stage as such and yet still be a humorist.

The second internal problem has to do with Climacus' claim that every existential communication is an indirect communication which as such provides space for free choice. Direct communication focuses on the *what* that is communicated whereas indirect communication aims to bring the other to a point whereby one has to *relate oneself* to the what in order to be for or against the what. Therefore, Climacus is involved in a contradiction since he both *indirectly* tries to bring the reader to a choice and he *directly* tells the reader that certain solutions are better than others. The openness of the choice is thereby sealed off excluding the indirect mode of communication that Climacus claims to be the only true way of communicating existentially.

The third problem is the most serious. In order to let all the pseudonymous works fit into his hierarchy Climacus has to abstract from parts of what is actually said. This becomes very clear when we turn to Climacus' treatment of the aesthete. The aesthete is the only stage that does not introduce a first principle to secure a cognitivist foundation for normativity. This is the reason why Climacus would have had to classify Heidegger and Sartre as aesthetes. Of course, it is anachronistic to criticize Climacus for failing to peruse Heidegger and Sartre, but it is *not* anachronistic to show how Climacus fails to read the aesthetic essays in *Either/Or* from within. Let me just refer to the two important essays, "The Crop Rotation: An Attempt at a Theory of Social Prudence" ("Vexel-Driften") and "Ancient Tragical Motif as Reflected in the Modern" ("Det moderne Tragiske Refleks i det antikt Tragiske").

In the latter essay, the aesthete shows how ancient tragedy is based upon *destiny* whereas modern tragedy is based upon the assumption that the hero is a *free* being and thus responsible for his actions. The more the author goes in this "pelagian" direction,²⁶ the more one loses the tragic dimension. Nonetheless, the tragic dimension reappears when the subject, in his search for freedom, experiences an overwhelming sense of guilt. At this point it is very difficult to accept Judge Wilhelm's and Climacus' critique of the aesthete for not relating to himself and not choosing himself in his concrete complexity with exactly this past and these possibilities.

The aesthete misses Judge Wilhelm's postulate that by choosing oneself one also experiences the demand to choose "the Universal" (*Det Almene*). More specifically, the aesthete does not commit himself to Judge Wilhelm's original combination of a Kantian deontological idea of the good will as the final end of ethics and the Hegelian notion that norms stem from the tradition expressed in the social "Sittlichkeit". It is also obvious that the aesthete lacks Judge Wilhelm's firm belief in the capacity of repentance ("Angeren") to heal one's guilt and reconcile one with one's guilty past. Instead the aesthete presents two alternatives. Either you stay within *the tragic worldview* (which the aesthete seems to choose) or you start to perceive life from *a religious point of view*.²⁷ This last possibility would of course include the assumption of a first principle, using the terminology of Anti-Climacus from *The Sickness unto Death* (*Sygdommen til Døden*), has "posited" the religious man.

In "The Crop Rotation" ("Vexel-Driften") it is the absence of such a first principle that gives rise to *the boredom* ("Kedsommelighed") which the aesthete claims to be the essence of all human beings. The tediousness

of life corresponds to that “Nothing”, which runs through the whole universe. “The Crop Rotation” exhibits the nihilistic conclusions of the aesthetic tragic worldview and for this reason the essay is extremely witty and profound. It not only denies the existence of absolute values it also draws the tragic conclusion that all human efforts to create and fulfill values are based upon a nothingness that is perpetually threatened to breakdown into a sense of boredom. Judge Wilhelm may be right that such a worldview is a form of despair (the aesthete would be the first to agree), but he and Climacus are wrong when they try to deny existential sincerity. It is the other way around, namely the existential sincerity of the tragic and bored aesthete without any first principle to secure a cognitivist foundation of his values (not to say their realization) is a challenge to Judge Wilhelm’s and Climacus’ common assumption that only a cognitivist position is existentially sincere.

VII. An Aesthetic Existentialism?

Given this conclusion we may return to our fictitious dialogue between Climacus and Heidegger. As stated above, Climacus would be right to classify Heidegger as an aesthete since Heidegger is a metaethical noncognitivist. The standard critique of the aesthete, which would have been Climacus’ critique, would surely have applied to Heidegger. However, it would have been as off the mark with Heidegger as Climacus’ critique of the aesthete is in general. In Hegelian terms, the “truth” of a fictitious dialogue between Climacus and Heidegger might be better framed as a dialogue between the Aesthete *A* and Heidegger. Such a discussion would include the connection between *anxiety* (“Angst”) and *boredom*, between the Aesthete’s *tragic point of view* and Dasein’s *being unto death* (“Sein zum Tode”), the distinction within *Being and Time* between “Eigentlichkeit” and “Uneigentlichkeit”, and finally the distinction *within* the aesthetical position between the vulgar philistine forms of aesthetic life and the tragic worldview. In the end, the dialogue would not generate a positive normative ethic, but it would certainly work via different ways of realizing the tragic side of authenticity. This may not be much when compared with the grand ambitions of normative ethics, but it certainly would be more realistic.

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¹Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard’s Writings*, vol. 12.1, Princeton: Princeton U.P. 1992, p. 189; Søren Kierkegaard, *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, vol. 7, p. 173, Copenhagen 2002.

²*Kierkegaard’s Writings*, volume 12.1, p. 189, Princeton U.P. 1992, *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 173, Copenhagen 2002.

³*Kierkegaard’s Writings*, volume 12.1, p. 189, Princeton U.P. 1992; *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 174, Copenhagen 2002. “selv er i Vorden”.

⁴*Kierkegaard’s Writings*, volume 12.1, p. 194, Princeton U.P. 1992; *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 178, Copenhagen 2002.

⁵ *Kierkegaard’s Writings*, volume 12.1, p. 203, Princeton U.P. 1992” *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 186, Copenhagen 2002. ”Den objective Uvished, fastholdt i den meest lidenskabelige Inderlighedens Tilegnelse, er Sandheden, den høieste Sandhed, der er for en Existerende.”

⁶ *Kierkegaard’s Writings*, volume 3, p. 445, Princeton U.P. 1987; *Enten-Eller I*, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 2, p. 432, Copenhagen 1997.

⁷ *Kierkegaard’s Writings*, volume 12.1, p. 203, Princeton U.P. 1992” *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 186, Copenhagen 2002.

⁸*Kierkegaard’s Writings*, volume 12.1, p. 207, Princeton U.P. 1992 ; *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler*, *Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 189, Copenhagen 2002.

⁹ Kierkegaard's Writings, volume 12.1, p. 208, Princeton U.P. 1992 ; *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler, Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 191, Copenhagen 2002.

¹⁰ Kierkegaard's Writings, volume 7, p. 15, Princeton U.P. 1985; *Philosophiske Smuler, Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 4, p. 224, Copenhagen 1997.

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¹² ; Kierkegaard's Writings, volume 12.1, p. 202, Princeton U.P. 1992 *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler, Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 185, Copenhagen 2002.

¹³ Kierkegaard's Writings, volume 12.1, p. 203, Princeton U.P. 1992" *Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de filosofiske Smuler, Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 7, p. 186, Copenhagen 2002.

¹⁴ "Das Dasein ist ein Seiendes [.dem es.] in seinem Sein *um* dieses Sein selbst geht". *Sein und Zeit, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, volume 2, p. 16, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

¹⁵ Kierkegaard's Writings, volume 19, p. 13, Princeton U.P. 1980 *Sygdommen til Døden, Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 11, p. 129, Copenhagen 2006.

¹⁶ "Das Worumwillen ist ebenso ursprünglich als Daseins Offenheit für die Weltlichkeit seiner jeweiligen Welt". *Sein und Zeit, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, volume 2, p. 193, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

¹⁷ "Brief über den "Humanismus"" (1949), *Wegmarken, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, volume 9, pp. 313-364, Frankfurt am Main 1976.

¹⁸ *Sein und Zeit, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, volume 2, p. 289, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

¹⁹ *Sein und Zeit, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, volume 2, p. 292, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

²⁰ This interpretation is in accordance with Tugendhat's analysis in his classic presentation in *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, Berlin 1966. It is especially in accordance with Tugendhat's dictum: "Daß ein Wahrheitsbegriff auf die Aussagewahrheit paßt, ist die Minimalbedingung, die er erfüllen muß, wenn er überhaupt ein Wahrheitsbegriff sein soll." (*ibid.* p. 331).

²¹ *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (1925-26), *Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe* volume 21, §§ 13-14, Frankfurt am Main 1976.

²² *Sein und Zeit, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, volume 2, p. 403, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

²³ *Sein und Zeit, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, volume 2, § 53, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

²⁴ Kierkegaard's Writings, volume 19, p. 13 f., Princeton U.P. 1980; *Sygdommen til Døden, Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 11, p. 132, Copenhagen 2006.

²⁵ *Sein und Zeit, Martin Heidegger Gesamtausgabe*, volume 2, p. 193, Frankfurt am Main 1977.

²⁶ Kierkegaard's Writings, volume 3, p. 143 f., Princeton U.P. 1987; *Enten-Eller I, Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 2, p. 143, Copenhagen 1997.

²⁷ Kierkegaard's Writings, volume 3, p. 146, Princeton U.P. 1987; *Enten-Eller I, Søren Kierkegaards skrifter*, volume 2, p. 146, Copenhagen 1997.

Bonhoeffer and the Kütemeyer/Kierkegaard Footnote

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I forget now how I first ran across mention of the footnote and I have been unable to reconstruct the sequence of events that led up to it. I am certain that it did not come from reading the 1970 third German edition of Eberhard Bethge's biography: *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologe, Christ, Zeitgenosse*.¹ It was there that the footnote first appeared. The substance of the note -- as first reported by Bethge -- was that a young Kierkegaard scholar in Berlin, Traugott Vogel, had contacted him sometime in 1968 with the assertion that he, Vogel, believed he could identify the precise Kierkegaard work that Bonhoeffer used in writing a major section of *Nachfolge*² (Eng. tr.: *The Cost of Discipleship*). Vogel asked Bethge whether he could confirm that Bonhoeffer had possession of Wilhelm Kütemeyer's edition of selections from Kierkegaard's Journals. The work by Kütemeyer was titled: *Der Einzelne und die Kirche*³, the theme which governed his choice of passages

from the Journals. Bethge, having inherited much of Bonhoeffer's library, was quickly able to report back to Vogel that in fact Bonhoeffer did have a copy of Kütemeyer's work at hand during the Finkenwalde years (1935-1937).

News of the Vogel/Kütemeyer footnote came to my attention sometime in the mid-1980's. It stirred my interest because I had earlier argued in *A Dissent on Bonhoeffer*⁴ that Bonhoeffer's transition from *The Cost of Discipleship* to themes broached in his later *Letters and Papers from Prison*⁵ was not an easy one and not fully consistent with the then- and still-popular supposition of Bonhoeffer's largely coherent theological development from the earliest writings through to his more radical, provocative views in the prison letters. I had suggested in the *Dissent* that there was a long-term personalistic theme of strength and weakness in Bonhoeffer's writings, a largely neglected accent which warranted further examination and gave warrant for a view of episodic, unexpected turns in his thought, a view expressed by a few others early on following Bethge's 1951 publication of the prison letters.

I had taken a further step in that direction shortly after publication of the 'Dissent' when I was invited to deliver a paper to a Bonhoeffer Society meeting in Chicago in November 1975. The title of that paper -- unpublished -- was: "Bonhoeffer's Second Trip to America and the Limits of Theology as Autobiography." In that paper I took some issue with Eberhard Bethge's view that Bonhoeffer's first visit to America, to Union Seminary in New York in 1930-31, was decisive for Bonhoeffer since out of that first visit came Bonhoeffer's decision to commit himself fully and personally to Christ -- a view which I never questioned except as it reflected back upon Bonhoeffer's earlier theology. This view, by itself, tended to obscure what I felt to be later, equally "decisive" events in the shaping of his theology. As Bethge early phrased his own view: "the theologian becomes a Christian."⁶

When I read my 1975 Chicago paper, which diverged from Bethge's view, Bethge himself happened to be in attendance at the reading. It coincided, by chance, with one of his many visits to America, and he was hosted at the time by Bonhoeffer society friends at a dinner in his honor. He also had occasion to sit in on some of the society's programmed discussions which were held in conjunction with the much larger annual conference of the American Academy of Religion.

Though there was decided dissent on my own "dissent," especially with the substance of the paper, I did not subsequently abandon my views on the subject, but neither did I press the case for a personalistic, autobiographical accent in Bonhoeffer's thought. The paper never appeared as a journal article and the subject was more or less overshadowed by "secular" theological constructs inspired in large part by Bonhoeffer's prison letters. Then the matter of the Kütemeyer/Kierkegaard footnote came to my attention -- probably some time in the early or mid-1980's -- and my interest was renewed in my previous question about the personal, motivating factors at play in Bonhoeffer's thought. I was curious about his heavy reliance on this particular Kütemeyer version of Kierkegaard's *Journals* in writing *The Cost of Discipleship*. I wondered how that carried over into the later more "radical," provocative theology of the prison letters. Then when the Bonhoeffer Society issued its call for papers for its 1989 Anaheim meeting, the announced theme for the papers was that of secularity, spirituality, and Bonhoeffer's "love of the world." For me this offered the possibility of exploring *The Cost of Discipleship* and its Kierkegaard connection in relation to old and possible new questions arising with the Kütemeyer footnote.

Since I had maintained an interest in Kierkegaard over many years I felt that I might be able to follow Bonhoeffer's Kierkegaard interest into the *Ethics*⁷ and his prison letters. With that in mind and with the broad parameters of the call for papers, I submitted a proposal for a paper with the involved title: "Bonhoeffer's 'Love of the World,' 'the Dangers of that Book,' and the Kierkegaard Question." The phrase in the call, Bonhoeffer's "love of the world," had, as suggested, much to do with the widespread, post-World War II use in America -- also in Europe -- of Bonhoeffer's prison letters as inspiration for framing a "secular theology" and "religionless

Christianity.” One thinks here of Harvey Cox’s *The Secular City*⁸ and John A. T. Robinson’s *Honest to God*,⁹ for example. Characterizations of Bonhoeffer’s thought as a movement from “the church to the world” were widespread and these found some warrant in Bethge’s own representation of Bonhoeffer’s life and thought as “theologian, Christian, contemporary.”

With the steering committee’s acceptance of my proposed paper topic I determined that it would be essential to gain access to Bonhoeffer’s copy of the Küttemeyer volume. I thus wrote to Bethge, with whom I maintained cordial relations -- or rather, he maintained generous cordial relations with me despite my “dissent,” asking whether it would be possible to get hold of a copy of Bonhoeffer’s Küttemeyer. He replied by letter that he no longer had that book in his possession since he had passed it on to Ilse Tödt who was then completing editing of *The Cost of Discipleship* for inclusion in the new revised German edition of Bonhoeffer’s collected works.¹⁰ He offered to write Ilse Tödt about my request and gave me her address so that I might also write. Tödt graciously and generously responded by sending me a duplicated copy of Bonhoeffer’s Küttemeyer along with a key to his marginal markings and other valuable correspondence and print-outs.

Out of these new sources, those of the earlier dissent and also the earlier Chicago paper, I wrote a second paper, this with the strange, lengthy title accenting the Kierkegaard presence in Bonhoeffer’s CD. I also framed an added view of the diminished role for Kierkegaard in Bonhoeffer’s later turn of thought. A second coincidence occurred with Eberhard Bethge’s presence again at my second reading of a paper critical of what had become a rather standard interpretation of Bonhoeffer’s life and thought, one which Bethge had himself clearly helped define. I judged that this second paper, involved as it was, would similarly fail of journal publication. Thus it was never submitted in its entirety to any periodical. Nevertheless, because of its Kierkegaard subject matter, I did provide a copy of the paper to the Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf, presently, of course, bearing the names of Howard and Edna Hong in tribute to their great work in Kierkegaard translation and in the replication of so much of Kierkegaard’s own library holdings.

I should mention that a few weeks after the Anaheim reading I received a five-page analysis and rebuttal of my paper from Ilse Tödt who had been so instrumental in providing the copy of the Bonhoeffer Küttemeyer. In her response to the paper, she pointed up what she felt to be some failings in English translations of Bonhoeffer, not only on my part but also on the part of other translators of his works. She took strong exception to the paper’s overall argument and its description of Bonhoeffer’s rather frustrated personal relationship with Barth, a relationship which plays a major role in much of his later life (from 1931 on). Tödt remarked, though allowing that this account in the paper is “...impressively presented...”, that “[it] is likewise sad to see how inter-preters’ endeavors can lead readers astray.”

I found Ilse Tödt’s reaction to the paper very understandable, especially since she was not familiar with the original dissent and had no access to the unpublished “Bonhoeffer’s Second Trip to America...” She seems to have been surprised and upset -- certainly not convinced -- by the paper’s argument. Eberhard Bethge, I expect -- and it is only a surmise -- had sent a copy of the Anaheim paper to Tödt for her perusal and assessment in light of her then deep involvement in the further editing of CD. A reading of her reply suggests that she had a third party as an audience. Her assessment/rebuttal was addressed not to me alone since I am often referred to in the third person.

One further note in this story needs telling: For some years through the 1970’s, ’80’s, and into the ’90’s, I had periodically taught an undergraduate seminar on the writings of Kierkegaard -- a sort of companion piece to a regularly offered and popular seminar-type course on “Existentialism: Atheistic and Theistic.” With the Kierkegaard seminar, taught perhaps six or seven times over the span of years, we were able as a class to make regular visits to St. Olaf to visit with Howard, sometimes also with Edna, Hong, and were provided a guided tour of the Kierkegaard Library. Prof. Hong was always a very gracious host, and on my last seminar visit to the library with our Macalester students I presented Prof. Hong a copy of the Bonhoeffer

Kütemeyer/Kierkegaard book. In the cover letter with the gift copy I did not spell out sufficiently the significance of the item for interested Bonhoeffer scholars -- though I did this orally when I gave it to Prof. Hong. In subsequent years I checked with the library at least three times in the course of visits there, but the copy never showed up in the catalogue holdings. I checked my own files, but I could not find any record of the letter to Prof. Hong marking the occasion of the gift. Since I had had a serious computer crash after the last visit with Prof. Hong, I came to the conclusion that a record for the gift -- and the date of it -- was simply lost.

Then, at the annual dinner meeting of the Kierkegaard Society in San Francisco in November 2011, I met Andrew Burgess for the first time -- this through the initiative of a friend. In conversation with Prof. Burgess, he mentioned having read my 1989 Anaheim paper on a visit to the Kierkegaard Library, and he inquired whether it would be possible to have a copy of that paper for further scrutiny. I replied that I would check when I got home -- and that I thought I might have an extra copy on hand. I did, and sent it on to him. In response Prof. Burgess sent me a copy of his 2009 Julia Watkins Lecture on parallels between Bonhoeffer's late-developing love for Maria von Wedemeyer and Kierkegaard's early love of Regina. Prof. Burgess in his lecture also listed Kierkegaard concepts and word usages that Bonhoeffer made use of in *Nachfolge*. What especially caught my attention in Prof. Burgess's lecture was not only his familiarity with, and use of, Bonhoeffer's Kütemeyer/Kierkegaard but that he had made two separate trips to Berlin in order to have access to it, a work which he suggested was now in the care of the Lutheran bishop of Berlin.

Two other things followed the exchanges between Prof. Burgess and myself. A few weeks after the exchanges, I found a box of random papers and desk-top items from my former college office with a copy of the missing letter to Prof. Hong presented with the gift copy of Bonhoeffer's Kütemeyer/Kierkegaard. The date on the letter was April 3, 1996. I subsequently sent copies of the letter to both Prof. Gordon Marino, the Curator of the library, and Cynthia Lund, Assistant Curator, in the thought that with a fixed date and the letter to Prof. Hong itself further progress could be made in the search for the missing Bonhoeffer/Kütemeyer. That did not happen. But then, through the contact of a recently added member to Macalester's philosophy department, a former colleague of Marino's at St. Olaf, Prof. Marino was invited to Macalester for a public lecture on Kierkegaard along with a class visit. I got to sit in on both meetings and as a result of some interesting questions and exchanges with Prof. Marino was invited to speak in June of this past year at one of the scheduled group meetings of the library's summer Visiting Scholars Program. After speaking on the subject of "Bonhoeffer, Kierkegaard -- and Luther!" I presented Prof. Marino with a second copy of the Bonhoeffer Kütemeyer. Prof. Marino was most appreciative of this follow-up gift. But then, by happenstance, Prof. Burgess was also present in the audience and was able to witness -- after his two earlier visits to Berlin for research purposes -- to his own very real scholarly joy that Bonhoeffer's Kütemeyer/Kierkegaard had found an accessible American home.

I opine that here now is a valuable 'new' Kierkegaard Library resource, not only for tracking the impact of Kierkegaard on an important twentieth century theological figure, but a reflection, through Bonhoeffer, back upon Kierkegaard himself in the latter's own lifelong project of combatting the acculturation of Christianity.

¹ Munchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1967. Eng. tr.: *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage* (N.Y.: Harper&Row Publishers, 1970)

² Munchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1937. *The Cost of Discipleship* (N.Y.: Macmillan Paperbacks edition, 1963)

³ Berlin: Kurt Wolff Verlag/Der Neue Geist Verlag, 1934

⁴ David H. Hopper, *A Dissent on Bonhoeffer* (Phila.: The Westminster Press, 1975)

⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (N.Y.: Macmillan Paperbacks edition, 1972)

⁶ Section title in Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Man of Vision, Man of Courage*, p. 153

⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (N.Y.: Macmillan Paperback edition, 1965)

⁸ Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (N.Y.: Macmillan Co., 1965)

⁹ John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (Phila.: The Westminster Press, 1963)

¹⁰ Martin Kuske und Ilse Tödt, eds. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Nachfolge* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1989)



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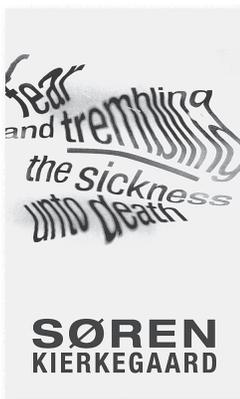
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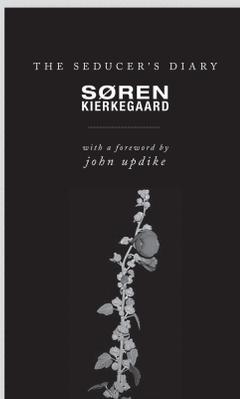


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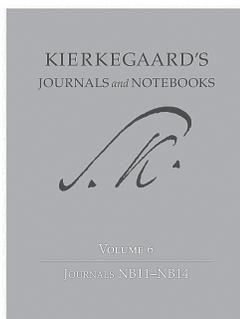


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POEM

Concluding Unscientific Postscript To Kierkegaard

By Daniel Klawitter

*People understand me so little that they do not even understand
when I complain of being misunderstood. ---Søren Kierkegaard,
Journals, Feb. 1836.*

Though your books line my shelf
dog-eared and underlined,
I can't claim to fully understand *myself*--
much less a mind as refined as yours.

You were one smart egg---
though legend has it
a hunchback with weak legs
and a handsome face.

A gloomy Dane who traced
relentlessly, the hypocrisies
of the bourgeoisie---
the semiotics of invisibility.

Preoccupied with paradox and sin,
you wrote under several false names,
then later played the game
of attacking your own pseudonyms.

And I love how you walked
the crooked streets of Copenhagen,
where often you would pause and talk

with the poor, the hungry, the forsaken.

You were no philosopher secluded
in an ivory tower, deluded
with visions of power and
fake heroics---Søren: you were no Stoic.

In fact, there are over ninety references
in your corpus where you call yourself a poet.
And *that* is why you are misunderstood!
Because poets are as slippery as porpoises---
skimming the surface, then diving to the depths.

We hold our breath and try to follow---
but this fear and trembling,
is a sickness unto death---
an existential wallow.

And though your books line my shelf---
their spines cracked and pages brittle,
I may not understand myself--
and understood you little.

REVIEWS

The Hong Kierkegaard Library: A Crown Jewel of St. Olaf College
By Jack Schwandt

Friends of the Kierkegaard Library, 2011, 232 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-615-48301-6

Reviewed by Sergia Hay
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In the preface to this book, Jack Schwandt writes that his aim is to honor the founders of the Hong Kierkegaard Library, to show how the library benefits its housing institution and beyond, and to salute the people who have worked and continue to work on its behalf. Schwandt's book accomplishes all of these aims admirably. He tells an engaging account with deep roots that run through the lives of Howard and Edna Hong and the history of St. Olaf College. This is no flat history, but rather it reveals a complicated series of events and personal stories which define the library. The book also accommodates several different ways to read it. Some readers may be primarily interested in the facts concerning the origins and continuing work of the library and therefore will keep to the main text. Other readers may find interest in a parallel story that develops in the footnotes; this story goes into greater detail about the lives and relationships of people who figure in this history and provides several literary examples that are thematically relevant to the text (and are, one imagines, ones that Hong himself would use). Another way the book may be read is the way I chose to read it: as an extended argument for the preservation and growth of the library. It would be difficult to finish this telling of the library's history without having a greater appreciation for the place and its mission.

Schwandt begins with the story of "two teachers," Howard and Edna Hong, and in these early pages one gets a sense of their personalities, values and sense of humor. Hong's personal collection of texts, which began to be acquired during their early translation project of Kierkegaard's *Journals and Papers*, was given to the college and formally dedicated in 1976. The history continues through the legal agreements made between Hong and St. Olaf College, the challenges of finding adequate space for the expanding collection, establishing a self-sustaining endowment for it, and providing housing and financial support for its growing number of visiting scholars. Chapter 4, "The Work the Library," attests to the wide range of activities conducted there; not only are there tasks involving the acquisition and cataloguing of new materials and the preservation of old ones, but the library also functions as a sort of Kierkegaardian community center which attracts a local and international crowd of scholars and enthusiasts of different ages and various disciplines. "Principled hospitality," a trademark of the Hongs, persists at the library through its programming, conferences, and daily activity. The final chapters of the book describe the support the library receives from the Friends of the Kierkegaard Library and the influence the library has had on some of the people who have studied there. The final chapter spotlights one particular student, Jonathan Stenseth, a St. Olaf College graduate and worker at the library whose exemplary life and early death sharpens focus on the things that really matter, the things of which Kierkegaard wrote.

Although the contemporary debate about the relevance of physical books and libraries receives some attention in a lengthy footnote, it hums in the background of the entire book. Surely there is an interest in preserving certain texts as artifacts, but what value is inherent in books and the places that house them? An easy and popular course of action would be to scan everything and set it afloat in the vast digital sea of information. However, in the case of the Kierkegaard library, it is a matter of content and context. Kierkegaard specifically warns against what is easy and popular, and it is likely that he would be highly skeptical of the industrial model of learning that centers on the production and consumption of desultory and excessive quantities of information.

Kierkegaard's Constantin Constantius asks, "Who in our day thinks of wasting any time on the curious idea that it is an art to be a good reader, not to mention spending time to become that?" If the kind of reading he had in mind was a rare endeavor in his time, then it must be even rarer for this plugged-in generation. Furthermore, the context of the library aligns with the content of Kierkegaard's material by providing a place that is set apart for this sort of endeavor, through its various expressions of hospitality, and its particular location. St. Olaf College is identified by its commitment to liberal arts, emphasis on vocation, and rich Lutheran tradition- all qualities that make it a good fit for the library beyond the legacy of the Hongs. As this book makes clear, the Hong Kierkegaard Library is not a museum of rare books, but a lively and inviting home to a community of readers and thinkers in a place that cares about reading and thinking.

Those who are curious about how the library came to be, as well as those interested in general about Kierkegaard, St. Olaf College history, and the living role of research libraries would enjoy this book. Schwandt's own interest in the library's future and his sincere and enduring friendship with the Hongs comes through in his writing. We're fortunate to have this book, a tribute to the library and its founders, so that we will not forget its original purpose and work to remain true to it.

Discourses at the Communion on Fridays, Søren Kierkegaard
Translated by Sylvia Walsh

Indiana University Press, 2011, pp. ix-147
ISBN: 978-0-615-48301-6

Reviewed by Paul Warhurst
King College, Bristol, TN

Sylvia Walsh has fittingly bound together Kierkegaard's thirteen discourses for the Friday Communion services, which he initially released across four separate collections. In her own words, the new translation 'seeks to preserve the inward passion and lyrical style' of the Danish originals and the accompanying introduction to the discourses serves a wide range of Kierkegaard readers (3). Kierkegaard himself stressed the import of these discourses by representing them as the interpretative key to the entire authorship and by resting his authorial case with them. By bringing these pieces together Walsh honors Kierkegaard's emphasis and facilitates future encounters with their interconnectedness to each other and to the rest of his writings. The critical footnotes add further texture and insight as well. For the new-comer to Kierkegaard, Walsh's introduction elucidates the central category of the 'single individual' while laying out a succinct account of Kierkegaard's entire authorship in relation to these signed, biblical-based discourses. Moreover, there ensues a nuanced discussion of the seven varieties of discourses found across Kierkegaard's body of literature which culminates in an extended explanation of the function and form of the Communion writings. The scholarly minded reader will find this section to be most helpful. Walsh, interacting with the discourses, develops the key themes of the writings: consciousness and confession of sin, the invitation and atonement of Christ, Kierkegaard's theological position on the Lord's Supper, and the existential responsibilities of the one who approaches and kneels at the altar, receives the bread and wine, and returns to the world. This fresh reading shows the fertility of the discourses and will, hopefully, initiate more work in these under-discovered and valuable writings. Take and read!

OBITUARIES

Obituary for HOMER EUGENE MASON (1925-2012)

Submitted by Joan Mason

Homer Eugene “Gene” Mason, 86, a retired professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota, died Wednesday, June 13, 2012 in St. Paul. Born July 4, 1925 in Montevideo, Minnesota, he was the son of Homer and Malinda Mason. He spent his childhood in Northfield, Minnesota, graduating in 1943 as valedictorian of his Northfield High School class. In his valedictory address, he said, “We cannot fight the forces of imperialism abroad and put our stamp of approval on it at home,” and urged equal treatment for all races.

Gene was drafted into the Army in 1943 and was injured in the Hürtgen Forest in 1944. He returned home to Northfield and graduated from St. Olaf College in 1948. It was there he met Joan Overson; they married in 1948 and were the parents of five children.

Gene earned an MA from the University of Minnesota and a PhD in Philosophy from Harvard University, writing his doctoral dissertation on “The Concept of a Morally Responsible Person.” His first teaching position was at Penn State University. In 1957 he joined the faculty of the Philosophy Department at the University of Minnesota, serving several years as chairman, and taught there until his retirement in 2000. He created a welcoming community for all; Gene and Joan were known for the gatherings they hosted for the department, graduate students, and visiting philosophers.

Philosophically and pedagogically, his particular interests were in the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard and Ludwig Wittgenstein, and the theories of justice and ethics. He was the editor of “Moral Dilemmas and Moral Theory,” published by Oxford University Press in 1996, and the author of articles on moral and social issues, community and public policy. His political activities dovetailed with his philosophical interests, and he was active in the DFL, working for candidates such as Eugene McCarthy and Don Fraser.

Gene learned carpentry from his father; in 1960 the two of them built an addition to the family cabin erected in 1922 by his father and grandfather on Lake Minnewaska, Pope County. Gene was a wonderful father who took his children camping and hiking and taught them to appreciate nature.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Joan Mason, his children John (Susan Davies), Austerlitz, NY; Chris (Ann), Baltimore MD; Karen (Matt Schaefer), Iowa City, IA; Martha Mason Miller, St. Paul; Tom, Nashville, TN; his brother Jim Mason, Starbuck; nine grandchildren, Bronwyn, Kari, and Noah Davies-Mason; Elizabeth and Will Mason; Daniel Schaefer; and Erik, Chris, and Kai Miller, and many cousins, nieces and nephews.

The funeral was held on Monday, June 18, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, 2136 Carter Avenue, St. Paul.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Doctors Without Borders, P.O. Box 5030, Hagerstown, MD 21741-5030; Hong Kierkegaard Library, 1510 St. Olaf Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057; or Iowa Women’s Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, IA 52242-1420.

**Obituary for
MARIE MIKULOVÁ THULSTRUP (1923-2013)**



— from her
personal
Bible

— záložka v
její bible

TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS
RODINĚ A PRÁTELŮM

This is to announce that Marie Mikulová
Thulstrup left this temporary abode
to meet her Lord and Saviour as he promised

Oznamuji že Marie Mikulová Thulstrupová
opustila toto prozatímní přístřeší aby
stála před svým Spasitelem tak jak on
přislíbil

Jeg bekendtgør at Marie Mikulová Thulstrup
har forladt dette midlertidige sted for at
møde sin Herre og Frelser som han har lovet det



1923 - 2013

anno Domini 2013

mors stupebit et natura
dum resurget creatura
judicanti responsura /Celano/

Johannes Pr. Thulstrup
her son • její syn • sønnen