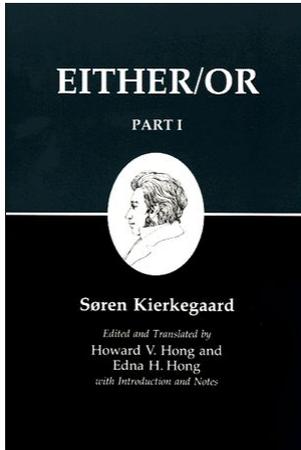


Kierkegaard's Top Ten Hits

Either/Or



Søren Kierkegaard, the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher rediscovered in the twentieth century, is a major influence in contemporary philosophy, religion, and literature. He regarded *Either/Or* as the beginning of his authorship, although he had published two earlier works on Hans Christian Andersen and irony. The pseudonymous volumes of *Either/Or* are the writings of a young man (volume I) and of Judge William (volume II). The ironical young man's papers include a collection of sardonic aphorisms; essays on Mozart, modern drama, and boredom; and "The Seducer's Diary." The seeming miscellany is a reflective presentation of aspects of the "either," the aesthetic view of life. Part II is an older friend's "or," the ethical life of integrated, authentic personhood, elaborated in discussions of personal becoming and of marriage. The resolution of the "either/or" is left to the reader, for there is no part III until the appearance of *Stages on Life's Way*. The poetic-reflective creations of a master stylist and imaginative impersonator, the two men write in distinctive ways appropriate to their respective positions.

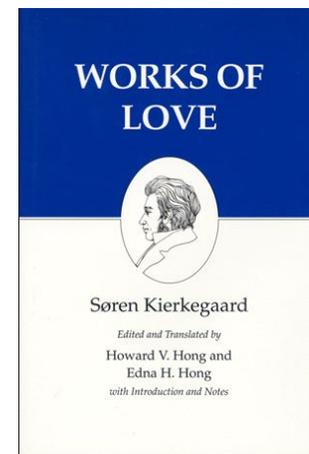
Location: Kierkegaard Library > Kierk 1 E61 E6 1989 v.1-2

Works of Love

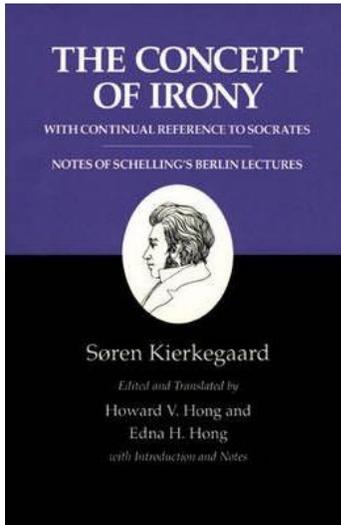
The various kinds and conditions of love are a common theme for Kierkegaard, beginning with his early *Either/Or* and Judge William's eulogy on married love, to his last work, on the changelessness of God's love. *Works of Love*, the midpoint in the series, is also the monumental high point, because of its penetrating, illuminating analysis of the forms and sources of love. Love as feeling and mood is distinguished from works of love, love of the lovable from love of the unlovely, preferential love from love as the royal law, love as mutual egotism from triangular love, and erotic love from self-giving love.

This work is marked by Kierkegaard's Socratic awareness of the reader, both as the center of awakened understanding and as the initiator of action. Written to be read aloud, this book conveys a keenness of thought and an insightful, poetic imagination that make such an attentive approach richly rewarding. *Works of Love* not only serves as an excellent place to begin exploring the writings of Kierkegaard but also rewards many re-readings.

Location: Kierkegaard Library > Kierk 1 K62 E6 1995



The Concept of Irony



One contemporary review has called this a work that “not only treats irony but is irony.” Presented here with Kierkegaard’s notes of the celebrated Berlin lectures on “positive philosophy” by F.W.J. Schelling, the book is a seedbed of Kierkegaard’s subsequent work, both stylistically and thematically. Part One concentrates on Socrates, the master ironist, as interpreted by Xenophon, Plato, and Aristophanes, with a word on Hegel and Hegelian categories. Part Two is a more synoptic discussion of the concept of irony in Kierkegaard’s categories, with examples from other philosophers and with particular attention given to A.W. Schlegel’s novel *Lucinde* as an epitome of romantic irony.

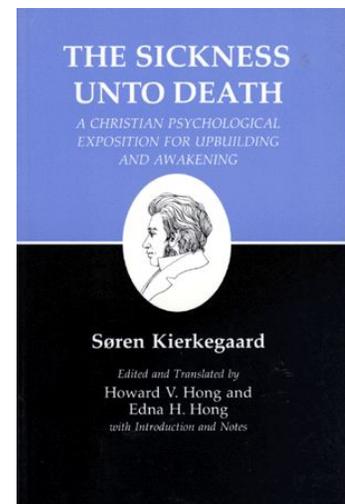
In substance, this text displays themes of romantic irony and esthetic despair that receives a constructive critique in *Either/Or* and *Stages of Life’s Way*. Kierkegaard’s other concerns in the work - immediacy, reflection, selfhood, subjectivity, objectivity, the esthetic, the ethical, the religious, the individual, the universal, the immanent, and the transcendent - are developed in the later pseudonyms and signed writings.

Location: Kierkegaard Library > Kierk 1 O54 E6 1989

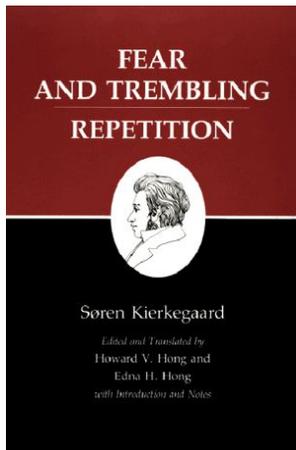
The Sickness Unto Death

A companion piece to *The Concept of Anxiety*, this work continues Søren Kierkegaard’s radical and comprehensive analysis of human nature in a spectrum of possibilities of existence. Present here is a remarkable combination of the insight of the poet and the contemplation of the philosopher.

In this work, Kierkegaard moves beyond anxiety on the mental-emotional level to the spiritual level, where - in contact with the eternal - anxiety becomes despair. Both anxiety and despair reflect the mis-relation that arises in the self when the elements of the synthesis - the finite and the infinite - do not come into proper relation to each other. Despair is a deeper expression for anxiety and is a mark of the eternal, which is intended to penetrate temporal existence.



Location: Kierkegaard Library > Kierk 1 S982 E6 1980



Fear and Trembling

Fear and Trembling and *Repetition* are the most poetic and personal of Søren Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings. Published in 1843 and written under the names Johannes de Silentio and Constantine Constantius, respectively, the books are basic in Kierkegaard's development as a philosopher and demonstrate his transmutation of the personal into the lyrically religious.

Each work uses as a point of departure Kierkegaard's breaking of his engagement to Regine Olsen - his sacrifice of "that single individual." From this beginning *Fear and Trembling* becomes an exploration of the faith that transcends the ethical, as in Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command. This faith, which persists in the face of the absurd, is rewarded finally by the return of all that the faithful one is willing to sacrifice.

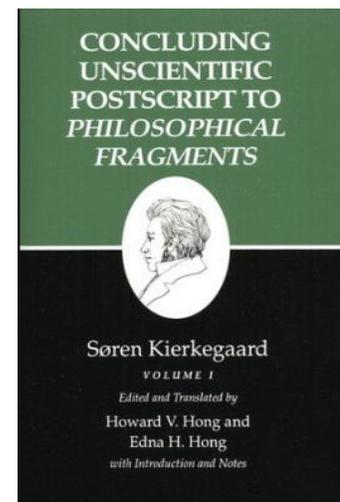
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Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments

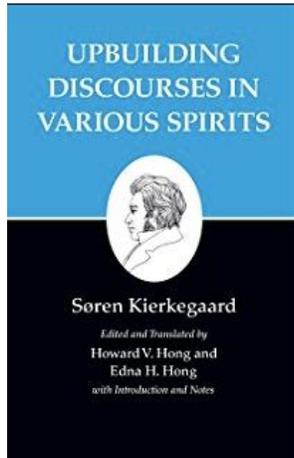
In *Philosophical Fragments* the pseudonymous author Johannes Climacus explored the question *What is required in order to go beyond Socratic recollection of eternal ideas already possessed by the lecturer?* Written as an afterword to this work, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is on one level a philosophical jest, yet on another it is Climacus's characterization of the subjective thinker's relation to the truth of Christianity. At once ironic, humorous, and polemical, this work takes on the "unscientific" form of a mimical-pathetical-dialectical compilation of ideas. Whereas the movement in either the earlier pseudonymous writings is away from the aesthetic, the movement in *Postscript* is away from speculative thought.

Kierkegaard intended *Postscript* to be his concluding work as an author. The subsequent "second authorship" after *The Corsair Affair* made *Postscript* the turning point in the entire authorship. Part One of the text volume examines the truth of Christianity as an objective issue, Part Two the subjective issue of what is involved for the individual in becoming a Christian, and the volume ends with an addendum in which Kierkegaard acknowledges and explains his relation to the pseudonymous authors and their writings. The second volume contains the scholarly apparatus, including a key to references and selected entries from Kierkegaard's journals and papers.

Location: Kierkegaard Library > Kierk 1 A12 E6 1978 v.12, pt.1



Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits



These discourses, composed after Kierkegaard had initially intended to end his public writing career, constitute the first work of his “second authorship.” Characterized by Kierkegaard as ethical-ironic, Part One, on the theme of “Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing,” offers a penetrating discussion of double-mindedness and ethical integrity; the irony lies in the relation between factuality and ideality. Part Two, “What We Learn from the Lilies in the Field and from the Birds of the Air,” is humorous for Kierkegaard in that it exposes an inverted qualitative difference between the learner and the teacher. In Part Three, “The Gospel of Sufferings, Christian Discourses,” the philosopher explores the theme of joy, as in “The Joy of It That the School of Sufferings Educates for Eternity.”

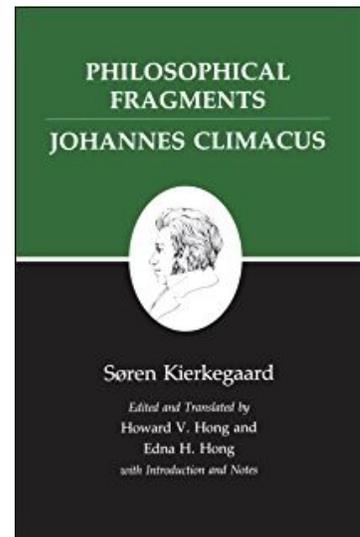
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Philosophical Fragments

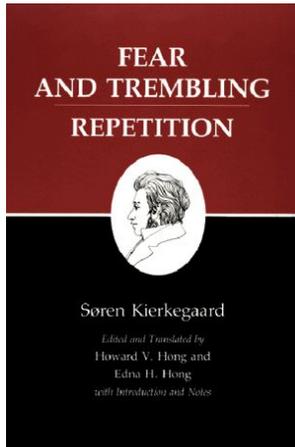
Under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus, Kierkegaard contrasts the paradoxes of Christianity with Greek and modern philosophical thinking. In *Philosophical Fragments* he begins with Greek Platonic philosophy, exploring the implications of venturing beyond the Socratic understanding of truth acquired through recollection to the Christian experience of acquiring truth through grace. Not originally planned to appear under the pseudonym Climacus, the book varies in tone and substance from the other works so attributed, but it is dialectically related to them, as well as to the other pseudonymous writings.

The central issue of *Johannes Climacus* is doubt. Probably written between November 1842 and April 1843 but unfinished and published only posthumously, this book was described by Kierkegaard as an attack on modern speculative philosophy by “means of the melancholy irony, which did not consist in any single utterance on the part of Johannes Climacus but in his whole life... Johannes does what we are told to do - he actually doubts everything - he suffers through all the pain of doing that, becomes cunning, almost acquires a bad conscience. When he has gone as far in that direction as he can go and wants to come back, he cannot do so... Now he despairs, his life is wasted, his youth is spent in these deliberations. Life does not acquire any meaning for him, and all this is the fault of philosophy.” A note by Kierkegaard suggests how he might have finished the work: “Doubt is conquered not by the system but by faith, just as it is faith that has brought doubt into the world.”

Location: Kierkegaard Library > Kierk 1 P568 E6 1985



Repetition



Fear and Trembling and *Repetition* are the most poetic and personal of Søren Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings. Published in 1843 and written under the names Johannes de Silentio and Constantine Constantius, respectively, the books are basic in Kierkegaard's development as a philosopher and demonstrate his transmutation of the personal into the lyrically religious.

In *Repetition* Kierkegaard discusses the most profound implications of the unity of personhood and of identity within change, beginning with the ironic story of a young poet who cannot fulfill the ethical claims of his engagement because of the possible consequences of his marriage. The poet finally despairs of repetition (renewal) in the ethical sphere, as does his advisor and friend Constantius in the aesthetic sphere. The book ends with Constantius's intimation of a third kind of repetition - in the religious sphere. The rebirth of God in the heart of man, this repetition brings the eternal into the present and allows the past to retain its meaning.

Location: Kierkegaard Library > Kierk 1 A12 E6 1980 v.6

Stages on Life's Way

A tripartite sequel to *Either/Or*, *Stages on Life's Way* begins with a banquet scene patterned on Plato's *Symposium*, though George Brandes maintained the text "holds its own in this comparison." The speakers are not only Victor Eremita and Johannes the Seducer from *Either/Or* but also Constantin Constantius from *Repetition* and a young man and a fashion designer. William Afham reports their speeches on love and the relationship between man and woman. In part two, Judge William from *Either/Or* discourses insightfully and with quiet enthusiasm on marriage "in answer to objections." Part three, "A Story of Suffering," by Frater Taciturnus is "an imaginary construction" in the form of Quidam's diary, a contrasting companion to "The Seducer's Diary" in *Either/Or*. Part three closes with a letter to the reader from Frater Taciturnus on what is exemplified by the three parts, "three existence-spheres: the esthetic, the ethical, the religious." The several manuscripts by the various pseudonymous authors had been left with Hilarius Bookbinder, who eventually put them together and published them in one volume. Retrospective in picking up themes, characters, and pseudonymous authors of the earlier works, *Stages* goes beyond them and points to further development of central ideas in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, whose pseudonymous author, Johannes Climacus, makes particular reference to the Lichtenberg epigraph in *Stages*, "Such works are mirrors: when an ape looks in, no apostle can look out."

Location: Kierkegaard Library > Kierk 1 S776 E6 1988

