

# THE HONG KIERKEGAARD LIBRARY (HKL)

Spring 2022 Newsletter



## GORDON MARINO-PROFESSOR, CURATOR AND COACH BY ELSE MADSEN

In his book *Either/Or*, nineteenth century philosopher Søren Kierkegaard proclaimed, “The highest and most beautiful things in life are not to be heard about, nor read about, nor seen but, if one will, are to be lived.” Professor Gordon Marino, commonly and affectionately known by his students as “Doc,” knows this quote, both intellectually and intrinsically. Professor Marino is one of the foremost Kierkegaardian scholars, and, in the process of becoming such, has lived a rich and integrated life. This spring he enters a new stage of life as he retires from the St. Olaf faculty.

Professor Marino first “bumped into Kierkegaard” by pure chance as he perused the shelves of a bookstore. In the midst of a tumultuous time in his life, Marino began to read the centuries-old wonderings of this Danish philosopher and found within the pages a modern resonance. “He made me feel as though suffering was something you could do either well or poorly; that it was an action and not just a passive thing.” His passion for Kierkegaard, and philosophy as a whole, propelled him through his doctoral studies and, ultimately, into a vocation as a professor. Of his time as a professor, Marino claims that the connections with students make this profession a passion and not a mere job. “It’s been just wonderful... I’m in touch with students from 25 years ago. There’s a real love there.” Of St. Olaf specifically, Marino says that the students of St. Olaf are the favorite of those who have crossed his path. “I’ve taught at Yale, Harvard, the University of Florida, and the Virginia Military Institute, but you guys are my favorite students. The students are just fantastic.”

Outside of his office Professor Marino is both an incredible athlete and an incredible coach. “Coaching and teaching have been really good for me. There’s a lot of students I never would have gotten to know, how bright they were, if I hadn’t been with them in two different places. So, I encourage people here to get involved in stuff outside of school so that you get to see the landscape of someone’s mind.” Sports also, Marino says, offer a unique opportunity for connection, vulnerability, and deep friendship. “[The friendships that come from sports] can be with people that you don’t know and with whom you have nothing else in common, but you’re buddies. They know you in a way that nobody else does. They seem like someone you’ve known since you were kids. There are levels of connection that are just fantastic.”

It’s clear to anyone who has taken a class or had the opportunity to get to know Doc that his retirement will leave a gaping hole in the St. Olaf community. It’s the connections that Professor Marino expects he will miss most when he retires, and these connections will be equally missed by the campus. “I’ll take away the relationships with students. They were really rich and wonderful. And I think part of that was that I spent a lot of time with students making them feel like they could just drop in and hang out. So, I think that’s a really important component of teaching at a small college. Making people feel at ease with coming in, hanging out, just talking.” Yet, Professor Marino hopes to leave behind the existential message of the connection “between your thinking and your life. Making that connection between those two levels of understanding, I think that’s really important.”

As Professor Marino enters retirement, St. Olaf has a chance to reflect on the incredible contributions he made, and hope that, in this next phase of his life, he is able to hear, see, and read beautiful things but that, as Kierkegaard said, most of all, he is able to live them.

*Fun Fact!:* Looking for a way to celebrate Doc’s time on campus? Order his go-to cage meal of the Chicken Wild Rice!

### WHAT’S IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

1. INTERVIEW WITH GORDON MARINO
2. MEET WITH HKL STAFF MEMBERS
3. SCHOLARS AT HKL
4. STUDENTS ON KIERKEGAARD
5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

# MEET WITH OUR STAFF



**GORDON MARINO**

Areas of specialization include History of Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, and Kierkegaard. Professor Marino is the author of *Kierkegaard in the Present Age* and co-editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*. His articles have appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Wall Street Journal*, *American Poetry Review*, and many other periodicals. Marino is also the Curator of the HKL

Eileen Shimota has worked at St. Olaf College in various positions for 24 years. With her undergraduate degree in communications and a master's in experiential education, she finds basically every aspect of the St. Olaf campus a great place to work. But her strong interest in sociology, psychology, and history has led her to want to work in the Kierkegaard Library.



**EILEEN SHIMOTA**



**JILL FISHER**

Jill Fisher has worked at St. Olaf since 2012 and has been with HKL since 2021. Jill received her BA degree from Concordia College, Moorhead with a double major of International Relations and Scandinavian Studies and this was also where she learned about Kierkegaard and the HKL. She is thrilled to now be a member of staff.



**BAILEY KINSKY**

Bailey Kinsky is conservator and owner of Valkyrie Conservation. She earned her M.A. degree with a Certificate of Advanced Study in Art Conservation at SUNY Buffalo State College, and she works to preserve as much of the historical integrity of a book while still allowing it to function as a readable material.



**DON JANKE**

Don Janke is a supporter of the HKL who has spent the past 20+ years working as both a staff and volunteer member.

Lise Faillettaz has worked for the HKL since 2003. In addition to providing assistance to students and scholars, she has responsibilities in the areas of collection development, acquisitions, access to periodical articles, and the organization of the historical archives of the HKL



**LISE FAILLETTAZ**

# SCHOLARS AT HKL



## MYKA LAHAIE, HKL FELLOW

Myka Lahaie recently completed a doctorate in theology from Durham University in the UK. Her dissertation was entitled “Love, ‘Gift,’ and the Fragmentary Self: A Theological Engagement with Jean-Luc Marion and Søren Kierkegaard.” Myka’s research interests include Kierkegaard and the ‘new phenomenology’ as well as the contemporary relevance of Kierkegaard’s writings for theology. She is excited to have this time at the HKL to continue work on a book manuscript based on her dissertation.



## TROY WELLINGTON SMITH, KIERKEGAARD HOUSE FOUNDATION FELLOW

Troy Wellington Smith is a PhD candidate in the Department of Scandinavian at the University of California, Berkeley, and Adjunct Instructor in Norwegian at St. Olaf. For the 2021-2022 academic year, he is the Kierkegaard House Foundation Fellow of the Hong Kierkegaard Library, where he also serves as Special Consultant for the Rare Book Collection and Project Director of the Archives. This Interim, he taught “The Ethics of Print: Hans Christian Andersen, Søren Kierkegaard, and the Danish Golden Age.”



## MATIAS TAPIA WENDE, VISITING SCHOLAR

Matias Tapia Wende comes from Santiago, Chile. He has a Ph.D. in moral and political philosophy from the Universidad de Chile. Currently, he is exploring Kierkegaard's sociopolitical thought, with the main focus placed on the notions of State and political identity.

*"The HKL has an undeniable variety of sources by and on Kierkegaard. However, for me, the characteristic that makes the HKL so unique is that you will always feel at home here. That sense of community provides research with a whole new level of meaning and humanity." -Wende*

# "WHAT DOES KIERKEGAARD MEAN TO YOU?"

*"I've always loved alliteration, and in the spirit of this, my response will take this form: to me, Kierkegaard acts as a connection and a catalyst. My great-grandparents emigrated from Western Denmark to a small town in South Dakota in the early 1900's. My great-grandmother, however, never stopped missing her home, nestled in a small Danish town. As a result of her intense love for the place of her birth, Danish culture has remained greatly important and prominent within my family. In this sense, Kierkegaard connects me to the country that has so influenced my life and the lives of those I love. Yet the writings of Søren Kierkegaard also force any careful reader outside of that which is familiar, and into the reexamination of that which they previously left unquestioned. Kierkegaard's limitless curiosity is contagious and catalyzes one to ponder their world, their self, and the implications of both."*

**-ELSE MADSEN**

*"Kierkegaard is the philosopher, above all others, who has foundationally oriented me towards becoming who I am. Kierkegaard's (or, more accurately, Anti-Climacus') treatment of the self in *The Sickness Unto Death* was what I needed to come out to myself as transgender, and has totally changed the way I interact with my own internal life. Kierkegaard has inspired me to pursue philosophy not just for knowledge's sake, but to incorporate it into myself, and to use philosophy as a tool to change myself and, if I am lucky, the world around me."*

**-LILA GRAHAM**

*"Kierkegaard is not a psychologist in a modern sense nor does he diagnose people of mental illnesses but what he does take upon himself is to encourage all of us to look within and confront all that we've been trying to escape from for so long. Kierkegaard to me is someone who I can go to not because I want to try to solve a problem but because I can find immense consolation in knowing that we have the choice to not only live but also suffer with dignity"*

**-BALOCH MARYAM**

*"Kierkegaard means to me 'blatant honesty to life'. He embodies the deep, inner anxiety lingering in all of us that emerges out of the reality of death that we all will face eventually in our lives. Kierkegaard helped me to situate my dad's depression and the attributing factors. In some ways, Kierkegaard means to me that we are all not alone with the deepest senses of despair we come face to face with often in our lives. He makes anxiety, death, depression, but also joy, love, marriage and all other issues very relatable. In some other ways, Kierkegaard has never established any arrogance based on intellect, but he was known to be approachable by all kinds of people in Copenhagen society -- the ordinary working people, and the bourgeois elite. We need it so much in our polarized society in which we believe that education is the separator. Kierkegaard means to me to be receptive to the despairing over life that we all share. Let's embrace it more."*

**-JEREMIAS THIEL**

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## **INTERIM COURSE REUNION LIVE EVENT**

Happening in Steensland Hall on  
March 2, 4:30 pm.

## **KIERKEGAARDIAN PERSPECTIVES AND PRESCRIPTIONS ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

The HKL will hold its Ninth International Kierkegaard  
Conference May 6-8, 2022.

For more information about the conference, visit the HKL  
website.

## **YOUNG SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

The Young Scholars Program plans to be held in person on  
campus of St. Olaf College for the summer of 2022 and is  
currently accepting applications. The deadline to apply is April  
30th, 2022. For more information visit the HKL website.

## **LIBRARY OPEN HOURS:**

HKL's new location at Steensland Hall remains open Monday  
to Friday from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm.



**THE HKL IS OPEN FOR ALL STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH AND STUDY PURPOSES**