

# Carnivalization of Christendom<sup>1</sup>

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In his memoirs written at the end of a long ecclesiastical career, which included positions as theology professor, court pastor, and finally the most eminent position in the Danish church, Bishop of Zealand,<sup>2</sup> Hans Lassen Martensen (1808–84) wrote his response to Kierkegaard's 1854 'attack' on the 'established order'. The matter concerned Martensen personally since Kierkegaard began his attack after a funeral speech Martensen made at the Slotskirke in Copenhagen on 5 February, 1854, in memory of Bishop Jakob Peter Mynster (1775–1854), whom Martensen succeeded the following April. In that speech, Martensen exalted the late Bishop, defining him as a martyr and a 'witness to the truth' [*Sandhedsvidne*]. This was a concept Kierkegaard had confronted for a considerable time, trying to define criteria which would make a witness of the truth recognisable. He reached the conclusion that, on the one hand, there were 'successful men' who testified in such a way that the truth 'serves them and not the other way around'; they took advantage of the public use of the word and enjoyed public acknowledgement. On the other hand, there were 'witnesses to the truth' who were destined to be 'despised' and to be failures in this world.<sup>3</sup> With these reflections behind him, Kierkegaard started a tough debate with Martensen after having let some months pass for reasons which remain unclear. In one of the major Danish newspapers – the national liberal paper *Fædrelandet* – he argued that using the title 'martyr' to describe a Christian like Mynster showed that Martensen had a conception of Christianity incompatible with the New Testament. For Mynster died in his bed without having paid any price for his faith and, precisely for this reason, had received appointments, fortune and honours, including the moment of his solemn funeral celebrated 'with great musical accompaniment' (*M*, 7; *SV1* 14,10). This was the first act of the attack

that Kierkegaard would continue, until his death, in the pages of *The Moment*.

Drafting his memoirs some 30 years after the event, Martensen considered himself capable of looking back with an air of detachment on what had happened, and takes a 'historical' point of view. For this reason he was ready to recognise in Kierkegaard a 'great richness of spirit and great genius', and was ready to acknowledge the latter's merit in having given 'impulses' and 'ferments' which were bound to yield fruit in the future.<sup>4</sup> He manages, however, to camouflage his real intention of re-evaluating his adversary and of showing that the latter was not worthy of the fame he enjoyed. Martensen asked: What great ideas were really contained in his work? The relation of the individual man to God? 'This was well-known for a long time'. Different stages of life? This too, 'we already know'. The ideal of imitation? It is a 'caricature' of Christ. Finally, he criticises the attack by suggesting that Kierkegaard – under the illusion of having received a divine mission – had betrayed himself: for he addressed it to the 'masses', which he had hitherto scorned, rather than the individual. 'His real vocation was precisely what he had been all along, i.e., an author in the peace and quiet of his study'. Martensen softened towards his adversary only when he recognised that it was Kierkegaard's precarious health that had 'progressively ruined his psyche'; and this could lead anyone to 'sweeten' his judgement of him. No trace of this sweetening, however, is to be found in Martensen's private correspondence with pastor Ludvig Gude (1820–95) of Hunseby, his close friend and disciple. In a letter dated January 2, 1855, for example, Martensen attributed to Kierkegaard a fanaticism "which borders on paranoid arrogance" and a "fanatic and coarse anger"; in the following letter dated January 11, he affirms that Kierkegaard's opinions were "false" and that his ethic was to be denied as a "totally Jesuitical or, even worse, a diabolic" doctrine.<sup>5</sup>

Neither Martensen's memoirs nor his letters would have surprised Kierkegaard, though. He already knew some of the accusations and he had clearly foreseen the others. The ambivalent style in which they were written, the apparently noble but in reality malevolent language in which they were formulated, the compassionate expressions that imply superiority over an adversary by showing benevolence – all these traits belong perfectly to 'the pastor', 'the orator', the high level ecclesiastical functionary which Kierkegaard describes in the columns of *The Moment*. Martensen thus becomes a kind of ideal type, who confirms in his memoirs, a posteriori, the reality of the ecclesiastical figures described by Kierkegaard with sar-

casm or grotesque characteristics that, at first sight, seem like the fruits of a hyperactive imagination. But the memoirs confirm on the other hand the polemic ability Martensen possessed. This is apparent in the way he tries to neutralise Kierkegaard's attack, namely, by criticising him of sectarianism, one-sidedness, and mental instability. These considerations take a line which many supporters and later commentators would follow. As a result, a marginal position was assigned to Kierkegaard's late writings in comparison with the rest of his production.

### 1. Theology as 'Pleasant Literature'

Martensen was not, in fact, just any adversary – though today his name is remembered because of Kierkegaard. In his time he succeeded in consolidating his position as the greatest Danish theologian, not only in his home country but also abroad. His principal work, *Den christelige Dogmatik* [Christian Dogmatics] (1849), was translated into various languages and the third German edition appeared as early as 1855. *Den christelige Ethik* [Christian Ethics] and a volume on Eckhart were also translated into German, as was his voluminous correspondence with I.A. Dorner (1809–84, theology professor at Kiel). He was therefore probably the most widely read non-German theologian in 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany. The positive reception of his works in the large neighbouring country is authoritatively confirmed in the history of the dogmatics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Martin Kähler. He mentions Martensen as the only non-German theologian worthy of consideration, and attributes the success of his works to the 'admirable command of form possessed by the author', which allowed him to write about dogmatics 'as if it were pleasant literature'. Kähler continues that even the most complicated problems were handled 'with the tone of a good conversation partner', evoking in the reader the reassuring impression that there is no obstacle that a good theologian cannot elegantly overcome.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps Kierkegaard would have agreed with this analysis, but he would have arrived at another judgement. The 'command of the form' which Kähler praised is, for Kierkegaard, a superficial quality which masks the poverty of the contents. Martensen is 'a slippery one' (*Pap. X 1 A 582*), he writes in his journals, an 'elegant court preacher who continually brings Christianity back to external elegance' (*JP 6635; Pap. X 3 A 164*). And Kierkegaard is no doubt thinking of him when he affirms that 'priests are rhetoricians and the Sunday services are like exercises in schools of rhetoric' (*JP 3715; Pap. X 4 A 525*). The eloquence of preachers and theologians

is proportional to the degeneration of Christianity into pure small talk. The conviction that Christianity could be perfected, i.e., governed by the general laws of progress, which was held by that optimistic age, helps theologians, Kähler noted. But in Kierkegaard's opinion this is achieved at the cost of renouncing the idea of the discipleship, renouncing imitation, mortification, rebirth, suffering for the truth, testimony and martyrdom, and paradox; by renouncing all the categories that are in the sphere of 'contemporaneity' rather than evolution. An easy and pleasant Christianity such as that portrayed in Martensen's *Dogmatik*, which is advanced enough to be 'socially acceptable', is what Kierkegaard calls the 'Christianity of Christianity'. While being in harmony with the religious sentiments of modern human beings, it is completely different from that of the New Testament which, to the contrary, 'to the highest degree displeases and shocks people' (*M* 170; *SV* 14, 183) in every epoch.

## 2. The Late Works: Continuity or Interruption?

As noted, Martensen affirms – anticipating many critics in the coming years – that a caesura separates Kierkegaard's early works from the later ones, and that the latter are the creation of an ailing spirit. After Martensen, one of the first authors to respond to Kierkegaard used the pseudonym 'Aesculapius' – with a certain of meanness – to suggest that this was a clinical case. Ernst Troeltsch later spoke of a 'psychopathic disposition' while Pierre Mesnard wrote of a 'coup de folie'.

Conversely, this essay is born of the conviction that the works of the attack are fully worthy of being included in Kierkegaard's opus, and even more, that *The Moment* represents one of Kierkegaard's highest moments. In order to evaluate this thesis, we must consider two problems: first, we must determine the relationship between his late and early works, and, secondly, determine how the supposed lack of dialectic should be understood (cf., Theodor Haecker). The issue has to do with 'direct communication': it has to do with the replacement of the fine register of irony present in Kierkegaard's earlier works, at least at first sight, with the rougher and more 'popular' languages of satire, derision and the grotesque. In addition, it has to do with the repetition of several themes (primarily the theme of money), so obstinately repeated that they seem to be obsessions or even 'monomaniacal', as Theodor W. Adorno believed himself authorised to diagnose.

As far as the first point is concerned, we are better capable of making a

judgment than his contemporaries, who were direct witnesses to the attack, but did not know Kierkegaard's journals. It is easy to see from his journals that many of the themes of the attack were already treated there and that, in some cases, well-developed criticisms had already been formulated. Furthermore, many of the themes were anticipated in his published writings, though their kinship to the attack is less evident.

For this reason, many of those who affirm a continuity between *The Moment* and the preceding works think that the principal difference is a change in style rather than content. Since there is an undeniable difference between Kierkegaard's late writings and his other works, if the change is not considered a break in content, it is bound to be explained as a difference in tone and proportion. In his late writings Kierkegaard is said to have expressed ideas which he already possessed in an intentionally hyperbolic, exaggerated and excessive way; he was exasperated at a situation of Christianity which appeared increasingly hopeless to him, while nobody was willing to 'admit' that it represented a caricature of authentic Christianity.<sup>7</sup> This opinion contains something true; however, it seems too imprecise in the light of a change not simply in tone but also in the application of a particular literary genre (which, as we will see in detail, is the genre of 'carnival'). This genre was already used in earlier works, but it was employed in *The Moment* in a particularly consistent and systematic way. Before we go into the details of this problem, however, we must look at themes which testify to a change of opinion with respect to the writings prior to the attack. The principal theme has to do with the relation between faith and imitation [*Efterfølgelse*], i.e., between 'grace' and 'prototype' [*Forbilledet*]. Later we will deal with another change concerning an attitude towards the state church.

### 3. The Evolution of the Kierkegaardian Concept of 'Imitation'

'The preaching of Christianity is theatrical, for the guarantee of distinction between theatre and Church is 'imitation' (JP 1904; Pap. X 4 A 354), i.e., the connection between crede and existence, the authentication of words through acts and the inevitable sum of conflicts and sufferings these bring. The sphere to which Christianity is assigned is not that of 'intellectuality'. This means that its precept is not 'intelligere ut credam'. But neither is it 'credere ut intelligam', for in Kierkegaard's opinion the irrationalism of 'quia absurdum' is a product of a bad dialectic. Instead, it should be: 'Do

according to Christ's precepts and orders, do the Father's will, and you will become a believer' (*Pap.* XI 1 A 339).

The influence of Pietism on Kierkegaard is well-known, and his interest in imitation<sup>8</sup> is the most significant trace left on him by this form of Protestantism. But we should not limit ourselves to indicating the influence in general terms. For example, references to Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), who is traditionally considered to be the father of Pietism, are sporadic and not particularly significant in Kierkegaard's writings. His library catalogue shows that he did not even possess *Pia desideria* (1675). Instead, it was more important for Kierkegaard to study a proto-pietist like Johann Arndt (1555–1621), an author neglected by academic theology. Arndt was troubled by Lutheran orthodoxy and forced to leave Braunschweig to live in Eisleben and then Celle (where life treated him better). During the birth of Pietism, Arndt played a role which appears increasingly relevant today.<sup>9</sup> It is to Arndt's principal work, *Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentume* (1605–10) that Kierkegaard refers to in *Stages on Life's Way* when he writes: 'The Bible lies on my table at all times and is the book in which I read the most; my second book of guidance is a rigorous devotional book from an earlier Lutheranism' (*SL* 230; *SKS* 6, 214). In *Vier Bücher*, discipleship occupies a central position, so much so that some editions of this work bear the motto: 'Christum sequendo citius apprehende quam legendo' [One understands Christ more quickly by imitation than by study].

Because we do not know precisely when he read Arndt's writings, it is impossible to determine how much Kierkegaard owed to Arndt and how much he simply found in Arndt that confirmed his prior convictions. Moreover, we should remember that his father introduced the young Søren to the Hernhutian environment in Copenhagen, where he could have received similar suggestions. It is certain, however, that Kierkegaard could have found many theses dear to him in *Vier Bücher*: the idea that the example (the 'prototype') is difficult to follow because it is hard [*zuwider*] for a natural man; the emphasis on simplicity and the 'infantile obedience' with which a believer should listen to God's word; the invitation to consider Christ's death not only as the cause of liberation but also as 'the cause for the renewal and sanctification of ourselves'. He could certainly also find there the affirmation that every good master should practice what he or she preaches; that we should incessantly 'incline' toward perfection even if we are incapable of attaining it; that penitence is the necessary tool to perceive the true meaning of God's word; that theologians are concerned too much with doctrines and too little with life; that an authentic Christian, and not

one in name only, can be recognised by his or her willingness to let him- or herself be 'hurt, insulted and persecuted' for Christ; and finally, an emphasis on Matthew 7:14 ('For the gate is narrow...') that Arndt uses as the motto for the first book in *Vier Bücher*.<sup>10</sup>

Kierkegaard could not find in Arndt a satisfactory answer to the fundamental question concerning the relationship between justification and sanctification, between faith and works of love; with regard to the idea that these are mutually inclusive realities rather than mutually exclusive ones, *Vier Bücher* offers no adequate reflections, nor does it suggest how the problem should be treated at a theoretical level.

### 3.1. 'Doctrine of the Prototype' and 'Doctrine of Justification'

When he confronts the question of justification, Kierkegaard thinks that the concept of 'merit' belongs to an infantile conception of Christianity, both in the secular history of Christianity as well as in its individual history. On the individual level, it is the immature person who believes he is able to fully realise the exigencies demanded by Christianity through his own efforts: 'When one is young, it still seems possible to achieve the ideal if one will only honestly, with all his abilities, strive; there is a childlike, if I dare say so – a peer-relationship – between myself and the prototype [*Forbilledet*], if only I will it to the uttermost' (*JP* 1135; *Pap.* X 2 A 207). At the macro-historical level, on the other hand, it is during the immature period of the Middle Ages that people believed that they could come so near the prototype as to gain salvation: people in the Middle Ages indeed 'childishly (and to that extent forgivably) persisted in the naïve thought that they could succeed in approaching, in resembling, the prototype' (*JP* 1857; *Pap.* X 2 A 47; cf. *JP* 1922; *Pap.* X 5 A 88).<sup>11</sup>

The passage to maturity is completed with Martin Luther (1483-1546), whose conception of Christianity 'really corresponds to the transformation which occurs when one becomes a man and is no longer a stripling; his teaching about faith is adult religion' (*JP* 1135; *Pap.* X 2 A 207). This turning point, completed by Luther, must be seen in the framework of his time, dominated by an emphasis on the prototype, discipleship, works, asceticism, and the lifestyle of monks. In order to counter this situation it was necessary to restore honour to grace and defend it most vigorously (if necessary, unilaterally). Luther's contribution was that he worked as a 'corrective' to a Christianity based on self-justification, and that he fought 'the fight' to the end; at that time, it was necessary in order to allow a new point of view to be respected. Luther 'won' this fight, it seems, and won it once and for all. As

a consequence, once the objective had been reached, the following generations forgot how to fight; after Luther, the 'doctrine of grace' was accepted as an acquired fact without any relation to 'aspiration'; and Christianity forgot that this was an 'anticipation' which would commit an individual, and not something which would exempt him. The result, which Luther obtained after 'having fasted and disciplined his flesh for twenty years', became an easy starting point (*JP* 2542; *Pap.* X 4 A 451). Thus the 'corrective' was transformed into a 'normative', and it lost any critical and dialectical force and became an integral part of the established order.<sup>12</sup> The 'worldly world' understood immediately that Luther's doctrine, transformed into a result, would end by legitimising the renunciation of an effective conversion:

Aha! There is just the man for us, that Luther! Aided and abetted by his theory, we get permission to hang on to a thoroughgoing secularity, to arrange our lives so secularly that it is a pleasure' (*JP* 2521; *Pap.* X 3 A 217).

As a remedy for the state of things caused by this reversal, Kierkegaard does not propose an elimination of Luther's corrective in order to recover the initial situation, but rather an adoption a corrective for the corrective. He proposes accentuating once again the idea of the prototype, but without returning to the 'infantile' conception of merit, which would no longer be 'excusable'.

At first, Kierkegaard seems convinced that he can attain his objective without conflicts with Luther. He thought this for two reasons. First of all, if Luther accentuated the 'blessing', it was a corrective determined by the context. So if the religious situation has changed it is necessary to look for a corrective with a slightly different or perhaps opposite emphasis, precisely in order to be substantially faithful to the reformer from Wittenberg; emphasising the 'prototype', he writes, 'different times have different requirements' (*FSE* 15; *SV1* 12, 306). Kierkegaard alludes here to a metaphor by Luther: 'the world looks much like a drunken farmer who is riding: when he adjusts the one side, he falls off from the other'.

Secondly, because Kierkegaard considers – at least for a time – that the role attributed by him to the 'prototype' could be likened to that which the law played in the thinking of Paul and Luther, and above all to the 'elenchus', the refuting role that the law could play. This imposes exigencies nobody could completely realise and thus forces the believer to give up confidence in his own means in order to place his trust exclusively in God's mercy.



Galatians 2:19 (for I through the law died to the law) corresponds exactly to the presentation I usually give of our relationship to 'the prototype'. 'The prototype' must be presented as the requirement, and then it crushes you. 'The prototype', which is Christ, then changes into something else, to grace and compassion, and it is he himself who reaches out to support you. In this way through the prototype you have died to the prototype (*JP* 349; *Pap.* X 2 A 170).<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2. Latent Conflict on the 'Gift'

But a role like this attributed to the prototype makes us sense a potential conflict with Luther. Kierkegaard himself notes that if Luther made us completely forget Christ 'as the model', an aspect he strongly insists on, then it is clear that he 'could be attacked from Luther's own position' (*JP* 2503; *Pap.* X 2 A 30). Kierkegaard of course knew that the importance he attributes to Christ as the example – going so far as to claim that this exemplarity was grace – was the legacy of Pelagius. Moreover, although there is no record that he read *Pia desideria*, Kierkegaard was sure to have known that Spener, citing Arndt, had noted that anyone who took sanctification seriously would run the risk of being considered 'papist' (or 'Weigelian', also a heretic)<sup>14</sup> – and that this was a sign of widespread hostility towards this theme. Before 1852, however, the idea that the re-appraisal of discipleship could lead to criticism, not only of Protestantism but also of its great initiator appears only sporadically in the journals.

However, at some point, the divarication becomes so wide that Kierkegaard has to confront the disagreement directly and must add a 'but' – even to Luther. This 'but' appears in a note in the journals in 1852, which we must take as the turning point. Having begun with a reiteration of respect, Kierkegaard says: 'Luther rightly orders it this way. Christ is the gift – to which faith corresponds. Then he is the prototype – to which imitation corresponds'. Luther says the right thing, but not enough:

Still more accurately one may say: first of all imitation in the direction of decisive action whereby the situation for becoming a Christian comes into existence. Then Christ as gift – faith. Finally, imitation as the fruit of faith (*JP* 1908; *Pap.* X 4 A 459).<sup>15</sup>

This text represents the turning point in Kierkegaardian reflection on *ordo salutis* and his relationship to Luther. This is the first time this thesis is expressed, namely, putting discipleship first, not faith. More precisely,

Kierkegaard identifies three movements. First: imitation is busy with ‘decisive action’, thus creating a suitable ‘situation’ for ‘becoming a Christian’. Second, only at this point can Christ give Himself and be taken as a gift, so only at this point does faith intervene; faith thus occupies the second place in the sequence rather than the first. Third, a last movement follows in which imitation again comes into play: no longer is it an action prior to faith, but it is its consequence. It is worth noting the similarities with Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1480–1541). His sequence is also composed of three movements and is polemically aimed at *sola fide*. According to Karlstadt, there is ‘a mortification preceding faith, a mortification, [...] which comes with faith, and a mortification, which follows faith’.<sup>16</sup> This similarity could be a sign of the underlying influence exercised by Karlstadt, who was one of the most active advocates of reform in Wittenberg. With regard to Pietism, he was first allied with Luther, but later became an adversary (and in this way he resembles Kierkegaard). Ulrich Bubenheimer has indicated this influence in recent works.

Faith, though moved to the second position, is not attainable on the basis of an autonomous and voluntary initiative. ‘Situation’ does not assure faith. Nor is it a phase in a hypothetical process of fulfilling the requirements of the prototype; it is just a condition of possibility: with the situation you *can* believe. Thus, Kierkegaard can still talk about grace ‘in the first place’,<sup>17</sup> moving the emphasis without contradicting himself. Faith remains a gift. But only those who are in the situation – precisely in the determined situation that comes into being as they embrace imitation voluntarily – are capable of not wasting this gift, of receiving it ‘seriously’. And only they are capable of consequently producing the second form of imitation, that which is ‘the fruit of faith’. Connecting situation and faith here, Kierkegaard tries to answer a question he asked himself earlier: ‘Am I therefore unable to do something myself with regard to becoming a believer?’ If one answered with an ‘unconditioned ‘no’, one would ascribe to a ‘fatalistic election by grace’. In order to avoid this outcome, Kierkegaard recognises the necessity of resorting at a certain point to the intervention of ‘subjectivity’. And this must happen with the introduction of a first ‘voluntary’ moment, which precedes faith (*JP* 4551; *Pap.* X 2 A 301). If indeed it lacks the first moment, the first form of imitation, then it is bound to lack also the second form (the third moment), or at most it will persist as mere appearance (as ‘secret interiority’). In this way Kierkegaard voices a precise criticism of Luther. He does not rudely accuse him of having annulled the value of works, for he knows the importance Luther attributes to works

when they are the fruit of faith. Instead, Kierkegaard accuses him of having stopped people from serious accomplishment by introducing his doctrine of justification. Luther's error consists of a 'lack of dialectic', of not having noticed that works are not spontaneous fruits of the faith, as some of his writings led many to believe. His error consists, above all, in not having seen 'the immense danger' which implicitly lies in formulating this conception of salvation as a universal doctrine, or better, in formulating a conception he needed *only* 'after about 20 years of fear and trembling and spiritual trial' (*JP* 2544; *Pap.* XI 2 A 303). The danger threatens all those who come after him and find themselves directly facing the 'gift' of faith without having experienced, as Luther, a monastic life and 'twenty years of hunger and mortification', and moreover, who face this gift without being able to do so since every form of 'asceticism' had been abolished in Protestantism.<sup>18</sup> This simplification and facilitation ('lowering') of the 'sequence' in its initial movement also conditions the conclusion, making it less serious. Works that follow faith as its fruit cannot be 'works of love' if the free gift that faith represents is not received with awareness of its high price. Grace will be 'taken in vain'.

It may be apparent that the accusation against Luther of having proposed a dangerous doctrine for posterity is more significant anthropologically than it is theologically since it concerns Luther's insufficient and over-optimistic knowledge of human nature more than it concerns the conception of grace as such. This conception would be adequate in itself if everyone had completed Luther's itinerary – through the monastery – and had possessed an earnestness equal to his. But there is perhaps only one serious man like Luther in each generation.

Another accusation, however, is related to what we have just seen, and it strikes directly at the so-called 'formal principle' of Protestantism, i.e., the *sola scriptura*. The rank assigned by Luther to the idea of blessing is, according to Kierkegaard, connected to a selective reading of the New Testament. This causes twofold discriminations. On the one hand, it 'rejects' the Letter of James, which Kierkegaard considers to be sufficient to 'bring to despair' anybody who confronts the Bible with 'an impassioned, infinite interest' (*CUP* 26; *SKS* 7, 33f.) – though he is inclined to recognise why Luther, in his time, had to act as he did). On the other hand, Luther's reading 'onesidedly draws Paul forward and uses the gospels less' (*JP* 2507; *Pap.* X 2 A 244). This is the argument that returns in the only case where Luther is recalled in *The Moment*. Here Kierkegaard accuses him of having provoked an 'enormous confusion' by 'inverting' the biblical data, 'criticizing

Christ by means of Paul, the Master by means of the follower' (*M* 341; *SV* 14, 351). The difference between Paul and the evangelists lies in the fact that Paul 'puts infinite stress on the death of Christ as the Atonement; the object of faith becomes the atoning death of Christ. In this way the prototype *qua* prototype is shifted further away' (*JP* 1877; *Pap.* X 3 A 409). Instead 'in the Gospel, Christ is presented more as the prototype' and not only as a person who suffers death on the cross. Indeed, 'if Christ were only the Redeemer, His death would be the essential. Then He would not have had to live for such a long time on earth, to be born as a baby, to grow up, etc'.

Working out a conception in which 'prototype' and 'grace' are 'integrated with each other' – an alternative to the 'orthodox' formulation of the doctrine of justification – Kierkegaard tries to achieve the same objective as that doctrine, namely liberation from the need to base salvation on merit. He tries, however, to achieve it differently, i.e., by placing emphasis on sanctification, by giving priority to the evangelists over Paul since they attribute more importance to Christ as 'prototype', and by emphasising the canonical value of the letter of James. The revaluation of these themes made by Kierkegaard also explains his partially positive judgement on some aspects of Catholicism, such as its refusal to completely abandon discipleship and the necessity of being 'in harmony'.<sup>19</sup> With this itinerary, Kierkegaard takes a 'conversionist' line, which had already appeared in Wittenberg in the 1620s in the conflict between Karlstadt and Luther, and which was reactivated by Arndt. It persisted in some areas of so-called radical pietism, and finally reached Kierkegaard – perhaps via the Hernhutanian environment frequented by his father. About a century later, Dietrich Bonhoeffer would take a similar line with his *Nachfolge*.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. The Language of His Late Writings

This analysis of Kierkegaard's evolution concerning discipleship and his relation to Luther should demonstrate that the hypothesis of a caesura between the early works and the later ones cannot be justified. At this point, we can return to the question of the manner of communication chosen by Kierkegaard in *The Moment*, and to the question concerning the style or, rather, the literary genre which characterizes the work.

##### 4.1. Journalistic Language?

In our time, *The Moment* is presented to the reader as a single volume and, for this reason, the fact that it was originally a biweekly magazine in a light format is easily overlooked. Each pamphlet contained a different quanti-

ty of articles, ranging from a minimum of 4 (No. 1) to a maximum of 10 (No. 2). There were 71 articles contained in 10 numbers, which could be purchased issue by issue or through a subscription, (though No. 10 was published posthumously). It was widely circulated.<sup>21</sup> A strange characteristic of this magazine is that Kierkegaard was the only author as well as its founder, but contrary to common belief, he was not the editor.

The editor was actually C.A. Reitzel, who had already published the majority of Kierkegaard's writings (36 out of 46 publications).<sup>22</sup> Until 1847, his publications were on commission, i.e., edited *hos* [through] but not *af* [by] Reitzel, since Kierkegaard bore the printing costs (his usual printer was Bianco Luno) and received the revenue from sales (advised from the 25% cut, or in one case a 16% cut, which was due Reitzel as commission). Until 1847, Kierkegaard was his own editor. But in the summer of 1847, he signed a new contract, under which terms he was to enjoy, from then on, the treatment of a commissioned writer]: all the printing costs were to be borne by Reitzel who was to pay Kierkegaard an agreed-upon sum from time to time. From that day on, he was 'no longer his own editor, but a normal writer on contract. This is even true for *The Moment*'.<sup>23</sup> As a matter of fact, we no longer see *hos* on the title page of *The Moment*, but *af* C.A. Reitzel.

The testimony of Emil Boesen (1812-79) concerning his last conversations with his friend while they were in hospital probably contributed to the common opinion that Kierkegaard was the editor of *The Moment* and that he did not earn anything from his activity as a writer. In the testimony, Boesen quotes Kierkegaard: 'I still had some numbers of *The Moment*, which I had to publish, and I had a few hundred of dalers left to use for this'.<sup>24</sup> Based on this, it would seem that Kierkegaard published *The Moment* at his own expense<sup>25</sup> (not just its editor); but to the contrary, he earned a given amount on the basis of the contract agreed upon with Reitzel.<sup>26</sup> Arguing that it is improbable that Kierkegaard lied about a matter like this on his death bed, or that Boesen distorted Kierkegaard's thought, Brandt and Torkelin interpreted the phrase to mean that Kierkegaard still had money enough to publish *The Moment*.<sup>27</sup>

The first phase of the attack was conducted in the columns of the daily *Fædrelandet*, which Kierkegaard regularly used from December 18, 1854 to May 26, 1855, publishing 21 articles – even though newspapers and journalists are normally the object of his most severe criticisms. Subsequently, he considered it necessary to have an 'organ' at his disposal which was entirely his, not only for publishing all the materials he was producing, but

also for reserving for himself ‘in every regard the most unconditional freedom’ (M 101; SV1 14, 103).<sup>28</sup> In particular, it was the freedom to publish materials that could have provoked libel actions on the part of those who could feel personally attacked – indeed, a group of 10 pastors turned to Martensen in October, 1855, asking him to denounce Kierkegaard for having violated the press laws, although the initiative went no further – or materials that could have caused a repressive intervention from the public authorities. He had been alert to this issue for some time. For example, he had observed in the *Postscript*: ‘at times religiousness in Church and state has wanted legislation and police as an aid in protecting itself against the comic’ (CUP 522; SKS 7, 474). Later on, he had feared that *Practice in Christianity* could cause him certain legal problems, despite the relative freedom of expression guaranteed by law in 1851.<sup>29</sup> This replaced the previous rigid law of 1799, which provided for sanctions against those who attacked the church or members of the clergy, or who denied God’s existence and the immortality of the soul. Besides, Kierkegaard had ironically referred to that law while it was still in force in *The Battle between the Old and the New Soap-Cellars* (1838)<sup>30</sup> – one of many examples of his continuous attention to the workings of social control.<sup>31</sup>

The fact that Kierkegaard abandoned the idea of publishing the attack in a single volume and chose instead to use a periodical stems from his decision to abandon the ‘distance from the moment’ (M 91; SV1 14, 106) which he so loved. He decided to go into battle at close quarters, where it was not possible to ‘wait for hours, days, weeks’ to find the right word or image (M 92; SV1 14, 106), but it was necessary to respect imminent deadlines. He also wanted to maximize the publicity of the attack: first, by choosing a political newspaper ‘with a wide circulation’ so that ‘the ecclesiastical class’ could not ignore the attack or keep silent with the excuse that it was conducted on pages ‘nobody reads’; secondly, by printing his new magazine in a compact size (a couple of numbers include collections of ‘Minor Remarks’ that are halfway between aphorism and witty motto)<sup>32</sup>; and finally, by choosing a range of language adequate to the limited space.

Faced with Kierkegaard’s effort to broaden his circle of readers, some critics thought that the style adopted in the attack derived from this objective. According to them, Kierkegaard adopted a ‘low and uncultivated’ language in *The Moment* and lowered himself to the level of any ‘scandalmongering journalist’ in order to make himself understood, even ‘on street corners’. In their opinion, this would also explain the effective but unsophisticated titles such as ‘Take an Emetic’ in No. 1, which evokes the

vulgar image of vomit. According to others, like Brandt, Kierkegaard resorts to the 'grotesque' style to impress the imagination of the reader as one sees in an article in No. 9 where pastors are compared to cannibals.<sup>33</sup>

#### 4.2. 'Poetic Exaggeration'

Sensational journalism and the tradition of the 'grotesque' share a common style characterized by exaggeration, frequent use of hyperbole, emphatic expressions, words used for effect, laboured similes, and deforming descriptions. And the pages of *The Moment* are full of exaggerations. The resort to amplification, according to Kierkegaard, was required by the strategy of the attack itself. Boesen confirms this when he recalls having asked Kierkegaard on one of his last visits to the hospital whether Kierkegaard intended to correct some of his expressions which might not seem to correspond to reality but are 'exaggerated'. He recalls having received this answer: 'That is how it is supposed to be, otherwise it does not good. I certainly think that when the bomb explodes, it has to be like this.'<sup>34</sup>

The exaggerations found in *The Moment*, however, are different from those of scandalmongering journalism because they are not serious. Scandalmongering journalism deforms and manipulates reality, but when it does so, it does so seriously.

And thus, from the existential viewpoint, the question about truth is reduced to an irrelevant query. The seriousness of communication in its external form and the non-seriousness of existence are indissolubly linked, for 'hypocrisy and lies never laugh but wear a serious mask'.<sup>35</sup> But for Kierkegaard – for whom the question of truth is always essential – the deformation of reality via exaggeration is realized by resorting to a manner of expression which is not serious but witty, not realistic, but deformed in itself. It could not be otherwise, if the seriousness of existence is to be saved, i.e., if exaggeration is to be anything other than a deliberate lie.

For Kierkegaard, exaggeration is an instrument that should not be renounced by anybody who wants to make the truth emerge in the context of Christendom. He greatly admired Cervantes precisely because he considers him to be the writer of 'poetic exaggerations', and for this reason, he affirms in a note in his journals that all that is needed in Christendom is 'a comical poet à la Cervantes' who is capable of showing how, in the context of Christendom, 'a real Christian' would be so eccentric as to seem a 'counterpart to Don Quixote' (*JP* 1762; *Pap.* X 2 A 32). It is this role 'à la Cervantes' that Kierkegaard assumes in his late writings – though he later corrects himself and observes that in Christendom, 'no poetic exag-

generations will be required at all, as is the case with Don Quixote'. But this is an ironic correction, because in Christendom, it is enough that the poet 'à la Cervantes' shows the reader an 'essentially true Christian life' as it is, without any amplification. Of course, he must do so without 'reduction', either, in order to bring about the effect of exaggeration. In reality, [Christian] existence, as it is, 'has become a comical thing', exaggerated and hyperbolic in relation to the 'lowering' practiced systematically in established Christianity. In other words, in Christendom 'it is impossible not to write a satire if one simply relates the truth' (*CUP* 353; *SKS* 7, 322). The direct communication employed in *The Moment* – like the indirect communication used in previous writings, especially those signed Anti-Climacus – also requires the reader to search for the truth behind the 'medium' of the language which expresses it. In this case, it means looking behind exaggeration, regardless of whether this exaggeration is provoked by the poet's creative work, (in fact, Kierkegaard is not always true to his idea that exaggeration is no longer necessary in Christendom), or whether it is born from the simple, clear description of the de facto situation, of things in their 'essentiality'.

Brandt approaches the essence of the question when he speaks of the 'grotesque'. But he fails to reflect deeper on this category and limits himself to applying it arbitrarily to only one page of *The Moment*. In any event, even if this is given due consideration, it would not be the most adequate definition of the language of *The Moment* as a whole. This is also the case because *The Moment* cannot be ascribed a single literary style since it contains different styles of expression. Some pages adopt the language of 'edifying discourses', such as the text about the prophet Jonah in No. 5 or the piece with the title 'One Lives Only Once' in No. 8.

## 5. Carnivalization

It is more appropriate to apply a broader and more complex category to *The Moment* which not only concerns the writing style but rather indicates a 'point of view', i.e., the category of 'carnivalization'. This implies the thesis of Michail Bachtin. He says that the carnival constitutes an archetype, which appears in very different ways in different phases of human history, but which has been present since the 'earliest stages of cultural development'. It is an 'undisputed' principle, a general manner of seeing the world which runs counter to the dominant one, an attitude towards life which is 'sharply distinct from the serious official, ecclesiastical, feudal, and political



cult forms and ceremonies'.<sup>36</sup> According to Bachtin, it finds expression above all in squares and in public festivities, for it appears primarily as a popular spectacle, though it also exerts influence on theatre and literature. Bachtin names Dante, Erasmus, Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky as well as Rabelais, Cervantes and Boccaccio, as great authors in whose works traces of carnivalization are found. This gives us an idea about how widespread this phenomenon is. There is said to be an 'objective memory of the genre' that explains the presence of carnivalized traits in situations where there is no 'subjective memory', i.e., it is also found in authors who are not inspired directly or systematically by any popular tradition. Indeed, in order to show how carnivalistic themes have been handed down, one of the principal figures Bachtin refers to is Socrates.

If we consider Kierkegaard's predilection for this 'great sage of antiquity', it will be immediately clear why this is of particular interest to us. Bachtin sees in the person of Socrates a dialogical mode of conceiving truth, where 'truth 'is not born or found in the mind of an individual person', but 'it is born *between people* ... in the process of their dialogic interaction'.<sup>37</sup> Here, we can only point to this theme, even if it would be worth comparing Bachtin's idea of dialogical truth with Kierkegaard's, which attributes more importance to the 'how' than the 'what' with regard to the relationship between communication and truth. At any rate, the dialogical conception of truth is contrasted with the 'official monologism' which presents an institutional, static version of truth unconnected to the relationships between people. It is in the struggle with this form of 'established' truth that Socrates demonstrates the characteristics of the carnivalistic liberating attitude, which makes way for a truth searched for and found (or approached) in responsibility: 'Characteristic of Socratic dialogue are unrestrained *mésalliances* of thoughts and images. 'Socratic irony' is reduced to carnival laughter'.<sup>38</sup> Socrates' spiritual world was actually 'directly linked with the carnival forms of antiquity that fertilized the Socratic dialogue and freed it from one-sided rhetorical seriousness'.<sup>39</sup> The fact that a physically grotesque appearance is traditionally attributed to Socrates in contrast to the interior 'beauty' of his spirit, is a confirmation of the non-conformist, agitating and unconventional nature of Socrates' word. And it confirms the fact that his contemporaries already perceived this.<sup>40</sup> This tradition has been perpetuated through time and Bachtin singles out the most significant modern testimony of it in the portrait of Socrates drawn by Rabelais in the prologue to *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Here, based on the *Symposium* as a joking parody, the Greek philosopher is compared to a Silenus. When seen

from outside, nobody would 'have given the peel of an onion for [Socrates]', while he conceals inside 'a heavenly and inestimable drug', i.e., 'an incredible disregard for everything that people commonly do, watch, flee to, sail from, fight for, travel to, and toil for.'<sup>41</sup>

### 5.1. Carnivalization in *The Concept of Irony*

A similar non-conformism and a similar critical detachment from everything that 'the human species strives for' – or from everything 'in which you naturally have your life', to use the words of *The Moment* (M 177; SV1 14, 189) – can be found in Kierkegaard. Thus, it is not striking that the contrast between Socrates' internal and external aspects, and the carnivalistic portrait of his person impressed Kierkegaard as much as Bachtin. This is better confirmed in Kierkegaard's work that was written 'with continual reference' to the great sage of the antiquity, as its title indicates, namely *The Concept of Irony*. Here Kierkegaard does not limit himself to investigating irony at a theoretical level by examining Socrates' 'thought', but he develops his analysis with frequent observations on Socrates' way of life, freely and creatively based on the testimony of Plato as well as those of Aristophanes, Xenophon and Diogenes Laertius. Early academic reviewers called these observations 'excrescences', as we will see later. In the presence of numerous, apparently 'satirical', digressions of this kind, we find ourselves observing a procedure which is still in its early stages but which will be consolidated in the works that follow. At first sight it seems verbose and not always to the point. It is sometimes almost playful, rich with anecdotes, real and hypothetical cases, figures of speech, and similes. And it is exempt from the linearity and formal coherence that are essential for a 'serious' thesis, according to conventional typology. This is intentional, though, as is explained in the *Postscript*, because 'relative to abstract thinking, jest [*Spøg*] is breadth [*Brede*, mod. Danish, *bredde*], but relative to concrete existence-communication it is not breadth' (CUP 357; SKS 7, 326). A 'breadth' which, as we will see, Martensen considered 'unbearable'.

We are told that Socrates usually 'hung about the streets and boulevards instead of taking his place in the state' and that 'as great a virtuoso in casual contacts ... he conversed equally well with tanners, tailors, Sophists, politicians, poets, with young and old' (CI 179–181; SKS 1, 227f.). Socrates 'always dwelt on the lowest aspects of life, on food and drink, on shoemakers, tanners, on shepherds and on pack asses' (CI 17n.; SKS 1, 79 n.) in 'the boisterous noise of the marketplace' (CI 18; SKS 1, 80). He had a 'hulk of a body' with strikingly 'big feet' and with 'deep-set eyes'; he had

an ‘unprepossessing exterior’ and had been ‘ironically’ endowed with all this by nature (*CI* 148; *SKS* 1, 198f.). We read that Socrates fleeced his followers and that in polemical discourses with Sophists he would reach levels of real ‘ferocity’, indeed, that of ‘cannibalism’ (cf. *The Moment*, No. 9). All in all, he was similar to a Silenus, as Kierkegaard notes, quoting same the comparison made by Alcibiades in the *Symposium*.<sup>42</sup>

All these observations, and other ‘digressions’ of the kind, constitute a sort of plot which runs throughout the *The Concept of Irony*. If we read it with a careful eye, the frequency of such occurrences is too high to be able to explain them as expedients to make the text more vivid, more animated, more diverse, or as external enrichment and part of a personal taste for anecdotes and witty observations. These ‘digressions’ belong to the substance of the exposition. They represent a precise manner of expression, which in turn aims at a precise objective, that of ‘concrete communication’ – even though it is via writing, and, in the case of *The Concept of Irony*, via an academic text.

This peculiarity of Kierkegaard’s writings are perhaps difficult to perceive today because it concerns texts that are already classic in their own way – though every reader immediately recognizes the difficulty in classifying them under a certain category (philosophy, theology, or literature). For this reason, it is helpful to re-read the evaluations of *The Concept of Irony* – Kierkegaard’s thesis for a *Magister* degree in theology<sup>43</sup> – given by the dissertation committee at the University of Copenhagen when Kierkegaard was still a student – and not even an excellent one.<sup>44</sup> The first examiner, F.C. Sibbern (1785–1872), asked that some passages, ‘which are stylistically inferior’ (*SKS* K1, 133), be eliminated. Other examiners were more forceful: J.N. Madvig (1804–86), a Latin scholar, deplored the lack of ‘scientific rigour, strength and concentrated consistency’ as well as the presence of ‘a satisfied quest for spicy and witty expressions which often degenerate to a level of evident vulgarity and bad taste’ (*SKS* K1, 134). F.C. Petersen (1786–1859), a Hellenist, criticized numerous verbal excesses and passages written in ‘sarcastic and burlesque style’ (*SKS* K1, 136). Finally, P.O. Brønsted (1780–1842) accused the author of having often crossed the line which separated a well-tuned irony from ‘vulgar exaggerations’ [*platte Overdrivelsen*] (*SKS* K1, 137).

Sibbern also requested an evaluation from Martensen, encouraged by H. C. Ørsted (1777–1851), the University rector, who – though he was not competent in the field – read it and received an ‘unpleasant impression’ from it.<sup>45</sup> Martensen was evidently unwilling, and he limited himself to a

terse judgement.<sup>46</sup> However, we learn more about Martensen's opinion of *The Concept of Irony* by reading his memoirs, where he reports that Kierkegaard had come to him to ask his opinion about some pages of the dissertation during a visit at his place (evidently before publication, since Martensen was his tutor). Martensen tells us: '... I expressed a rather a cold evaluation, which was probably much due to the fact that I found his language and style unpleasant. It was unbearably verbose [*Brede*] with many wearying repetitions, infinitely long sentences, artificial and mannered expressions. This is what always disturbed me when I read his works'.<sup>47</sup>

We must ask ourselves how conscious Kierkegaard was of his style. It is probable that his choice derives, first of all, from Kierkegaard's view of 'established reality'; Kierkegaard's view is anti-institutional, anti-official, anti-conventional, unceremonious, and is sustained by a polimic so strong as to be frightening, as Poul Martin Møller (1794-1838) had affirmed. He was the only master towards whom Kierkegaard harboured sentiments of respect and friendship, and he was probably the only one who had sensed the qualities of the young student and understood his peculiar characteristics. He sensed someone who had a similar point of view and who consistently followed its perspectives; he sensed someone who was convinced that 'here in the world everything is reversed' (*JP* 3329; *Pap. X 2 A* 609).

We also find evidence in *The Concept of Irony* that his choice [of style] was a conscious preference based on a specific knowledge of the genres in question. This is true of a 'reflective' thinker like Kierkegaard, at any rate. We find this evidence in a section where Kierkegaard cites several historical examples of irony which he considered useful when schematizing the concept of irony. One is the medieval 'Catholic Church' which 'views itself ironically' by giving free rein, on certain dates, to popular events such as 'the Feast of Ass, the Feast of Fools, the Easter Comedy'; Another example is the Roman habit of allowing soldiers to 'sing satirical songs about the victor' (*CI* 253; *SKS* 1, 291) during celebrations in honour of victorious leaders. These historical references – which also show the broad spectrum of meanings the term 'irony' covers in Kierkegaard – cannot be accidental. Indeed, they presuppose a technical knowledge of the 'carnivalistic' genre. And it is interesting to note that we can find these very references in the pages Michail Bachtin dedicates to the genealogy of the carnivalistic genre. Here the Russian academic reminds us of the 'Feast of Fools [*festā stultorum*]', the 'Feast of the Ass', the 'Easter Comedy [*risus paschalis*]', he also adds that 'in the early period of the Roman state, the ceremony of the triumphal procession included, on almost equal terms, the glorification and the derision

of the victor'.<sup>48</sup> Since it is very improbable that Bachtin read *The Concept of Irony*,<sup>49</sup> it would be natural for us to ask whether there is a common historical tradition which both authors could have followed. The hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that Kierkegaard possessed three works of an 18<sup>th</sup> century German researcher, C.F. Flögel, i.e., *Geschichte der komischen Literatur* in four volumes (1748-1787), *Geschichte der Hofnarren* (1789) and *Geschichte des Burlesken* (1794). These are works by an author whom Bachtin considers to be the most important historian of the comic-grotesque genre and from whom he obtained abundant materials for his studies – though Bachtin distanced himself from Flögel at times.<sup>50</sup>

### 5.2. A Subdued Carnivalization

If, then, it is reasonable to apply the category of carnivalization to Kierkegaard's work, it should be made clear to what extent it can be correctly applied. There are two principal limits to be examined.

A first consideration concerns the presence of a muted and subdued smile in Kierkegaard's works, which never becomes the open liberating laugh of the carnival. With this trait, Kierkegaard shares a view of laughter that characterizes his century. Like other authors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hegel in particular, Kierkegaard underscores the negative dimension of irony, namely, the fact that irony is 'free from the sorrows of actuality, but also free from its joys, free from its blessing' (*CI* 279; *SKS* 1, 315). Let us return to Bachtin again. He writes that 'the bourgeois nineteenth century respected only satirical laughter, which was actually not laughter but rhetoric. (No wonder it was compared to a whip or scourge.) Merely amusing, meaningless, and harmless laughter was also tolerated, but the serious had to remain serious, that is, dull and monotonous'.<sup>51</sup> And it is precisely in these terms that also Kierkegaard conceives his own mission as a 'comic' author: the Omnipotent 'knows best how the blows should be struck so that they are felt, that laughter, used in fear and trembling, must be the scourge – this is why I am used' (*M* 245; *SV1* 14, 259). This negative dimension explains the heavy sensation which even the most brilliant pages of Kierkegaard leave, and the impression of an unachieved result and an unobtained opening. Kierkegaard himself is conscious of their absence and indeed knows that they are denied him. He explains the absence of *Heiterkeit*,<sup>52</sup> hilarities, of which he was gravely aware and to which he perhaps wanted to call attention by entrusting *Stages* to the pseudonym Hilarius Bookbinder. However, although Kierkegaard, in common with his contemporaries, lacked the capacity or possibility of a lively and regenerating smile, he

nevertheless distinguishes himself noticeably from his time. This becomes clear in the very passage of Bachtin quoted above that continues as follows: 'all that was serious had to be serious, this means it had to be expressed in a uniform and plain tone'. For Kierkegaard, on the contrary, 'seriousness' must be combined with 'jest' (*PC* 133; *SV1* 12, 124) so that communication can maintain and transmit the seriousness of *existing* and not the inauthenticity of 'instructing', i.e., it can be 'infinitely' serious insofar as it is capable of arousing 'self-activity in those who receive it'. This 'play' between seriousness and joke constitutes the core of carnivalistic eccentricity in Kierkegaard – though it is subdued in comparison with the *positive* dimensions of the carnival – and precisely in this sense he distinguishes himself from 'the 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeoisie'.

The second consideration deals with the relation between the different worlds that are present in carnival. The carnival creates a new world; it presents a reversal of the real world that it opposes. It is a contrary world in which the clown becomes king; the lowest social class becomes the highest; the servant becomes the master; the scepter belongs to those without power, etc. Kierkegaard was strongly impressed by similar reversals and, in turn, he is fertile proposing new ones. As a rule, commentators concentrate their attention on the paradigmatic reversal of the incarnation expressed by *sub contaria specie* where God appears in the form of a slave (in the hymn in Philippians 2, 5–11).<sup>53</sup> But in addition to this, there are many profane reversals in *The Concept of Irony*: a police officer disguised as a robber; a Bishop dressed as a coachman; a delinquent who gives lessons in honesty; a king who dresses as an ordinary citizen and then meets a person in authority who treats the king with condescension, only to find out that he himself is the inferior. In *The Moment*, No. 5, there are even men who dress as women.

In spite of these analogies, the relation to the institutional world is more complicated in Kierkegaard than in the carnival. In order to parody the real world, the carnival does not take inspiration from an ideal world as a model. But it imagines overcoming the old world according to the cyclical life–death–life succession. Conversely, Kierkegaard's irony and satire develop against a backdrop of the opposition between the real and the ideal. In addition to reality, i.e., Christendom – whether it is viewed with the hypocritically serious eye of the representatives of the established order or with the sharp eye of the ironist – the 'Christianity of the New Testament' also exists as the ideal prototype that should be never forgotten. The motto of *The Moment* says precisely: 'With the help of ideals against hallucinations'.<sup>54</sup> The great complexity of this construction offers a further explanation for

the lack of a positive and liberating outcome in Kierkegaardian irony; it is precisely this complexity which makes it difficult: the proclamation of the ideal confers on Kierkegaard's satire an ethical preoccupation which does not belong to carnival.

### 5.3. Carnivalization in *The Moment*

At this point it follows that the 'coarseness' which characterizes *The Moment* does not represent anything new; it can be traced back to the initial phases of Kierkegaard's writing. Thus, the course style does not justify the claim that his late writings should be 'separated' from Kierkegaard's earlier work.

Furthermore, we noted that this 'coarseness' is the fruit of Kierkegaard's congeniality with the view of existence that we defined 'carnivalistic'. This means that when we read his works, we must be attentive to the genre that Kierkegaard adopts from time to time, especially when we read passages that appear strange at first sight. The insistence on the elemental themes of life, for example, (such as money, which is 'maniacally' present in *The Moment*) appears obsessive if the late writings are measured with formal vigour; in reality this insistence constitutes the 'verbose' and 'playful' development of a theme that is absolutely serious, namely, that the money is 'the greatest power the world has ever seen' (*M* 165; *SV1* 14, 177).

Besides, there are numerous traces of carnivalization in *The Moment*. We find the vulgar image of vomit, as mentioned, which is frequent in carnivalistic literature; indeed, what enters and leaves the body is a favourite theme in carnivalistic literature. We also find the theme of disguise and mask. We see it in No. 10 (*M* 333; *SV1* 14, 346), for example, where Kierkegaard imagines disguising himself as a soldier and solemnly taking the oath of loyalty to the flag; he wears a tricorne hat, a cartridge-pouch and a sabre, mounted on a 'rocking horse' to attack the enemy. Here Kierkegaard is conducting a parody based on the debasement of actions, objects and symbols endorsed with the sacredness of the 'official' system. Another example of debasement is found in No. 10 (*M* 348; *SV1* 14, 358). He presents the image of a bishop assuming the role of a coachman to make the excursion of well-motivated Christians to Deer Park even more meritorious. On many occasions, we also find the theme of the square, the market place and the street. This is of great importance, not only in Kierkegaard's work, but also in his life. This is why Villads defined him as 'the greatest Peripatetic in Copenhagen', and why Meir Goldschmidt (1819-87) called him, with fitting sarcasm, 'the strolling philosopher'. Elsewhere Kierkegaard boasts of talking to anyone he encountered, regardless

of social class and condition, and of conversing with different interlocutors in a style that he surely considered Socratic:

It gave me a real Christian satisfaction to think that, if no-one else, there was at least one person in Copenhagen with whom any poor man could easily stop and talk on the street, and that, if no-one else, there was someone who, although he frequented the society, did not avoid but knew every maid, every family, every day labourer (*PV* 60; *SV1* 13, 546).<sup>55</sup>

This theme appears also in No. 1 (*M* 94; *SV1* 14, 108) where Kierkegaard recalls that people knew his love of an “either-or” to the extent that even children mocked him on the street by calling him this nickname. This is a carnivalistic stage in which the object of mockery is Kierkegaard himself; he not only used carnivalization, but also personally suffered from it.

We see the theme of playing cards in No. 4 (*M* 160; *SV1* 14, 173) and 10 (*M* 330; *SV1* 14, 344). We see the reference to the tavern in No. 4 (*M* 161; *SV1* 14, 173) that affirms that pastors reduce Christianity to a song of drunkards, indeed ‘even a happier song’ because it is free from the melancholy found in songs of the kind out of the knowledge of the inevitable end of joys in this world. Here the life–death–life connection, characteristic of the cyclic vision of existence expressed in the carnivalistic festival, is present. And if Kierkegaard does not evoke this theme intentionally, we may have here a confirmation of the ‘objective memory of the kind’ that emerges in authors with an anti-official point of view and which leads Kierkegaard, even in a short sentence, to discern the complicated dimensions in an apparently ‘low’ phenomenon like the tavern song.

We see more examples such as the image of a dog that is forced to walk with two legs (*M* 182; *SV1* 14, 194),<sup>56</sup> the image of a pastor who ‘makes a jump’ as soon as he sees a banknote, like a small doll jumping out of a tobacco case (*M* 231; *SV1* 14, 246), the rowdiness of youths on New Year’s Day (*M* 311; *SV1* 14, 323). The list could continue, but we must stop to take a better look at two more cases.

The first is presented in one of the ‘Minor Remarks’ in No. 10 (*M* 351; *SV1* 14, 360f.) with title ‘Heartiness/Heartlessness’. It is argued that a person who does not have his heart in ‘the right place’ accuses the other ... of being without a heart, because it would never occur to him to find the heart precisely there, exactly in ‘the right place’ [...]. Among possible ‘wrong’ places where the heart can be, Kierkegaard indicates the throat, the lips and the trousers. This passage is the only one which appears to allude



to sexual organs (unlike carnivalesque literature, where it is frequent). But Kierkegaard is probably thinking of the satire of *The Corsair*, which publicly ridiculed him for the strangeness of his short and lopsided trousers – with the evident intention of evoking double-entendres. The veiled way in which the sexual theme appears in *The Moment* confirms the subdued carnivalistic style mentioned above.

The second case is presented in numerous passages in which Christianity is compared to a theatrical presentation. Different aspects and different protagonists in church life correspond to similar moments on the stage of a theatre. And the reason such perfect analogies can be established lies, according to his journals, in the fact that discipleship was lacking. The preaching of Christianity becomes theatre because the only guarantee for difference between the theatre and the church is ‘discipleship’ – according to the passage quoted above. Pastors are ‘salaried artists’ who learned, as at acting school, to use ‘pompous clichés’, to throw ‘heavenly glances’, to cry ‘torrents of tears’ (*M* 190; *SV1* 14, 204). The church is a stage on which the ‘dramatically costumed’ (*M* 99; *SV1* 14, 113) celebrant moves, dressed luxuriously in silk and velvet. The congregation is the audience and therefore they play a part which is less active and therefore less blameworthy, although not completely innocent in the whole ‘mechanism’. The responsibility falls principally on the pastors, secondly on the state, and finally on the ‘common mass’ as well, but only when, after having been ‘put on guard’ and made aware of the ‘immense deceit’, it continues to live as before for the sake of a quiet life.

This unmasking of different actors who recite various parts that compose the great stage of Christendom already produces a comical effect for the ‘lowering’ of the pompous preachers to the role of common salaried actors. This lowering is then further exaggerated with a ‘doubly powerful’ passage that aims to ‘surprise’ the reader, for example, in the case of one of the ‘Brief Observations’ in No. 6 entitled ‘The Theatre – the Church’; it is acknowledged that there is a difference between the theatre and the church, but only because ‘the theatre honestly and sincerely acknowledges that it is what it is, while the church is instead a theatre which tries dishonestly to hide what it is’. Here, Kierkegaard applies an elemental canon of the comic genre whereby the smile arises from ‘delusion’ or from the surprise of the reader who believed that the highest point of exaggeration had been attained with the forcing of analogies between church and theatre. The reader expected that these would be subdued when it was acknowledged that a difference nevertheless remained. However, contrary

to expectations, the tension suddenly becomes accentuated by the fact that the difference is of a kind opposite to that which is reasonably expected. This process goes beyond the borders of true irony, since ironic style is 'full of allusions, but it is concerned with allusions which remain suspended in the air and which lack that surprising element that distinguishes (for example) from the witty motto'.<sup>57</sup> Although he seems resolved to provoking a comical effect, however, Kierkegaard does not always succeed in arousing a reaction of surprise because he uses the described mechanism too often. In the reader who has already learned to anticipate it, the 'climax' does not cause an open laugh, but a muted smile (although this could have been exactly the objective Kierkegaard intended to achieve).

If we remember Kierkegaard's conviction that Christendom is a great theatrical production, we can better understand what he means when he affirms that Christendom itself transformed the cross into a 'hobbyhorse' or in a 'trumpet' for children (*M* 186; *SV1* 14, 199). He means that, albeit veiled in a false seriousness, carnivalistic parody-like exaggerations already exist in things themselves more even than in the carnival proper. From this he reasons that if one wants to be the gadfly of irony, satire and sarcasm, one has to first of all expose its theatrical nature. One must show the satire which is present in things, waking up those who are in hypnotic sleep (like 'Sleeping Beauty'<sup>58</sup>) and those who take it to be reality because they are fascinated by the stage, which Kierkegaard calls 'the great hallucination'.

Kierkegaard never speaks explicitly of the strategy he follows during the attack. But two passages from *The Moment* contain illuminating casual observations. The first one is found in No. 7, which contains a brilliant piece dedicated to the vicissitudes of the life of Ludvig From, a theology student who one supposes is busy seeking 'first' the kingdom of God, which one might expect a future pastor to do. After various adventures in which he is busy seeking anything but the kingdom of God, the moment arrives where he is ordained and presented to the community. In the sermon he preaches for the occasion, the part dedicated to the Christian duty of 'seeking first the kingdom of God' is received with hearty approval by the bishop present at the ceremony. But somebody raises the objection: 'But, your Reverence, do you believe the desirable agreement between discourse and life was preached? This *first* made almost an almost satirical impression upon me' (cf., *M* 235; *SV1* 14, 250). The other passage is found in No. 2, where one reads that witnesses to truth 'make a career and are successes in this world ... by describing on Sunday how the truth must suffer in this world' (*M* 120; *SV1* 14, 132), and this is followed by the desolate exclamation:

‘what a satirical self-contradiction!’ The two parentheses (‘almost a satirical impression’ and ‘what a satirical self-contradiction!’) are commentaries on what Kierkegaard considers to be absolutely normal behavior in Christendom (the figure of From is indeed inspired by a real person, Pastor Hans Peter Kofoed-Hansen (1813-93)). It shows us that satire against Christendom does not come from the outside: it is Christendom itself that makes satire of itself to the extent that it pretends to be Christianity and to claim congruency with the New Testament; it does not admit that it has transformed the Word into a ‘store’ and a ‘shop’. If discipleship is substituted by cheap grace, if ‘communication of existence’ is reduced to doctrine, if people who claim to be witnesses to truth are not those who suffered for it but those who are exponents of the established order and have most benefited from the worldly success, if all this is still called ‘Christianity’, then satire is in these things themselves. And the principal task of a ‘corrective’, which Kierkegaard wants to be, is not to add satire to satire, but to make the already existing satire visible in concrete facts. It is a tough enterprise, as Kierkegaard emphasizes in passages in *The Moment* dedicated to what he calls ‘the particular difficulty’ of his mission. A ‘satirical self-contradiction’ also emerges from a small sketch in No. 6:

In the splendid cathedral, the Honorable Right Reverend *Geheime-General-Ober-Hof-Prædikant* [Private Chief Royal Chaplain] comes forward, the chosen favorite of the elite world; he comes forward before a chosen circle of the chosen ones and, deeply *moved*, preaches on the text he has himself chosen, ‘God has chosen the lowly and the despised in the world (*M* 203; *SV* 1 14, 217).

This passage, too, reproduces reality and in this case, too, the ‘satiric nonsense’ is imminent in the things themselves. But the dramatic fact is that a reaction is lacking, not so much of opposition or criticism, but rather of the perception of the comicality of the situation: ‘and there is no one who laughs!’ This is a conclusion in which desperation resounds. In many pages in *The Moment*, one senses what great effort Kierkegaard makes, using all the comical and stylistic instruments at his disposal, to awaken, in a Christian people no longer able to laugh, the capacity to laugh at Christendom’s ‘satiric nonsense’.

It is exactly because satire is in the things themselves that Kierkegaard can also affirm, as we saw above, that ‘it is impossible not to write a satire if one is telling nothing but the truth’. And this is again why, in an article in March, 1855, he underscores that what he ‘wants’ is *Redelighed* [integrity,

honesty, truthfulness, *parresia*], a moral 'humane' virtue.<sup>59</sup> In Christendom, this is the necessary, potentially explosive precondition for an authentic decision for (or against) Christianity, and more generally, for criticizing the established order [...].

## 6. Political Indifferentism?

Integrity [*Redelighed*] can have an explosive effect not only with respect to Christendom but also with respect to every constituted order. It disturbs public order and collides with the state.

Kierkegaard's position evolves with time, as already mentioned. During the years prior to the attack, he maintained an attitude which was not hostile to the status quo (or to the 'government' as he often says), not so much because of a political choice but rather because of a desire to keep a distinction between the necessary renovation within Christendom and any 'exterior' reform. Thus, when Pastor Andreas Gottlob Rudelbach (1792-1862) started a campaign in favour of the introduction of the civil marriage and appealed to Kierkegaard as his principal ally (because of his well known criticism of 'Christianity of habit and of the state'), Kierkegaard, in response, accused Rudelbach of misunderstanding the dialectic in his writings, and emphasized two levels of distinctions. He declared, first, that he did indeed dislike the Christianity of habit practiced with 'secular-minded thoughtlessness' by Christians in name only. But he preferred it to that of 'the sects, the enthusiasts, the superorthodox, the schismatics' (*COR* 52; *SV1* 13, 52), because the former thwarts Christianity 'in a negative way' by its sluggishness, while the others pervert it 'in a positive way' with the spiritual pride, leaving no hope for improvement in future. He then reminded Rudelbach that he had never written a line in favour of a 'change in external aspects'; he had always been an enemy of 'church reform' which confuses 'politics and Christianity', since the former was a purely external reality while the latter was '*Inderlighed*' [pure interiority] and that they were thus two incommensurable entities.

Kierkegaard's hostility to any form of passionate politics in the religious sphere comes from his conviction that Christianity ought to be 'infinitely higher and infinitely freer than all institutions, constitutions, etc'. (*COR* 55; *SV1* 13, 440). Christianity implies 'indifference' [*Ligegyldighed*] to externals', (*COR* 57; *SV1* 13, 442), to all that is temporal and without a dialectical relationship to eternity. A Christian should 'not care' about politics, and Kierkegaard himself is convinced 'that it does not make any difference what

government I live under' (JP 4151; Pap. IX A 353). His distrust of reforms (even those, like the reform sought by Rudelbach, that conform to his convictions in terms of content), and his scorn for 'parties,' which are inevitably formed to support reforms and gather the necessary support, is so strong that Kierkegaard can be defined as a 'quietist'. He was convinced that anybody who looks to put external reforms into practice ceases to be a non-conformist and must renounce irony.

Thus, while he defends the 'functional' need for authorities and is worried about the crisis the authorities face because of the socio-political changes in his time (the diffusion of democratic political systems, the advent of an era of social levelling), Kierkegaard takes little interest in the problem of the 'legitimation' of power; it is no coincidence that he never quotes Rom. 13.1 ('You must all obey the governing authorities ...')<sup>60</sup>. This, too, is a question without pathos, since, with regard to exteriority, 'existence' – that is, simply being there – is sufficient to justify authority. What is valid for the 'state' is contrary to what is valid for the church: the latter is founded on 'becoming' while the former is based on 'what is established' [*det bestaaende*]. This creates a hierarchy with respect to spirit because 'becoming' is more spiritual than what is already 'established'. Kierkegaard explains why the principle of conservation, which is different from that for the church, holds true for the state:

Even if one institution or another is not very successful – if it is part of the established – one must be very circumspect about abolishing it, simply because the idea of 'the state' is 'the established'; and we are perhaps better served by vigorously maintaining a less successful establishment than by reforming it prematurely (JP 593; Pap. X 1 A 552).

The support that Christianity supplies to the constituted order also has a more 'active' motivation, namely, obedience to authority, not by way of coercion, but by interior conviction. Christianity teaches us to fear God and honour the king (1 Peter 2, 17); therefore, 'a Christian is to be, if possible, His Majesty's best subject' (M 113; SV1 14, 125). However, Christianity's support of the state can be gained only in certain conditions. In a situation of profound corruption where the state itself is involved, such as the situation in Christendom, 'authentic Christianity' could be 'dangerous' for the state (JP 4241; Pap. XI 2 A 356)<sup>61</sup>. Integrity [*Redelighed*] in authentic Christianity – which could only be a minority phenomenon – would reveal the great deceit for which the state is also to blame because of its

complicity with the majority of name-only Christians. The state may find it more convenient to be concerned with a 'lowered' Christianity such as official Christianity, which is too compromised by its own hypocrisies to be able to reveal those of others, and which is thus inoffensive.

Kierkegaard also takes a traditional position with regard to the possibility that Christians oppose the state. The Christian must be the best subject, but only 'if possible'. In fact, there is a limit to this indifferentism, and it is the classic limit from Acts 5:29, which Kierkegaard refers to in the above-mentioned response to Rudelbach:

We ought to obey God rather than men. There are situations, therefore, in which an established order can be of such a nature that the Christian [...] ought not say that Christianity means precisely this indifference to the external (*COR* 56; *SVI* 13, 441).

The details of Kierkegaard's perspective emerge, however, when one inquires into when these 'situations' are concretely present. They are present when the state interferes with the religious sphere, but this interference – which the Christian must take action against – is not that which occurs when power fights against Christianity (because then the heterogeneity between two spheres remains intact). The problem arises when power conditions Christianity by allying itself with it and, if possible, 'protects it'. In this way, it manages to contaminate Christianity from the inside. And since the embrace of power is more dangerous than a clash with it, it is understandable that Kierkegaard is so hard on the 'pastors': they are a sort of 'fifth column' which delivers Christianity into the hands of the enemy, a Christianity that is unconquerable in open battle if it remains faithful to the New Testament.

The only matter Kierkegaard considers worth confronting with 'pathos' is the mingling of the sacred and the profane, the religious sphere and the worldly sphere. In this context Kierkegaard is convinced that his work also has political relevance. The 'fusion' between Christianity and the state compromises not only the correspondence of Christianity to the prototype of the New Testament – by transforming the 'militant' religiosity into 'acquiescent' religiosity and by transferring into temporality the victory of Christianity over the world, since the opposition between the worldly and the religious ends only in eternity.<sup>62</sup> – but it is harmful also to the state, which appropriates a role 'too high' for its nature, while protecting itself with 'ridicule' like the burgomaster, who claimed to be protecting the king,

though he had not recognised the king clothed like a normal citizen (*M* 113; *SV* 14, 125f.).

Kierkegaard is thus convinced that his criticism promotes good politics. 'Good', not because it is characterized by a content or a program favouring others (at this level, indifference is the rule), but because it is based on an accurate perception of the limits of its field of action. It is, however, concerned with service which the 'impatient politician' in search for concrete solutions would naturally find 'impractical' and could not appreciate (*PV* 103; *SV* 13, 589).

In the writings during the attack on Christendom [Christenhed], Kierkegaard modifies his position concerning the value of external reforms. At this point, he considers the abolition of the state church to be a necessary condition for a possible deeper change involving the interiority. In order to be able to 'make men aware' (note, not to convert them) of Christianity the New Testament', it is necessary that light be shed on an 'enormously huge illusion that has a purely external aspect' (*M* 107; *SV* 14, 119). This is simply because in the context of Christendom it concerns not pagans but people who are convinced of being Christians. It is necessary that the giant mechanism supported by '1000 officeholders' be exposed. Such a mechanism is so powerful that it could introduce any new religion without difficulty, even a religion founded on the belief that the moon is made out of 'green cheese' (*M* 163; *SV* 14, 176). Although he did not have today's all-pervasive and efficient means of propaganda and persuasion, Kierkegaard's 'far-sightedness' sees the conditioning power of worldly and religious apparatuses. It seems that he suffers from 'far-sightedness' since, on the one hand, he pays little attention to new labour organizations connected to the industrial development that characterised the socio-economic conditions of his time, though he was aware of developments in finance and commerce, both at the level of large companies and small shops. In this regard, he repeats the maxim: 'Everyone is a thief in his business'. There was something rotten in the state of Denmark. On the other hand, Kierkegaard perceives the influence exercised by mass communication (i.e., in his day, the daily press) so strongly that his analyses seem to anticipate the today's scenario dominated by television and telecommunications. In the 'newspapers' he even sees a reality capable of making Christianity impossible because they hinder the existence of the individual by creating an anonymous entity like 'the public'. Thus the mortal enemy of Christianity is not 'technology' but mass communication. Technology is in itself not so pervasive that it penetrates every sphere of existence. The

'newspapers' however, give technology a voice, a speaking voice which penetrates every aspect of life. The instruments of mass communication are 'technology' insofar as they are based on number and reproducibility; they make ideas anonymous and know no sacred limits (modesty, reserve). Moreover, they are '*all pervasive*' (as Cesare Pavese said of water) thanks to this voice (and, later, to images).

The evolution of Kierkegaard's thinking with regard to loosening the ties between church and state does not constitute a radical change of his fundamental conceptions since this principle was uttered the moment he refused to enter the fray with Rudelbach in favour of external 'reforms'. According to his principle, there are certain 'situations' when the exterior cannot remain a matter of indifference for Christians. What changes is his evaluation of the 'situations'; during the attack, unlike the preceding period, Kierkegaard thinks it is necessary to impose reforms, also in the sphere of exteriority [...].

In conclusion, we shall return to carnivalization. As we have seen, Christendom is a complex entity in which not only Christianity, the church, and society are involved, but also the state and the political world. It appears clear, however, that Kierkegaard's principal target in his attack is the ecclesiastical component, and that the term 'Christendom' does not refer equally to all the constituent parts, but refers primarily to the religious ones. This is not because Kierkegaard holds the ecclesiastical elements dearest, but because these are essentially 'responsible' for the degeneration of Christianity into Christendom. Additionally, even if it is true that both the state and Christianity compromise and corrupt each other in Christendom, only Christianity is effected so radically that it is totally eliminated.

This is why Christendom is theatre: it hides its own immense void behind its external appearance. It makes one believe that what no longer exists is still there, and thus produces the great 'hallucination'. It is a show which transforms churches into theatres. But unlike what happens at the theatre – but in conformity with the omnipresence of carnival, which invades every square and street of the city – Christendom knows only ephemeral borders between the stage and reality, because, while pastors are the principal actors, they are also all those who contribute to the global illusion by acting their minor parts in a space where actors and spectators end up mingling [...]. The merchant who professes the prevailing religion in order to obtain the confidence of clients more easily; the father who is interested in Christianity only at the moment of his son's baptism; the hypocritical lovers of the quiet life who find the demands of Christianity too



great, but do not stop calling themselves Christians – all these constitute the gallery of Christian masks, each one of which brings its contribution to the big performance.

Every dimension of existence, both public and private, can supply cues for carnivalization. The richest material, however, is supplied by an established order or an official institution. These become the targets of desanctifying analyses – inspired by sarcastic and burlesque visions of the world – more readily than other aspects of reality. Here Christendom presents the best material, for it is the fruit of a radical illusion and not merely a partial deformation; it is destined to be a fantastic world, a great carnival. In order to make it the object of satire, Kierkegaard is convinced that he need not carnivalize it from outside. For him, it is sufficient to present it to his readers as it is, by using exaggerations to ‘attract attention’ and by trusting that reality itself appears as an exaggeration when it is exposed to consistent integrity [*Redelighed*] in a world where ‘all is hypocrisy’.

## Notes

1. Our gratitude goes to our friends, especially Daniella Engel, Ettore Rocca, Giacomo Borella and Mario Cantilena, who willingly helped us realize this translation. Ku G&M.
2. The Danish Evangelical-Lutheran national church does not have an archbishop or a real synod structure, although the role of bishops and superintendents are recognized (similar responsibilities are listed in the *Danish Law* of 1683), thus it seems to sustain itself as a 'well-ordered anarchy'. However, the Bishop of Zealand (who resides in Copenhagen and who is in contact with the government) has the most prestigious and authoritative responsibility.
3. *Synspunktet for min Forfatter-Virksomhed*, [Point of View for My Work as an Author] *PV* 58; *SV* 1 13, 545. (The text is from 1848, but was published posthumously, in 1859, by his brother Peter.)
4. Hans Martensen, *Af mit levnet* III, Copenhagen, Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag, 1883, p. 12, p. 23.
5. Bjørn Kornerup (ed.), *Biskop H. Martensens Breve*, I, *Breve til L. Gude 1848-1859*, Copenhagen, G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1955, pp. 131-132.
6. Martin Kähler, *Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik im 19. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1962, pp. 178-179. (The text was edited posthumously, it is from the years between 1890 and 1912).
7. Cf. *Pap.* XI 1 A 525.
8. This term is used in Danish also to translate the Latin word 'imitatio'; however translating this word with 'imitation' is not a good solution in many cases.
9. That the father of Lutheran Pietism is not Philip Jakob Spener but Johann Arndt is F. E. Stoeffler's thesis, and it increasingly finds a consensus in *Pietismusforschung*. (It was argued, with some success, by W. Koeppe in his study on Arndt in 1912). More prudent with regard to the general relation to Pietism, and more generous in recognising the importance of Arndt, is Gustav-Adolf Benrath in *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte*, ed. by Carl Andresen & Adolf Martin Ritter, II, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988; see p. 599.
10. Quoted from the same German edition on which the Danish translation in Kierkegaard's possession is based. Johann Arndt, *Die vier Bücher vom wahren Christentume*, ed. by Johann Gottfried Theodor Sintenis, Nürnberg, Verlag von Heinrich Haubensteicher, 1826. See p. 5; p. 14, p. 176, p. 326; p. 24, p. 55, p. 319; p. 55, p. 221; p. 57; p. 194; p. 219, p. 268; p. 228.
11. Cf. also *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, *CUP* 542; *SKS* 7, 493.
12. Cf. *JP* 711; *Pap.* XI 1 A 28; *JP* 2544; *Pap.* XI 2 A 303; *Pap.* XI 2 A 309.
13. Cf. *JP* 1922; *Pap.* X 5 A 88.
14. Cf. Philipp Jakob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, ed., Kurt Aland, Berlin, Walter DeGruyter, 1964, p. 85. It is a page where Spener sums up the content of the *Postilla* by Arndt. *Pia Desideria* was originally the preface to the re-edition of Arndt's text published in Frankfurt in 1675.
15. Author's emphasis, trans. modified.
16. Andreas Bodenstein Karlstadt, 'Anzeyg etlicher Hauptartikeln christlicher Leere', in *Karlstadts Schriften aus den Jahren 1523-1525* II, ed., Erich Hertzsch, Halle (Saale), Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957, p. 66.
17. Cf. *JP* 1922; *Pap.* X 5 A 88.
18. 'We congratulate ourselves for having explained away all asceticism from Christianity, showing how far Christianity is from the foolishness of such things as monastic flagellation. But wait a little! Something is always left out, and that is the paradigm' (*JP* 1860; *Pap.* X 2 A 326).
19. For example in *JP* 1904; *Pap.* X 4 A 354 and *JP* 3619; *Pap.* XI 1 A 106. See also *M* 110; *SV* 1 14,

122f.

20. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, trans., Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2001.
21. A note from Kierkegaard to the editor Reitzel dated 19 July 1855 says, for example, that the first 1000 copies of No. 2 were printed, followed by 500 more (cf. Niels Thulstrup [ed.], *Breve og Aktstykker vedrørende Søren Kierkegaard*, I, Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1953, p. 328). There was also a third edition (cf. Frithiof Brandt & Else Thorkelin, *Søren Kierkegaard og pengene*, Copenhagen, Spektrum, 1993 [1935], p. 35).
22. Cf. Brandt & Thorkelin, *Søren Kierkegaard og pengene*, p. 24.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
25. I must correct myself, for I have written that *The Moment* was 'founded and financed' by Kierkegaard (cf. *Contemporaneità e critica della cristianità stabilita in Søren Kierkegaard*, in Giuseppe Ruggieri (ed.), *La cattura della fine. Variazioni dell'escatologia in regime di cristianità*, Genova, Marietti, 1992, p. 236, footnote 48).
26. Cf. Table in Brandt & Thorkelin, *Søren Kierkegaard og pengene*, p. 35.
27. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
28. Cf. also *Pap.* XI 2 A 413.
29. §§ 8 and 9 concern the case of libellous affirmations with regard to religious institutions.
30. Cf. *EPW* 106; *Pap.* II B 7: 'a list of abusive words one can use without becoming liable under the Freedom of the Press Ordinance of 1799'.
31. Therefore Adorno's thesis that Kierkegaard lacked 'any evident experience of the social landscape' and that 'he was more foreign to the social order than any other idealistic thinker' seems unfounded, (Theodor W. Adorno, *Kierkegaard. Construction of the Aesthetic* (1933), tr. and ed. R. Hullot-Kentor, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 10, p. 39). More generally, regarding Kierkegaard's lack of understanding of or indifference to social phenomena, Cattepoel observes that this is based on 'two ideologies', because, 'it permits theologians who are loyal to the Church to deal with the 'tame' Kierkegaard who used a pseudonym, putting aside the 'awkward' one of the period of *The Moment*. Furthermore, in this way even Marxists can deal with Kierkegaard – and therefore with the subjective dimension of man – without questioning the exclusive competence of their precursors, Marx, Engels and Lenin, with regard to society and history' (Jan Cattepoel, *Dämonie und Gesellschaft. Søren Kierkegaard als Sozialkritiker und Kommunikationstheoretiker*, Freiburg/Munich, Verlag Karl Alber, 1992, p. 266).
32. Cf. No. 6 ('Brief and to the Point', 'Minor Remarks') and No. 10 (again, 'Minor Remarks').
33. Brandt, *Søren Kierkegaard*, Copenhagen, 1963, p. 105.
34. Emil Boesen recalls the conversations during one of his last visits to Kierkegaard in the hospital. See Bruce Kirmmse (trans. and ed.), *Encounters with Kierkegaard. A Life Seen by His Contemporaries*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 125.
35. Michael Bachtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans., H. Iswolsky, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 95.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 5f.
37. Bachtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans., C. Emerson, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 110.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
39. Bachtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 121.

40. Bachtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, p. 132: 'The image of Socrates himself is of an ambivalent sort – a combination of beauty and ugliness (see the characterization of him by Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium*); Socrates' own characterizations of himself as a "pander" and "midwife" are also constructed in the spirit of carnival debasings. And the personal life of Socrates was itself surrounded by carnivalistic legends (for example, his relationship with his wife Xanthippe)'.
41. François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, intro., D.B. Wyndham Lewis, London, Dent, 1966, vol. 1, p. 3.
42. Cf. *CI* 50; *SKS* 1, 111.
43. With this writing Kierkegaard obtained the degree of 'master' from the Faculty of Philosophy which corresponded to 'license' from other faculties. It was a kind of 'minor doctor' [*lille doktorgrad*] (Cf. *SKS* K1, 125).
44. A signal to these judgements is found in Dario Borso, *Introduzione*, in Søren Kierkegaard, *Dalle carte di uno ancora in vita*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 1999, p. 42. He furthermore indicates that also in *From the Papers of One Still Living* there are some 'repentine falls on low level languages (jokes, be calembour or stupidity) which never fail to cause effects of disharmony' (p. 41).
45. Letter to F.C. Sibbern (not dated), *SKS* K1, 138f.
46. 'Since Prof. Sibbern asked me to express my evaluation on the question, I declare herewith to share the opinions already expressed on the dissertation and to be in favour of its approval'. *SKS* K1 140.
47. Martensen, *Af mit Levnet* II, 1883, p. 142.
48. Bachtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 5f.
49. However, it is not impossible, since the work appeared in German translation in 1929.
50. Kierkegaard's library is a source of other surprises; if we look at it, we find, among the classics, the works of Aristophanes, Lucianus (8 volumes), Apuleius, Juvenal, P. Terentius, Persius Flakkus. And we find some fifteen works (some of them are in numerous volumes) dedicated to the folk literature from different countries; numerous collections of fairy tales, saga, legends; a Danish edition of the works of Carlo Gozzi, a German edition on *Pulcinella*, two volumes including the *Pentamerone* translated 'from Neapolitan' into German, 2 volumes on mimic.
51. Bachtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 51.
52. Kierkegaard uses this German term in *Stages on Life's Way* (*SL* 420 and 469; *SKS* 6, 390 and 432).
53. Kierkegaard offers a carnivalized version of this in *Judge for Yourself*, when he says that Christ abolished the idea of honour and human respect and that his life 'expresses' this maxim: 'Miserable fool's costume [*Narredragt*]; the more it is put on and the more it glitters and sparkles, the more miserable it is' (*JFY* 178; *SV* 1 12, 448).
54. Cf. 'Addendum' to No. 1 and furthermore, the article in No. 9: 'That the Ideals Should Be Proclaimed – Otherwise Christianity Is Radically Falsified'.
55. Cf. also *Pap.* V B 72.
56. The thought here is associated immediately with the short story *La carriola* by Pirandello.
57. Beda Allemann, *Ironia e Poesia*, Milan, U. Mursia & C., 1971, p. 11. Alleman holds that the concept of surprise, 'the traditional one in theories related to the comic', should be substituted by the concept of 'mobility' when it concerns irony, because irony is based 'on reports which are subtle, as opposed to humour, which is based on surprise', p. 15.
58. Cf. *Works of Love*, *WL* 200; *SKS* 9, 198.
59. "What Do I Want?" in *Fædrelandet*, March 31, 1851 (*M* 46–49; *SV* 1 14, 52–55).
60. As far as I know, there is only one exception – in *On My Work as an Author* – which was later elim-

inated (published by E. Hirsch in the notes for the German edition of that text).

61. Without date, probably in 1854.

62. Cf. *Armed Neutrality*, AN 130; *Pap. X 5 B 107*, p. 289.

