

CRITIQUE

Abraham and Hegel: a Reply to Stewart

Gordon Marino and Anthony Rudd

I

In his paper “Hegel’s View of Moral Conscience and Kierkegaard’s Interpretation of Abraham”¹ Jon Stewart sets out to evaluate Kierkegaard’s criticisms of Hegel in *Fear and Trembling*. Although he starts with the modest suggestion that Kierkegaard has simply quoted from Hegel in a misleading way, the paper eventually turns into a vigorous Hegelian critique of Kierkegaard. We shall argue here that this critique, though challenging, ultimately begs the question against Kierkegaard.

In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard makes reference to Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* in order to characterise the ethical sphere with which Abraham comes into collision. This is essentially the sphere of *Sittlichkeit* (Social Morality) in which the individual judges the rightness of his or her actions by reference not to a inner voice of conscience but to the objective standards provided by the Laws and customs of Society. Now Kierkegaard² repeatedly insists that if *Sittlichkeit* is the highest court of appeal in judging someone’s actions, then Abraham must be condemned. However, he accuses Hegel of inconsistency in still wanting to praise Abraham as the “father of Faith”.³ Stewart initially claims that there has been a misunderstanding. Hegel, in the *Philosophy of Right*, is concerned with politics and law, not with religion. And Kierkegaard himself affirms that *ethically speaking*, Abraham is indeed an intended murderer and is wholly unable to explain or justify his actions to any one else. So he is in fact agreeing with Hegel that Abraham has no legal or ethical defense. (pp. 64, 74–5) But that is all that Hegel is concerned with in the work from which he quotes, so it is misleading for Kierkegaard to present Hegel as an antagonist here.

If all Stewart has shown is that Kierkegaard quotes Hegel in a rather misleading way in a couple of places, then the result would be a fairly

trivial one. But it soon becomes apparent that this is not the main point. Stewart's real concern is to defend Hegel against Kierkegaard's suggestion that Abraham is justified, but in a non-ethical fashion, one that cannot in any way be made apparent to anyone else by discursive reasoning. By taking this line, Stewart argues, Kierkegaard is back-sliding from the Hegelian stance and exposing himself to the devastating Hegelian critique of moralities which are based on appeals to private conscience. (p. 72) For Hegel – and it seems, for Stewart – there is no higher kind of justification available than that of *Sittlichkeit*, so if – since – Abraham is not justified in those terms he cannot be justified at all.

Stewart's argument is presented in a somewhat puzzling way. He insists that Hegel is quoted misleadingly in *Fear and Trembling* because Kierkegaard actually agrees with Hegel about the moral/legal/political status of Abraham's act. However, Stewart does also recognise that there is nonetheless a "deeper disagreement" (p. 76) between them. He concludes his paper by presenting Kierkegaard with a dilemma. If he thinks Abraham was justified, then either this justification is one that makes no claim to truth, in which case we are reduced to a hopeless relativism; or else it does. But if Abraham claims to have the truth, this claim "must be based on reasons which are in principle available to all and thus subject to debate and criticism" (p. 76) – and in Abraham's case this condition clearly is not met. So the paper, having started with a mild suggestion that Kierkegaard was at cross-purposes with Hegel, concludes as a vehement attack on him from a Hegelian perspective. In what follows, we shall criticise Stewart's claim that Kierkegaard has quoted Hegel misleadingly, and his assumption that, according to Kierkegaard, Abraham was justified by the sort of appeal to private conscience that Hegel attacked. We shall conclude by considering the status of his claim that the only justification there can be is discursive rational justification.

II

Stewart holds that Kierkegaard has wrenched Hegel out of context, by taking him to task for his understanding of religion in a text (*Philosophy of Right*) that has little to do with religious matters. Six years after the publication of *Fear and Trembling*, *Anti-Climacus*, the pseudonymous author of *Practice in Christianity*, echoes Kierkegaard's earlier impressions: "Why has Hegel made conscience and the state of conscience in the sin-

gle individual “a form of evil” (See *Rechts-Philosophie*)? Why? Because he deifies the established order.”⁴ How might one be said to deify the established order? Surely, by claiming that there is no court of appeal higher than *Sittlichkeit*, the social morality which preserves the established order.

If Stewart, and, for that matter, Kierkegaard, are right in reading the Hegel of the *Philosophy of Right* as affirming that there is nothing above *Sittlichkeit*, then it is hard to fathom how the author behind both *Fear and Trembling* and *Practice in Christianity* can be said to have misconstrued Hegel. To be sure, Stewart argues that, in the very book that seems to provoke Kierkegaard’s ire, Hegel has in fact left some room for individual conscience; but it isn’t enough. Whenever individual conscience conflicts with social morality, social morality remains regnant. (p. 63) Ultimately, Stewart’s claim that Kierkegaard’s critique is grounded in a reading that takes Hegel out of context would be more compelling if Stewart could show that in other contexts, Hegel describes faith in ways that are compatible with *Fear and Trembling*.

In the first movement of the essay, Stewart acknowledges that for Kierkegaard the absolute validity of Abraham’s actions “comes from God himself”. (p. 62) Stewart has that right, and more. Pressing a question that Kant took up, Stewart quotes Kierkegaard as asking, “how does the single individual assure himself that he is legitimate?” (p. 65) That is, how is an Abraham supposed to know that it is God’s voice he is hearing and not the voice of his own derangement? Summarising the second *Problema* of *Fear and Trembling* Stewart writes, “The upshot of Kierkegaard’s analysis is that he cannot ... Abraham can never be wholly certain in the sense of discursive rationality ... Therefore his belief is not one of certainty or complacency but rather of deep anxiety and tension.” (p. 65)

But although he accepts that for Kierkegaard Abraham can only be justified by God Himself, Stewart also follows Hegel in understanding *Fear and Trembling* as a brief on behalf of the very subjectivism that Kierkegaard had frowned on in *The Concept of Irony*. Stewart replies on Hegel’s behalf to the critique of his views inherent in *Fear and Trembling* by considering the matter as “understood in the context of political philosophy”. (p. 68) In other words, Stewart does to Kierkegaard what he thinks Kierkegaard has done to Hegel. He reads Kierkegaard through the eyes of the Hegel of the *Philosophy of Right*, and surmises that from this perspective Abraham could only assure himself that he was legitimate by appealing to the strength of his personal convictions. Stewart judges that in his remark to Sec. 140 of the *Philosophy of Right* “Hegel seems to address

Kierkegaard's position directly and reduce it to absurdity." (p. 68) There Hegel writes "But if a good heart, a good intention, a subjective conviction are set forth as the sources from which conduct derives its worth, then there is no longer any hypocrisy or immorality at all." In other words, if good intentions become our criterion for moral evaluation, it is good night to morality.

Stewart admonishes – and Kierkegaard would not gainsay him here – that a policy such as the one Stewart has attributed to Kierkegaard would be extremely parlous in that it would place certain convictions and the actions that followed from them beyond criticism. Nowhere, however, does Kierkegaard suggest that Abraham is assured that he is following God's orders because he judges his convictions to be sufficiently strong. Indeed nowhere in the *corpus* of the man who wrote "Let no one misinterpret all my talk about pathos and passion to mean that I intend to sanction every unshaven passion"⁵ is there any indication that Kierkegaard believed passionate convictions to be self-justifying. If the strength of conviction were in fact Abraham's criterion, then it, no less than discursive reason, could easily produce the cocksurety that Stewart himself reads *Fear and Trembling* as disallowing. Though Stewart's Hegel seems to dismiss the possibility, Johannes *dè silentio* the poet of faith, tells us that Abraham was only able to draw his sword by the power of the absurd.

III

This brings us to the other horn of the dilemma. If Kierkegaard is not simply appealing to self-justifying passions, and is instead asserting that "Abraham must be right or must know the truth in some sense" it must follow that "Abraham's claim to truth must be based on reasons which are in principle available to all and thus subject to debate and criticism." (p. 76) But this, of course, is what Kierkegaard denies, so he is committing the "contradiction of saying that Abraham is *morally* correct or virtuous without giving any reasons for why." (p. 77) But, as Stewart himself had been at some pains to point out a little earlier, Kierkegaard does not claim that Abraham was morally correct or virtuous. Quite the opposite. It would be a contradiction, since "the ethical is the universal", to claim there was an *ethical* justification that was not communicable. But Abraham's justification if he has one, is very clearly and repeatedly said to be beyond ethics.⁶

It is as though, for all Kierkegaard's rhetorical vehemence and passion, Stewart cannot quite bring himself to believe that he really is saying what he is saying. Stewart's argument, quoted above, was that, if Abraham is right, then his claim to be must be based on generally accessible reasons. In *this context*, the conclusion cannot be assumed to follow from the premise. Kierkegaard is asking us to consider the possibility that someone may be justified before God, despite his inability to give an account of his actions to other people. Now, one could try to argue that he fails in this attempt, that what he asks us to consider really is unthinkable; but it isn't good enough to simply assert this as though it were an obvious truth. For the argument to get a dialectical grip on Kierkegaard, it must use principles that he would accept, not rely on the very ones that he is calling into question. Stewart, though, relies on an equation of justification with rationally articulated ethical justification as if this were uncontentious, whereas this is in fact the whole point at issue.

Of course, this is not to say that Hegel and Stewart are wrong about the substantive issue. We are naturally inclined to think their way. Abraham is a scandal and a paradox because he challenges such deep-rooted assumptions. Johannes *de silentio* explicitly denies having Abraham's faith, and also denies understanding it. He starts with the natural assumption that there is nothing higher than the ethical, the universal, the rationally articulable and then presents Abraham, as best he can, as a counter-example to this assumption, one which forces us to think whether we should accept it in a wholly unqualified fashion. (Abraham suspends the ethical, he doesn't abolish it.) If, on reflection, we find that we cannot abandon the natural Hegelian assumptions, we will at least have had things clarified, since we will now see that we cannot consistently maintain a Biblical faith as well. However, to simply refuse to question the assumptions at all, to take them for granted, as Stewart does here, is really not to engage with the challenge that Kierkegaard is posing.

Notes

1. *Kierkegaardiana* 19 (1998). Further references to this article will be indicated by page numbers in our text.
2. Or *Johannes de silentio*. Stewart does not mention the fact that *Fear and Trembling* is attributed to a pseudonym. However, it seems pretty clear that it is Kierkegaard and not just Johannes who is siding with Abraham and against Hegel, and we shall continue to follow Stewart and speak of Kierkegaard as the author here.
3. *Fear and Trembling*, trans H. and E. Hong (Princeton University Press, 1983) pp 54-55, 68-69, 82.
4. *Practice in Christianity*, trans H. and E. Hong (Princeton University Press, 1991) p 87.
5. *Journals and Papers*, ed and trans H. and E. Hong (Indiana University Press, 1967-78) III, 3127.
6. See, for instance, *Fear and Trembling* pp 55-6, 59, 70-71, 82.

Kierkegaard and Hegel on Faith and Politics

Jon Stewart

It was with a profound sense of pleasure and satisfaction that I learned of the review article by Gordon Marino and Anthony Rudd in response to my essay “Hegel’s View of Moral Conscience and Kierkegaard’s Interpretation of Abraham.” It is always an honor to have one’s work taken seriously by distinguished scholars and to receive carefully considered responses to one’s research. It was also with great pleasure that prior to reading the review, I willingly consented to the generous offer of the editors of this journal to respond to it since I felt certain that the comments it contained would stimulate an interesting and productive discussion. Unfortunately my enthusiasm was quickly disappointed as I read the review, for it seemed to me to be based on a fundamental misunderstanding of my article. Thus, it is only with great reluctance and conscious of my promise to the editors that I write this response since I cannot imagine that the readers of this journal will benefit from my simply restating what I have already said in the article in order to clarify a misunderstanding which has not been a general one.

The goal of my essay was to present two interpretive options to the difficult passage at the beginning of “Problema I” in *Fear and Trembling*, in which reference is made to the section “The Good and Conscience” in Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*. My procedure was to try to understand what to make of this reference by trying to see it in terms of, on the one hand, Hegel’s social-political philosophy and, on the other hand, the statements made about faith and revelation in *Fear and Trembling* as a whole. The interpretive thesis that I came to and that I set forth in the essay was that either “Kierkegaard’s reference to Hegel in this context is out of place since Hegel’s goal in the *Philosophy of Right* is wholly different from Kierkegaard’s here, or that seen in the context of Hegel’s politi-

cal philosophy, Kierkegaard's own position ultimately reduces to absurdity" (pp. 58-59). My procedure was then to assume first the one option, (i.e. that the reference to Hegel is inappropriate since Kierkegaard is not concerned with political philosophy), and then to explore what would follow from that assumed premise; then I assumed the other possibility, (i.e. that the reference to Hegel is appropriate since Kierkegaard is in fact concerned with politics in *Fear and Trembling*), and did the same. Thus, I tried to sketch out these two interpretive options and their consequences in the hope of arriving at a better understanding of the passage in question and of Kierkegaard's relation to Hegel generally.

Given that the essay was interpretive and not critical, one can imagine my surprise when I read that my paper represented "a vigorous Hegelian critique of Kierkegaard" and "a vehement attack on him." The paper was never intended to be a criticism of Kierkegaard or anyone else, let alone a vigorous or vehement one. It is inconceivable to me how a paper that purports to be nothing but interpretive can be construed as aggressively critical. Upon rereading the review I was struck by how often the authors immediately assume my position to be identical with that of Hegel. They write "Hegel and Stewart" or "For Hegel and it seems, for Stewart," thus immediately making an inference which is by no means grounded in anything said in the paper. Indeed, the only claims that I make are interpretive ones concerning the passage in question, and I can hardly flatter myself with the belief that my own political views could be of any interest whatsoever to the readers of this journal. This conflation of what are imagined to be my own opinions on politics and the social order with those of Hegel perhaps explains the mistaken perception that the essay was intended to offer a criticism of Kierkegaard.

The first half of my procedure involved assuming that the reference to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is simply out of place since the context of the two works is so different as to defy genuine comparison. Kierkegaard is concerned with religion and Hegel with political philosophy. On this reading, the reference at the beginning of "Problema I" can be seen as rhetorical or polemical, but it is difficult to see in it anything of philosophically substantive content, given the two radically different contexts. Thus, as the authors agree, "If ... Kierkegaard quotes Hegel in a rather misleading way in a couple of places, then the result would be a fairly trivial one" (pp. 245-246).

The real criticism issued by the authors concerns the second half of my thesis. The main claim is that I have begged the question in the favor

of Hegel by assuming that all belief and action must be discursively justifiable. Thus, they argue, I have missed the point of *Fear and Trembling* and have not recognized the radical nature of Kierkegaard's position. The authors have misleadingly quoted a number of passages from my article out of their proper context in order to make this charge. The context of this part of the essay, which is clearly indicated in the thesis, is that of ethics and political philosophy. The interpretive assumption of the second half of my thesis, which is hypothetical, is that the reference to Hegel's political philosophy is correct and appropriate since Kierkegaard also wants to make some comments or reflections relevant for that field. Given this assumption, the comments in my analysis are to be understood *in the context of political philosophy*. It is in this context where we all feel the right to demand reasons and some form of discursive justification for action. The authors, however, quote from the essay, giving the impression that Stewart and Hegel require this kind of justification not just in the political sphere but generally. Thus, Stewart and Hegel have missed the point since the upshot of *Fear and Trembling* is that revelation and faith are not discursive, justifiable or communicable. But in the analysis there is no talk of faith but of ethics and political philosophy, and all are in agreement, i.e. Marino, Rudd, Stewart and Hegel, that *in political philosophy* it is not too much to demand that people bring their reasons for action to the table for negotiation. Thus, there is no question begging since there is no critical claim being made here. I am simply exploring the results of the assumption (explicitly stated in the thesis) that Kierkegaard's reference to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is appropriate since he too is discussing questions of political philosophy. All that is being said is that in the political sphere it seems desirable to demand reasons for actions. Given that this is what Kierkegaard denies in the case of Abraham, we seem to be obliged to understand his discussion in a different context, i.e. in the context of religion. Here one can perfectly well have beliefs or perform actions which are not justifiable or communicable, and no one has any problem with this, certainly not Stewart or Hegel. If the authors demand an account of this in Hegel, then I refer them to his profoundly Kierkegaardian defense of faith against Enlightenment reason in the section "The Enlightenment" from the "Spirit" chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There Hegel, who himself studied theology, shows how the arguments of reason against faith are question-begging and fail to grasp the true inward nature of faith.

At the end of the review there is a telling sentence which I quote

here: "If, on reflection, we find that we cannot abandon the natural Hegelian assumptions, we will at least have had things clarified, since we will now see that we cannot consistently maintain a Biblical faith as well" (249). This claim is striking since the entire body of the article purports to discuss *Fear and Trembling* and the statements made there about faith, but then suddenly here at the end this is identified immediately with "Biblical faith." Kierkegaard's analyses of the Bible are certainly interesting and illuminating, but can they so readily be taken as synonymous with the basis for Biblical faith? The Bible is open to a manifold of interpretations, and for this reason it means many things to many people. Certainly one has the right to interpret it in a manner that is at variance with Kierkegaard's analyses. Thus, one can ask how helpful it is to identify a passage in *Fear and Trembling* with the basis for "a Biblical faith." Such an identification seems to betray an investment on the part of those who perceive anything that contains so much as a hint of a criticism of Kierkegaard as being an open attack on the Bible and on their faith. By assuming that Kierkegaard represents Biblical faith, the authors put themselves in the position of having to defend him at all cost. But surely there could be other understandings of Biblical faith than Kierkegaard's interpretation, and Biblical faith does need to stand or fall with him. (Let it be noted that Hegel himself did not view his position as undermining Biblical faith, but as strengthening it.) But the question of one's own personal view of Biblical faith is not an issue for scholarship, and it was certainly not the issue of my paper. Moreover, the disposition of wanting to identify Kierkegaard with Biblical faith does not serve either Kierkegaard, the man, or Kierkegaard scholarship. At least as I read his texts, the last thing Kierkegaard wanted was to become an icon for someone else's faith.

The Ethical and Religious in Kierkegaard

Lou Matz

I

In his "Hegel's View of Moral Conscience and Kierkegaard's Interpretation of Abraham," Jon Stewart attempts to clarify the meaning and implications of Kierkegaard's reference in *Fear and Trembling* to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Stewart's thesis is that either Kierkegaard's reference to Hegel is entirely irrelevant for the analysis of faith in *Fear and Trembling* since the *Philosophy of Right* concerns the issue of social ethics and not religious faith, or that if the reference to Hegel is relevant, then Kierkegaard has unwittingly invited a *reductio ad absurdum* to his own position on ethics or political philosophy.¹ It appears, however, that Stewart wants to press further the Hegelian argument against Kierkegaard. He suggests that Hegel's critique of the moral point of view or subjective moralities can be applied to Kierkegaard's conception of religious faith *per se* since the same philosophical difficulty exists for religious faith as for morality if justificatory appeal is made solely in terms of the particularity or subjectivity of one's own conscience. The philosophical difficulty is how one knows that what one's conscience judges as moral or what one interprets as a divine revelation is really the case. Stewart says, "It is clear that Kierkegaard in the final analysis wants to make room for the legitimate place of direct revelation. This is an issue which he wrestles with not only here but also elsewhere in the *corpus*. For Hegel, by contrast, individual self-certainty about a divine revelation or a voice of conscience is not truth" (p. 72). So it is Kierkegaard's ethical position which is implied by his view of faith *and* his conception of religious faith *per se* which are subject to Hegel's *reductio*. Accordingly, the result for Kierkegaard is that he is forced into a two-horned dilemma: Abraham's action is defensible by appealing to a self-justifying conscience or Abraham must appeal to rea-

sons which are publicly accessible and amenable to criticism. But both consequences are troublesome for Kierkegaard since the former leads to Hegel's devastating critique of the moral point of view and the latter is simply inconsistent with Kierkegaard's fideism.

II

In their reply to Stewart's essay, Marino/Rudd charge Stewart with begging the question against Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard's challenge to Hegel is to entertain the possibility that an action which is unjustifiable from the standpoint of the ethical or "universal" can be justified at a higher, religious standpoint. Is there a higher standpoint than the ethical which is not amenable to rational justification? Marino/Rudd argue that Stewart mistakenly assumes that Kierkegaard is justifying religious faith, either explicitly or implicitly, by appealing to passionate convictions or some subjective principle of conscience. Kierkegaard is not; rather, the religious standpoint is to be understood – and not *justified* – through the category of the absurd.² So Stewart's first horn of the dilemma is mistakenly presented since Kierkegaard does not attempt to justify the religious standpoint at all, let alone by appealing to self-justifying, passionate convictions.

With respect to the second horn of the dilemma, Marino/Rudd claim that Stewart is wrong to suppose that justification always requires reasons which are publicly accessible. It is at this point that Marino/Rudd claim that Stewart has begged the relevant question against Kierkegaard since the task of *Fear and Trembling* is to explore the intelligibility of Abraham's teleological suspension of the ethical. As Marino/Rudd say, "Kierkegaard is asking us to consider the possibility that someone may be justified before God, despite his inability to give an account of his actions to other people" (p. 249). They admit that Kierkegaard's view might be wrong, but Stewart begs the question by relying "on an equation of justification with rationally articulated ethical justification as if this were uncontentious, whereas this is in fact the whole point at issue" (p. 249). One could put their point in other terms. Stewart was mistaken to assume that Hegel's critique of subjective moralities in the last moment of the realm of *Moralität* necessarily has relevance for a subjective view of religious faith such as Kierkegaard's. Why think that the critique of the moral point of view has any bearing on a possibly altogether different

point of view, i.e., the religious? The religious might ultimately be a higher standpoint than the ethical and not reducible to it, as Hegel argued.

III

With respect to the first horn of the dilemma, though, it is difficult to see how Kierkegaard can escape the substance of Hegel's critique. While Marino/Rudd are right that Kierkegaard does not justify Abraham's conduct by an appeal to passionate conviction, it does not help Kierkegaard to invent a new category, the absurd, and attempt to understand or perhaps "justify" Abraham's faith by means of it. The notion of the absurd must, in some way, carry justificatory force. Why? Because Abraham must believe it is God rather than his own derangement which is speaking to him and which leads him to act against the ethical. By relying solely on his own particular experience, Abraham can have no assurance *whatsoever* that it is God or the infinite at work and not his own finitude.³ To be sure, Kierkegaard's analysis of the entire ordeal highlights just this point, which is why Abraham is anxious and is unfathomable to the outside observer, but for Kierkegaard to imply that Abraham is justified by means of the absurd does not solve the difficulty. It seems that any attempt to address the problem of a true revelation must rely on some rational criteria, which must necessarily mediate between the particular Abraham and the universal God and which ultimately invites the Hegelian critique. On this point, Stewart is right to defend Hegel's *reductio* against the ethical implications of Kierkegaard's view of the religious, a *reductio* that Kierkegaard brings upon himself.

With respect to the second horn of the dilemma, is it the case that Stewart begs the question against Kierkegaard regarding the necessity of discursive justification regarding religious faith *per se*? Marino/Rudd have a point here since Stewart suggests, but does not develop, an argument. I take it that Stewart assumes that the issue regarding the ethical implications of Kierkegaard's view of faith naturally leads to a different, but related, issue: how compelling of a religious view is Kierkegaard's which has such ethical implications? How defensible is a religious view *per se* which can, in principle, separate the ethical from the religious? On this point it seems to Stewart and to me that Kierkegaard's view is deeply problematic and perhaps indefensible. There is a long history of philo-

sophical argument beginning with Plato's *Euthyphro* about the independence of the good from the gods and running through various thinkers such as Locke, Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, and J.S. Mill who criticize the attempt to separate ethics and religion, reason and revelation, since the latter must be compatible with the former. For example, Kant argues that the only basis to think there is a God in the first place is through man's moral experience, i.e., from the standpoint of pure practical reason. To suppose that a religious believer can be justified before God in any way other than through morally virtuous conduct is a religious illusion whose consequences are pseudo-worship and fanaticism.⁴ Ludwig Feuerbach makes a similar argument. He contends that the idea of a transcendent God divorced from the human experience of love and morality is a transcendental illusion since the human powers of love and morality, and not a transcendent Being, have objective, independent reality.⁵ So while Marino/Rudd are correct to question the legitimacy of Stewart's application of Hegel's critique of subjective moralities to "subjective religiosities" – if I may use this term for Kierkegaard's subjective religious view – they fail to consider how the ethical implications of a subjective religiosity immediately raise serious questions about the legitimacy of such a conception of the religious itself. Both philosophers and the major religious traditions (e.g., Christianity and Buddhism) oppose Kierkegaard's separation of the ethical and religious categories, and the burden of proof is on Kierkegaard to demonstrate the contrary.

I have one final observation. In their penultimate sentence, Marino/Rudd claim, "If, on reflection, we find that we cannot abandon the natural Hegelian assumptions, we will at least have had things clarified, since we will now see that we cannot consistently maintain a Biblical faith as well" (p. 249). This conclusion appears to be a *non sequitur*. The fact that religious beliefs, like scientific, legal, moral, and other practical beliefs, might require reasons which can be publicly defensible does not imply that a Biblical faith cannot be "consistently maintained." This seems to assume that a fideistic or Kierkegaardian view is the only possible basis for a Biblical faith. But this is false. There are other ways to defend the Biblical faith, like Kant's, which defends the central tenets of the Biblical faith by means of a rational faith. Stewart's aim in his essay, which has spawned this debate, was not to examine the relevance of Kierkegaard for Biblical faith but simply to follow out the ethical implications of Kierkegaard's conception of the religious and to suggest how Hegel's critique of the moral point of view raises questions about the acceptability

of Kierkegaard's conception of the religious itself. To be sure, Stewart does not always clearly distinguish between these two points and does not develop the latter argument enough. Nevertheless, Kierkegaard's separation of the ethical and religious raises serious problems for his conception of the religious, and in this sense, the animating intuition of Stewart's essay, i.e., that Hegel's critique of subjective morality is also relevant for assessing Kierkegaard's conception of the religious *per se*, is insightful.

Notes

1. Stewart, *Kierkegaardiana* 19 pp. 58-59. I believe that Stewart's argument would have been better served by using the term "morality" rather than "political philosophy" since his analysis focusses on the moral implications of Kierkegaard's conception of the religious. Stewart's word choice, though, is understandable since for Hegel morality is dependent on the principles and institutions of a rational political order (*Sittlichkeit*).
2. Marino and Rudd, "Abraham and Hegel: A Reply to Stewart," the last two sentences of the last paragraph of section II.
3. Kierkegaard recognizes this problem in his *Postscript*. He says, "In a solely subjective definition of truth, lunacy and truth are ultimately indistinguishable, because they may both have inwardness" (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Volume I, trans. Hong & Hong. Princeton University Press, 1992, p.194). Kierkegaard says, though, that the difference between the two depends on the object of inwardness; the content of madness is a fixed, finite object, whereas the content of religious truth is the infinite. Of course, this qualification simply raises the problem anew – how does one know it is the infinite?
4. See Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Greene & Hudson (Harper Torchbooks, 1960), pp. 156 ff.
5. See Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. Eliot (Prometheus Books, 1989), p. 16.