

REVIEWS

Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff,
Johnny Kondrup, Finn Hauberg Mortensen (eds.)

Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter 1-3, K1-3

[Søren Kierkegaard's Writings 1-3, K1-3]

G.E.C. GAD, Copenhagen 1997.

The first five volumes of *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* (SKS), containing *From the Papers of One Still Living* and *The Concept of Irony* (vol. 1), *Either/Or* (vols. 2 & 3) along with two corresponding volumes of commentary (K1 and K2-3), make up the first portion of that which – at the earliest by the year 2009 – will comprise a complete critical-historical edition consisting of 55 volumes: 28 volumes of text and 27 volumes of commentary. The project is being financed by the Danish National Research Foundation, which in 1993 bequeathed monies for the foundation of the *Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre* in Copenhagen – and thus also to a national philological undertaking of monumental proportions. Apart from the philological team at the Centre, several translators and consultants, both foreign and domestic, are involved in the edition.

In its final state SKS will have gathered within its covers everything that previously was found, in the three editions of *Samlede Værker*, the two separate editions of Kierkegaard's journals and papers (*Efterladte Papirer* and *Papirer*) and the book *Breve og Aktstykker vedrørende Søren Kierkegaard*. But that's not all. An electronic edition (SKS-E) which, in addition to what has been mentioned above, will collate all the various instantiations of Kierkegaard's writings, rough drafts, published and unpublished included. Not a single deleted comma will escape this electronic eye – an eye whose movements will be coordinated within a synoptic system which the reader can use, moving either horizontally or vertically within and between the various texts and editions. For quite understandable reasons, this search device has not been included in the book version (SKB-B), otherwise it would most certainly burst one's bookshelf.

Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter exhibits a well-wrought precision and a finely tooled elegance, deftly crafted and ambitious, bristling with a modern critical-historical self-consciousness. The Magister's own leisurely curving initials grace the bottom of the front cover of each volume's fine, blue-grey cloth binding, itself ensconced within a cerulean dustjacket.

Between the covers, the reader is met by a very pleasant and readily readable font of Palatino and Optima, set upon high quality paper. If you are man of letters these tomes will warm the cockles of your heart. Moreover, a new organizational approach lies implicit in the very title *Skrifter*, for the formerly held distinction between *Værker* and *Papirer* has been abandoned. While the reasons for this are of a practical nature, they are also based upon a changed perspective concerning the very nature of the material itself which the publishers are employing (an complete account of the reasons behind this decision will appear in K17). In what follows, I will present the five published volumes and the principles by which these were produced.

But also new is the fact that the reader confronts the text alone, without the aid of those footnotes to which we have previously all been so accustomed. So, be prepared to slap yourself on the forehead upon running into a long quotation in either Greek or Latin, for example, because you must, quite literally, abandon Kierkegaard in order to find a translation. And this may certainly seem annoying, but the arrangement of the text is such that even the most distraught reader can make something out of it: along the edges of the principle text, in the side margins, are line numbers which, along with the page number, guide you painlessly to the corresponding commentary volume.

Moreover, two words crystallized within this reviewer's mind while reading these fine books: transparency and clarity! In the commentry volume you will find – apart from bibliografical informations and a precise discription of Kierkegaards handwritten manuskripts – a *Textual Evaluation* [Tekstredøgørelse] – where you can follow that individual text's production history from the first rough draft conceived by Kierkegaard, (in outline form, obviously; the full version will only appear in *SKS-E*) to the details of the final publication's price and sales. In the first volume of commentary, K1, the history of the SKS edition is itself recounted. There are 64 pages describing the edition's philological principles, which might seem to be excessive, but, in fact, is not, for the *Technical Guidelines* (for printed texts) [Tekstkritiske retningslinier. Trykte skrifter] of *SKS* comprise nothing other than a tale about the restless wanderings of the *Source Texts* [Tekstkilder] of existenz throughout a hundred years of uneven publication procedures.

SKS's criticism of its predecessors has less to do with typography, printing errors, omissions of texts, etc., and more to do with a fundamental

criticism of the philological principles underlying these three editions. Firstly, those principles A.B. Drachmann, J.L. Heiberg, and H.O. Lange used as the basis for establishing a fundamental text are called into question, especially since the text, they established at the turn of the century has subsequently been the basis for all the other editions. Secondly, criticism is leveled at the critical apparatus various editions, particularly that of Rohde's and the third edition for Drachmann, Heiberg, and Lange were all classically trained philologists, experienced in methodically discriminating between surviving pieces of texts and mere fragments in their search for an historical *original*. Given this, one can easily understand the following dictum Drachmann wrote while in 1903 while in the midst of his editorial work: "The old methodical axioms which are set fast in classical philology apply, without exception, to S.K.'s text, although its transmission is apparently basically different from that of classical writers" (Aage Kabell, *Kierkegaardstudiet i Norden*, Copenhagen, 1948, p. 157). Here the actual art of printing books is thus seen as having, in principle, merely an *apparent* difference from the philological work. One consequence of this was that, in practice, Drachmann, Heiberg and Lange undervalued the first print (the original edition) as a primary source. Despite the fact, that only few of Kierkegaard's books – in his lifetime – came out in second editions, they did not consider, that the text that first appears in print is in fact the text closest to the author.

In order to establish the different texts Drachmann, Heiberg and Lange turned to the various layers in a particular work's production history – from draft materials, clean copies, and finished manuscripts – so to create as a philological *pedigree* through which the task of distilling out the *real* Kierkegaard was undertaken. Because of this, they made a host of conjectures and corrections concerning the text of the first or in some cases the second edition. They also adjusted the spelling and punctuation to more approximate contemporary norms. Where the harried writer wrote *orginal* [*sic*], for instance, they – completely without irony – corrected it to the more grammatically correct *original*.

However, *SKS* occupies a new, autonomizing philological standpoint. Which, of itself, takes issue with the romantic hermeneutics of *letzer Hand* (Schleiermacher, Dilthey) and intensionalism, preferring Gadamer's concept of *effective-history*, thus prioritizing the first edition of Kierkegaard's writings as a way of establishing the primary text. Consequently, this means that the text of the first edition – as it says in the guidelines – "finds itself at the crossroads between production-history

and reception-history" (K1, p. 16f), in the process of creating the text's public character. For it is precisely this text that confronted Kierkegaard's contemporaries, and this text laid the foundations for the first reception and criticism of Kierkegaard's work.

As a consequence of prioritizing the first edition, *SKS* has assured itself an absolutely consistent foundation for text establishment, because a first edition copy can always be found, while, by contrast, one can often not find a finished manuscript or a subsequent edition. Moreover, with such a prioritization, one avoids a phenomenon which, according to *SKS*, hallmarks the earlier editions, namely that their production represented a synthetic or *blended text*. Furthermore, the only corrections which *SKS* undertook are those which directly effected the text's meaning-bearing elements, such as common printing errors or errors which are obviously due to mistakes in typesetting. Here, finished manuscripts and clean copies are cited, so that every change is accounted for by a note at the bottom of the proper page. In marked contrast to *SV1* and *SV2*, where the apparatus for textual critique – which was, by the way, as uninsightful as it was impenetrable – was placed at the back of the book. The same principle is employed concerning typography. *SKS* has not engaged in an imitative practice – as is the case with *SV2* – but rather has taken seriously Kierkegaard's typographic signals such as spacing and italics, when they, too, are meaning-bearing elements even though the layout of the texts themselves is printed in a modern fashion.

But what undoubtedly distinguishes *SKS* the most as a critical-historical edition is the new commentary it provides – almost ten-fold that of earlier editions. In a preface to the first edition, Drachmann, Heiberg, and Lange write: "The informative annotations below the text are only a first attempt at a real commentary, to achieve anything even resembling completeness must be the task of the future". And it is precisely this task which *SKS* has now set itself to achieve – so that this command to the future just might be fulfilled in a little more than a hundred years.

The primary notes supplementing the first edition were mainly limited to translations of Greek and Latin citations, along with references to relevant Bible verses. Merely this, despite those previous editors having a timely perspective concerning events and people important in Kierkegaard's life, for example his relationship to Regine and his confrontation with the *Corsair*. Rohde, however, in his third edition went significantly beyond the commentaries found in the first and second editions, but, at

the same time, came to grief for building something onto the basetext which looked more like an interpretative schema than an attempt at modern textual criticism. And these were not just his interpretations, they were often other people's interpretations, which gave the whole thing the feel of being an interpretative key.

By contrast, *SKS* stresses the *factual* dimension of its commentaries: a commentary should be working *for* the text, not *with* the text; it should "open up, not close off, the text to new interpretations" (K1, p. 51). Thus, a commentary, besides providing translations of passages in foreign languages, should aid a modern reader who might otherwise be destined to lose the context. In the first place, this lostness has to do with references found in the text to historical places and practices as well as phrases, words, and concepts that were typical of Kierkegaard's time. Who today, for example, would actually know that *billig* (which now means cheap or inexpensive) once meant, in the Danish of the 1840's, just or fair (*retfærdig*)? Or, that "*Peter Madsens Gang*" (Peter Madsen's Path) in *The Concept of Irony* refers to a narrow little sidestreet off Østergade – an expression which in the minds of Kierkegaard's contemporaries would have been synonymous with the fleshly path to perdition? Or that the infamous theater joke in one of the *Diapsalmata*'s many artful aphorisms refers to an actual theater fire in St. Petersburg on the 14th of February, 1836? If, on the other hand, you have ever had an urge to find out how Kierkegaard's understanding of Socratic irony looked before it evolved into the form found in *The Concept of Irony*, then you can look it up for yourself on page 169 of K1. There it is, depicted in the form of a puzzle picture which shows Napoleon wandering around his own grave. In other words, the commentary volumes are worth a study in themselves as independent cultural and historical reference works.

However, rather more problems face these commentaries responsible for exposing Kierkegaard's more or less covert literary borrowings, ranging from direct quotations to paraphrases to veiled allusions. Kierkegaard approached his work with a background that ranged up and down the whole philosophical, theological, and literary tradition from Plato to Hegel as well as having a hefty smattering of the newer ideas in psychology and the natural sciences. Needless to say, if one were to hold Kierkegaard's extraordinary memory up against his claim as a productive genius that he really wasn't able to actually read books since he, while reading, to a larger extent developed himself, then one would be in the

possession of a very useful grasp of the peculiar intertextual *tightness* which distinguishes his texts.

An enormous amount of work has already gone into the first commentary volumes, and no doubt there will come from various sources a host of inquiries of the type: why have they not identified this or that obvious issue? (I, for instance, have a personal bone to pick concerning H.L. Martensen's 1841 review of Heiberg's *Nye Digte* in "The Fatherland", nr. 399 – where is the reference to the fact that, in one of the aphorism's in *Diapsalmata*, Kierkegaard, from his eagle's nest, is weaving Martensen's images into the tapestry of his own text?) But such critical salt loses its savor given the fact that *SKS* simply cannot, in any way, shape, or form claim omniscience. When the choice is made to split the commentary from the basetext, it is done especially (and also) in recognition of the fact that such work is by dint of necessity a *process*, because, in the future, one can make changes in the commentaries without having to change the basetext – and thus Kierkegaard can stand fast once and for all.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my best wishes for the future work on this edition which will undoubtedly stand as a milestone in scholarly research. This reviewer certainly looks forward in eager anticipation to its continuation. If the publishers maintain the same high level of quality until the last "i" is dotted and "t" crossed, then Kierkegaard will have finally received the edition which we and he expected – one in which the hopeful heart profits by the critical comma.

Thor Arvid Dyrenud
(Translated by Stacey Ake)

*Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff,
Johnny Kondrup, Finn Hauberg Mortensen (eds.)*

Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter 4, K4

[Søren Kierkegaard's Writings 4, K4]

G.E.C. GAD, Copenhagen 1998, 527 + 634 pp.

Søren Kierkegaard is an enormously prolific author who masters an elegant polyphony. If the style is the man, it is difficult to figure out who the man is. But that is not the real issue, for what concerns him – in the

words of one of his own authors, Johannes de silentio – is not the artful web of the imagination, but the shudder of the thought.

Still, Kierkegaard is inclined to put his narrative gifts to use. In the same book, *Fear and Trembling*, the author tries to understand how Abraham could have considered sacrificing his son Isaac. He begins by presenting several versions of how it might have been. These graphic retellings of the Old Testament account are perhaps the best piece of writing in all of Danish literature.

And they show that bible stories are not always something to tell to children. The clarity of the imagination breaks down, and the shudder of the thought is laid bare: a father about to kill his son.

“The shudder of the thought” could serve as a sort of formula for the works that have just been published as the fourth volume of *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*. The diligent team at the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre is still, remarkably, managing to keep up with Kierkegaard’s own tempo of publication. In fact, they are about to surpass him. The accompanying commentary has more pages than the works in the fourth volume themselves: 640 versus 528. Likewise, on the editorial front the same thing is about to happen with Kierkegaard that happened, on previous occasions, with, among others, Plato, The Bible, and Shakespeare – not undeservedly.

In one volume we now have *Repetition* from 1843, the novel about the forms of life of memory, hope, and thus repetition; and then, as mentioned, *Fear and Trembling* from the same year, a piece of “dialectical lyric” about the difficulties of understanding what faith is; *Philosophical Fragments* from 1844, about the relation between the Greek and – let me say it right out – the Christian; then *The Concept of Anxiety*, also from 1844, about man’s groundless relation to himself and his world: anxiety and original sin. And finally, like a salve on the wound that Kierkegaard sees it as his task to keep reopening – the little piece *Prefaces* from the same year, which is really a bit of light reading.

That is, to put it briefly, a proper mouthful. But Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff and all the others help us chew on it. Here we have an edition characterised by great precision. The texts themselves are solidly and consistently established. The accounts of their origin and the commentaries that accompany them are characterised by uncompromising accuracy. It actually looks as if we are about to have the definitive Kierkegaard edition.

And so it is difficult to find anything to criticise. I did manage to

find one single minor typographical error to which I will pettily draw attention: In one place in the commentary, Augustine's work is called "Om Guds stat" [*State of God*] instead of "Om Guds stad" [*City of God*].

With the fourth volume in hand one can well understand how it is possible to devote one's whole life to reading Kierkegaard. Not just because his works are so delightfully written, nor because they are so multi-layered. But rather because, in these particular works, one is confronted with the shudder of the thought: that man is not, without further ado, what he is, and that he does not belong in the world. I doubt that I have read anything else that has dramatised to such a degree this broken relation. Unless, perhaps, in some of the old gnostic writings.

Reading Kierkegaard, then, can transform the way one sees the world. But how often can this happen? Can it persist? Can it be repeated?

For my part, I have to admit that things are not exactly as they were before. It is perhaps the expression of a sort of bourgeois torpor that the shudder of the thought, as I reread *Repetition*, does not have the same hold on me that it used to. Is it just me, or is it the times that have changed?

For Kierkegaard, every human being is an exception that proves no rule, but is also proven by no rule, no norm or normalcy. But this is why the world in general need not find itself in a constant state of emergency – as it has not been, in recent times. The exception is only an exception in relation to the rule.

With this new edition, though, we are assured that Kierkegaard's work will stand, in worse times than these.

Niels Grønkjær
(Translated by Michelle Kosch)

*Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff, Jette Knudsen,
Johnny Kondrup, Finn Hauberg Mortensen (eds.)*

Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter 5, K5

[Søren Kierkegaard's Writings 5, K5]

G.E.C. GAD, Copenhagen 1998, 469 + 471 pp.

As the new edition of *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* moves onto its fifth volume, readers will have become familiar with the general format of the series, its high production qualities and aesthetic attractions. These are

books that are good to have, to hold and to read, even if, unlike the Danish third edition, one cannot slip them into one's pocket for reading on the plane while travelling to some international gathering of Kierkegaardians. Nor would any but the most compulsive or determined of those who like writing notes in their books feel comfortable about scrawling over such well-presented pages. Such issues are not unimportant in their own way, but clearly the key issue is, of what value are these books to the scholar? Will they contribute to a better understanding of the works themselves and will they facilitate a more informed critical debate?

One way of trying to answer these questions is by looking at the way in which the commentary volumes compare with the apparatus supplied by previous editions. Focussing on the commentary of the first of the 1843 discourses, I shall note some points of comparison and contrast between *SKS* and the third Danish edition (*SV3*) and the English translation by Howard and Edna Hong in Volume 5 of their series *Kierkegaard's Writings*, till *SKS* one of the most extensively annotated editions of Kierkegaard's works. Of course, beyond sharing the goal of making Kierkegaard accessible to contemporary readers, the specific aims of these three editions are somewhat different, and the differences are clearly testified by what is included or, often, excluded from the notes.

Whilst *SKS* offers an extensive text-critical introduction, giving full manuscript, bibliographical and publication details, Hong and Hong have a 'Historical Introduction' which touches on some of the publication details, but no real text-critical discussion, although their inclusion in the supplementary section of early drafts and accompanying critical notes partially compensates for this and, in any case, it is to some extent less immediately relevant to a non-specialist English language readership. *SV3* has no introduction, although the first footnote provides the briefest of publication details. And there are other areas where *SKS* is simply and obviously superior in quantitative terms. For the first of the 1843 discourses *SV3* provides two biblical references, Hong and Hong 13 and *SKS* 22. Additionally *SKS* does not just provide chapter and verse, as the others do, but also gives the content and context of each reference. This may sometimes seem superfluous to requirements for theologically literate readers, but they must remember that many philosophical and literary readers (and perhaps, if the truth is told, also some theological readers) do not immediately recognise the scriptural background of many of Kierkegaard's passing quotes, allusions or half-quotes. *SKS* also give us references to the liturgical readings that are a background to the dis-

courses, to contemporary hymns, and to important sources such as Balle's *Lærebog* and Mynster's *Betragtninger*. Some of the later discourses also have the benefit of illustrations in *SKS*, and where Hong and Hong only reproduce the title-page of the first edition of 18 discourses, *SKS* also gives us the title-pages of the separate books. *SKS* also gives a modern Danish interpretation of archaic phrases. The relevance of this to a non-native speaker who learned Danish through reading Kierkegaard is not always clear, and it might be questioned whether such phrases as 'The Lord's House' or 'in these holy places' really need explanation. Perhaps they do.

Thus far *SKS* would seem to be a clear winner. Nevertheless, the differences between this and other editions are not only to do with the fact that it is simply more extensive than any of the others. Sometimes it says less. Hong and Hong, as translators, inevitably have to address issues not faced by Danish editions, and they devote considerable effort to justifying their preference for 'upbuilding' rather than 'edifying' as a translation of 'opbyggelige'. The principle of 'less means more' is also illustrated by two points that arise in relation to the preface to the first two discourses of 1843, the description of the discourses as 'discourses, not sermons', and the dedication to 'that individual'. With regard to the question of 'discourses not sermons' *SV3* argues that this distinction does not reflect anything especially theoretical at this point in Kierkegaard's career, that he was restrained from referring to them as 'sermons' in print lest he attract the charge of presumption on account of not being a priest, and that his restriction of the 'edifying' to the realm of ethical immanence is a later development. Hong and Hong on the contrary talk up just this point, arguing that the sermon is not only distinguished from the discourse in terms of authority and content, but also lacks the specific paradoxicality of preaching in the strong sense. *SKS* on the other hand, does not get embroiled in the debate, noting only that SK was not ordained and was therefore not legally entitled to preach, providing us with the canon law sources for the restriction of preaching to the ordained ministry. Similarly in the case of the dedication to 'that individual'. *SV3* emphasises that this is Regine, opening their footnote on the phrase simply 'dvs. Regine'. Although *SV3* does go on to note that the phrase received a wider application, they do not develop the point, whereas Hong and Hong go to some lengths to emphasise that although Regine was indeed the occasion for the dedication, the discourses have a more universal orientation, such that any serious reader can become 'that individual'. In this case *SKS* is closer to *SV3*, although it provides

us with a larger selection of the relevant journal material on which this identification is based. With regard to both these issues, it soon becomes clear that whilst both *SV3* and Hong and Hong carry a strong, if subtle, interpretative agenda – *SV3* choosing to play up the biographical aspect of the work (see especially their note to p. 40), Hong and Hong doing the opposite and emphasising instead the Christian and theological thrust of the authorship, *SKS* on the other hand is genuinely neutral, limiting itself to arming the reader with the materials that will enable him or her to reach their own judgement, but not ‘spinning’ those materials in one direction or the other.

SKS, then, is as it intends to be, a real resource to scholarship, not succumbing to the temptation of infiltrating a partisan reading under the cover of an objective apparatus. Nor is this simply a resource for those now able to read the texts in Danish: it will perhaps prove of inestimable value in the long term as a resource for translators, so that future translations of Kierkegaard will be able to offer their readers an antidote to the wider circulation of some Kierkegaard myths. Not that even the best scholarly edition will finally immunise us against myth-making altogether, for that is, after all, part of the fun of interpretation. It does give us the opportunity gradually to develop a better sense for where myth-making begins and ends.

George Pattison

Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Jon Stewart (eds.)

Kierkegaard Revisited

Proceedings from the Conference

“Kierkegaard and the Meaning of Meaning It”

Copenhagen, May 5-9, 1996

Kierkegaard Studies, Monograph Series 1

Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York 1997, xi + 508 pp.

The basic question to organizers of a research conference is whether it should concentrate on one subject or, for many reasons, let a variety of interests meet each other. Anyone who has attended both types knows their advantages and disadvantages. In this case, the organizers have chosen to represent many and widely different aspects of the Kierkegaard re-

search. So, in their preface the editors, themselves, rightly point out the “diversity of themes treated at the conference and the heterogeneity of interpretative approaches and methods employed”.

The editorial principles followed in *Kierkegaard Revisited* do not seek to disguise, reduce or mitigate this diversity and heterogeneity. In English, German and French, as far as possible documenting the course of the conference, the edition brings three primary speeches and twenty two keynote speeches, each series chronologically arranged. Without any help of an index (or of notes, concerning the contributors) the reader on his own has to try to reconstruct the possible dialogues during the actual conference, seeking out what may be related efforts or fruitful conflicts, here and there to be found at a distance of a hundred odd pages. A minor part of this work is what this review will try to do, grouping the papers in terms of their main character: information or interpretation and in terms of their themes.

The most comprehensive part of the contributions is about the extensive *reception history*, not only as documentation, but also in the shape of analysis, methodical considerations and personal reflections. So, in the first primary speech, Howard V. Hong, the Nestor of Anglophone Kierkegaard scholars, reports on “Three Score Years with Kierkegaard’s Writings”. Kierkegaard in Russia is taken care of by András Nagy, while Rasdoveta Hofmann’s paper deals with Slavonic tradition (besides Russia: Bulgaria, Poland, Serbia and the former Czechoslovakia). Jacques Lafarge’s contribution covers the conditions of Kierkegaard reception in French philosophical milieus, and François Bousquet reports on Kierkegaard in theological tradition in France and in Francophone Switzerland, Belgium and Quebec, including Roman Catholic reception. Finally, Finn Hauberg Mortensen sets out the reception in Scandinavia, regrettably only up to 1960. Together, these studies show an extreme, thought-provoking variety of reception conditions and actual receptions. Still, they leave an unfinished mosaic. The lack of a study on German reception is especially felt, not at least on account of its important retroactive impact on the Danish Kierkegaard research.

Now, the interpretations. Three contributions deal with *theological aspects*. Per Lønning asks what theological orientation Kirkegaard would favour today, and answers with a criticism of everyday Kierkegaardianism as an *entente cordiale* between radicalism and pietism, whereupon, he calls individuals, church and society back into that ecclesiastical conventionality from which Kierkegaard once chased them out. Michael Theunissen

debates whether there is a lack of a separate theology in Kirkegaard's work where theology may seem to disappear, partly into Christology, partly into anthropology. By means of especially *The Sickness unto Death* – despair as experience basis for belief – Theunissen points out the necessity of working out a soteriological concept of God as a background for what might be Kierkegaard's separate theology, beyond the tendency towards absorbing anthropology. Finally, from a Catholic point of view, Klaus Wolff considers Kierkegaard's revelation theology as a theology of "contemporaneity" with Christ.

The papers on ethics are occupied with *Works of Love*. M. Jamie Ferreira hermeneutically investigates the images of blindness and vision (closed eyes and seeing). Arne Grøn carefully analyses the unsolved problem of mutuality in *Works of Love*. Putting Kierkegaard into perspectives of Nietzsche, Scheler, Dostoevsky and Camus, Klaus-M. Kodalle looks into the asymmetric problem of forgiveness (cf. Second Section, Speech VIII).

Philosophical aspects in a broader sense is discussed in two papers. Despite many traditions (not to mention several contributions to this conference) Alastair Hannay vividly disputes the very idea that Kierkegaard should be called a philosopher, considering all that counts as philosophy today. The rarely discussed *Prefaces* is the main text in Pat Bigelow's paper which considers the philosophic desire as broken – philosophy deprives us of the very thing that it seeks to give.

Political aspects are the subjects for Robert L. Perkins and Bruce H. Kirmmse. Perkins intends to depict how Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity opposes the new world order, developed since the end of the cold war. In a similar effort to actualize, Kirmmse follows Kierkegaard's road to politics and considers the post-revolutionary, anti-authoritarian modernist as a great bulwark against fascism.

A little isolated, but, nevertheless, badly needed is Sylvia Walsh's well-balanced paper on *woman and gender* in Kierkegaard's work.

Thus far, and a bit unfairly, the matter of *what* has been prevailing in this review. Now, the matter of *how* gradually takes over while the *aspects of literary history, aesthetics, poetics and problems of reading* come to the fore. Investigating the complex connection between Kierkegaard's life and his authorship, Joakim Garff proposes future a biographical reading to uncover how Kierkegaard's life-novel is related to the classic *Bildungsroman*. Of interest to literary history is also Ernst Behler's skilled primary speech on *The Concept of Irony* and its relationship to German romanticism and romantic irony, subjects which also occur in Klaus P. Mortensen's essay

on Danish romanticism and the demons of self-reflection, especially with regard to *Either/Or*. In a minute examination, Gene Fendt discusses the problematic status of religious drama, starting from Frater Taciturnus' writ against it. Thomas Pepper studies the maieutics in *The Concept of Irony* and in *Repetition*, pleading the cause of textual approaches and accurate poetological description without any ideological baggage. George Pattison brings up the role of the reader and proposes that Kierkegaard could be read in a way akin to Bakhtin's reading of Dostoevsky, that is aware of a plurality of independent voices and consciousses, aware of a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices. A similar track is followed by Roger Poole when he argues that the pseudonyms must be kept apart, and for instance demonstrates differences between "sin" in *The Concept of Dread*, *The Sickness unto Death* and *Philosophical Fragments*.

One writer is different from all these academics – David Lodge, the author of the novel *Therapy*. In the third primary speech he tells how he made use of Kierkegaard during the composition of this novel, lavishly showing what can happen in the workshop of an author.

Where, then, is a future for Kierkegaard research? Without any doubt, the classic studies will continue, in a more or less orthodox or critical way. However, to this reviewer (not only as a literary scholar) it seems that the ongoing movement back to the texts, to the polyphony of the pseudonyms and the autonym, is full of promise, concerning both the authorship of a revisited Kierkegaard and a revisited Kierkegaard reception and research. But certainly not without hesitation.

Once again having read another 500 pages on Kierkegaard, the reviewer tends to ask himself the question Howard V. Hong often has to answer: "Don't you get tired of it?" and tends to reply in a somewhat similar spirit. Tired, yes, from attempts to reduce Kierkegaard's work to opinions, tired, also, from flatly formalistic drill. The former intention is, unKierkegaardian, occupied by *what*, the latter, hyperKierkegaardian, by *how*. But tired from the kind of dialectics of *what* and *how* which remember to ask itself *why*? Never.

Many sentences from this book keep resounding. Among them this reminder: "Kierkegaard research is, strictly speaking, only permissible when the researcher is clear – and makes his audience crystal clear – that such research is not the thing Kierkegaard himself asks for" (Per Lønning, p. 105). May the movement back to the text, carefully listening to their different voices, not forget these words.

Flemming Harrits

Dorothea Glöckner

Kierkegaards Begriff der Wiederholung

Eine Studie zu seinem

Freiheitsverständnis

Niels Jørgen Cappelørn & Hermann Deuser (eds.)

Kierkegaard Studies, Monograph Series 3,

Walter de Gruyter, Berlin - New York, 1998, ix + 300 S.

Als Schlüssel für die Auslegung von Constantin Constantius' schwieriger Schrift *Die Wiederholung* wählt Dorothea Glöckner eine Formulierung, die in verschiedenen Variationen in den Aufzeichnungen Kierkegaards aus den Jahren 1843–44 wiederkehrt: "Die Wiederholung ist das höchste Interesse der Freiheit" (Pap. IV, 11, 270 & 117, 282). Man kann sagen, daß die Abhandlung einen Versuch darstellt, die Verkettung der Begriffe Wiederholung und Freiheit ernst zu nehmen, die ein Hauptanliegen sowohl in der Schrift selbst als auch in den Papieren ist. Das Ziel, das damit verfolgt wird, ist freilich nicht nur, zu zeigen, wie das Freiheitsproblem ein grundlegendes und einendes Thema in der ansonsten sehr unsystematischen Schrift von Constantius ist, es geht viel mehr auch darum, diese Schrift als einen Schlüssel für das Verständnis des Freiheitsproblems bei Kierkegaard überhaupt darzustellen. Hiermit betritt Dorothea Glöckner einen Weg, der bis zu einem gewissen Grade in der Kierkegaardliteratur übersehen worden ist, wo der Freiheitsbegriff meist einseitig von den späteren pseudonymen Schriften her diskutiert worden ist, vor allem dem *Begriff Angst*. Dorothea Glöckner beschränkt sich also nicht auf die Schrift *Die Wiederholung*, sondern diskutiert das ganze Werk bis 1846, vor allem die Climacusschriften, im Lichte des Verständnisses vom Freiheitsproblem, das dieser Schrift zugrundeliegt und das klar in den nachfolgenden Aufzeichnungen zum Ausdruck kommt.

Wie werden nun die Probleme der Freiheit und der Wiederholung infolge Dorothea Glöckner miteinander bei Kierkegaard verknüpft? Zunächst wird festgestellt, daß das Problem der Freiheit bei Kierkegaard nicht so sehr darin besteht, das Wesen der Freiheit begrifflich einzufangen, sondern in der konkreten Realisierung der Freiheit im Handeln. Für diese Verwirklichung der Freiheit im Handeln wird die Wiederholung eine Kategorie. In der Einleitung werden drei Argumente für diesen Zusammenhang in der Schrift des Constantius angegeben. Erstens ist es nach dieser Schrift gerade die Wiederholung, "die die dem Menschen

gestellte Aufgabe, seine Freiheit zu verwirklichen, zur ersten Herausforderung qualifiziert” (S. 6). Zweitens wird in dieser Schrift die Freiheit mit der glücklichen Liebe identifiziert, und “mit dieser Thematisierung der Liebe wird aufgedeckt, daß Freiheit erst in gegenseitiger Beziehung und damit in Abhängigkeit von dieser Beziehung bestehen kann” (ibid.). Drittens wird am Ende der Schrift deutlich, daß die glückliche Liebe, deren Wesen Constantius einzufangen versucht hat, religiös ist und also eine Liebe im Verhältnis zwischen Gott und Mensch.

Die Abhandlung ist aufgeteilt in sechs Kapitel. Im ersten Kapitel werden das Anliegen des Constantius und sein Projekt in der *Wiederholung* diskutiert, das zweite Kapitel führt eine Unterscheidung ein zwischen einem ästhetischen Verständnis von Freiheit, repräsentiert durch den jungen Mann, und dem religiösen Verständnis, das Constantius selbst vertritt. Dieses Kapitel wird durch eine spannende Diskussion über die Reue als “der ‘weibliche’ Weg der Freiheit” abgeschlossen (S. 89-96). Das dritte Kapitel versucht die Bedeutung der Wiederholung vom Gegensatz zum griechischen Erinnerungsgedanken und dem idealistischen Gedanken der Vermittlung her einzufangen. Kapitel vier und fünf hängen zusammen als Versuche, darzustellen, wie die Kategorie der Wiederholung ein Verständnis sowohl des Entstehens des Individuums (Kap. 4) als auch der Wirklichkeit als solcher (Kap. 5) umfaßt. Das abschließende Kapitel diskutiert die Wiederholung als Ausdruck des zeitlichen Charakters des Glaubens u.a. im Anschluß an den Essay Michael Theunissens: “Der Gebetsglaube Jesu”.

Die zentrale Frage in der Analyse des Begriffs der Wiederholung bei Dorothea Glöckner ist das Verhältnis zwischen der humanen und der spezifisch christlichen Existenz. Auch wenn sie in der Einleitung anführt, daß sie weder Kierkegaard von seinen “Quellen” noch im Lichte der Rezeption zu verstehen sucht, spürt man oft die Auseinandersetzung mit der Existenztheologie und der dialektischen Theologie als eine verborgene Voraussetzung für den Gang der Argumentation. Diese Problemstellung des Verhältnisses zwischen humaner und christlicher Existenz, die in einem gewissen Maße aus den Climacusschriften importiert ist, führt Dorothea Glöckner zu einer Unterscheidung zwischen drei Versionen des Gedankens der Wiederholung: Die dichterische Reproduktion des jungen Mannes, die religiöse Wiederholung des Constantius und die eigentliche Wiederholung, die im christlichen Glauben und christlicher Verkündigung liegt (S. 248-49).

Dorothea Glöckner hat durch ihre Abhandlung die Wiederholung-

schrift als einen entscheidenden Teil in das Frühwerk Kierkegaards zu integrieren vermocht. Die Gefahr einer solchen Integration ist natürlich, daß der Inhalt der Schrift im Lichte der altbekannten Problemstellungen aus der nachfolgenden Produktion verstanden wird, wodurch uns der Teil des Deutungshorizontes entgeht, der in dieser Schrift liegt, aber später verlorenging. Eine Lektüre der Schrift, die vom Begriff der Wiederholung bei Husserl, Heidegger oder Deleuze ausginge, würde in einer anderen Weise Gefahr laufen, eine fremde Problemstellung in die Schrift des Constantius hineinzulesen. Die hervorragende Studie von Dorothea Glöckner zum Problem der Freiheit im Lichte des Begriffs der Wiederholung hätte vielleicht ein breiteres Echo finden können, wenn sie dieses Risiko auf sich genommen hätte.

Zusammenfassend ist jedoch zu sagen, daß Dorothea Glöckner mit der Verkettung des Begriffs der Wiederholung mit dem der Freiheit nicht nur einen Aspekt des Frühwerks Kierkegaards erforscht hat, sondern einen teilweise übersehen Aspekt herausgestellt hat, unter dem man das Kierkegaardsche Werk insgesamt betrachten kann.

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(Übersetzung: Eberhard Harbsmeier)

Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Hermann Deuser (ed.)
Kierkegaard Studies: Yearbook 1996

Walter de Gruyter, Berlin - New York 1996, viii+577 pp.

Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Herman Deuser (ed.)
Kierkegaard Studies: Yearbook 1997

Walter de Gruyter, Berlin - New York 1997, viii+417 pp.

The *Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre* at The University of Copenhagen was established in December 1993. The Centre presents itself for the first time in *Søren Kierkegaard Studies. Yearbook 1996*, and for the second time in *Yearbook 1997*. Both yearbooks are divided into four sections. The first section contains the papers from the yearly research seminars at the Centre; the second contains essays by researchers who work at the Centre or in close connection with the Centre; the third consists of arti-

cles related to the new, great edition of Kierkegaard's works; and in the fourth we find news from the Centre. In the following I will have to focus and organize my review around certain topics, and I have not been able to do justice – if that is what I am doing – to all the contributions. My topics are mostly of the methodical kind, and I have regrettably little to say about the treatment of the concept of despair itself.

The first yearly seminar at the Centre, in August 1995, was devoted primarily to the first part of *The Sickness unto Death*, while the second seminar at the Centre, in August 1996, went one step further, to the second part of *The Sickness unto Death*. What makes both these sections, and especially the one in the 1996 yearbook, so interesting is that Kierkegaard scholars discuss the same or closely related issues; they communicate, agree and disagree on the same issue – and that, it seems to me, must be a big step – or a leap – forward in the Kierkegaard research.

Why did the Centre start with *The Sickness unto Death* and the pseudonym Anti-Climacus, probably the most dogmatic and frightening of all Kierkegaard's pseudonyms? The editors does not say anything about this choice, but one reason might have been the publication – in 1993 – of a small, tightly argued book by Michael Theunissen: *Der Begriff der Verzweiflung*. In this book Theunissen presents a philosophical reconstruction and a “transcending” criticism of Kierkegaard's theory of despair. – The *Yearbook 1996* starts, however, with two critics of Theunissen: with Alastair Hannay's essay “Basic Despair in *The Sickness unto Death*”, where he strongly disagrees with one of Theunissen's main reconstructive theses; and Arne Grøn's “Der Begriff Verzweiflung”, where he defends Kierkegaard's concept of despair against several critical points made by Theunissen especially in his transcending criticism.

But I will have, of course, to start with Theunissen. He presents his main theses and defence in the article “Für einen rationaleren Kierkegaard”. I would like to stop for a moment with this title. It refers, of course, mainly to Theunissen's own reconstruction, which is an effort to disclose the argumentative structure of Kierkegaard's work, but the title also reflects Theunissen's evaluation of the deplorable state of the Kierkegaard research as compared with the research on philosophers like Kant and Hegel. And in making this last claim, which is, I think, only partly true, Theunissen is also making another, perhaps more important, claim, the claim that Kierkegaard is drastically underestimated as a philosopher.

Theunissen believes that Kierkegaard in *The Sickness unto Death* pro-

ceeds in a hypothetical manner. Kierkegaard's introductory theses about man and his self – that man is a synthesis and a self posited by God – are, he claims, only hypotheses about man, which express necessary conditions for a phenomenon like despair. As it seems, these conditions have a kind of transcendental status, and they do not, in themselves, claim to describe any psychological facts about man.

Now keeping Theunissen's main view of Kierkegaard's *anthropological* concepts in mind, we will turn to his reconstruction of the theory of despair in *The Sickness unto Death*. Theunissen believes that Kierkegaard's theory of despair can be developed from one basic proposition or *Grundsatz* only. This basic proposition is not on the same level as the anthropological hypotheses about the self, it claims to describe a psychological truth about how we in fact relate to ourselves as beings of the kind described in the anthropological hypotheses. The answer in *The Sickness unto Death* is, of course: with despair. The different forms of despair in *The Sickness unto Death* can be explained as different variations of one basic form of despair. And this basic form is, according to Theunissen, the following: Immediately, we want not to be what we are ("Wir wollen unmittelbar nicht sein, was wir sind." 65).

In *The Sickness unto Death* Kierkegaard clearly makes a distinction between two main forms of despair – that of not wanting to be oneself with despair, and that of wanting to be oneself with despair – and he seems to regard the second as the basic one. This is the point the criticism of Alastair Hannay deals with, but it would be unwise, I think, to proceed too quickly at this juncture. Strictly speaking, Theunissen's *Grundsatz* is not identical with the first of the two main forms of despair at all, it is Theunissen's own invention, although, admittedly, a reformulation of the first form. Theunissen's reformulation of the second main form of despair is as follows: Immediately, we want to be what we are not (65–66). At this point it is not difficult to see that Theunissen's reformulation deviates from Kierkegaard's own formulation. Now Theunissen shows how these two reformulations fits with the fundamental concepts of Kierkegaard's anthropology: we do not want to be the synthesis of the finite and the infinite, of necessity and possibility, and we want to be what we are not, simply finite without infinity, or simply infinite without the finite.

Theunissen further argues that the first form of despair, not wanting to be what we are, is basic to the second form, wanting to be what we are not. As already mentioned, this is the point in Theunissen's analysis

which is contested by Hannay, and Hannay seems to have the evidence on his side in this matter. Kierkegaard, after all, explicitly states that all forms of despair can be reduced to the second form, wanting to be what we are, and, what is more, this second form, he says, would not be possible if it were not so that the human self was posited by something else – which is, according to the second part of the work – God. Now this implies, according to Hannay’s argument, that Kierkegaard’s analysis would not make any sense unless we introduce the idea of a true, “theological” self right from the start. Hannay says: “At any rate, I understand Kierkegaard’s *main* claim to be that the fundamental form that despair takes –...– is that of aiming at, or willingly accepting, specifications of selfhood that do *not* have the form of a selfhood established by God” (18). Wanting to be what we are, should be, on this background, a kind of defiance against our true self, so that in wanting to be what we are, we do not want to be our true self. Implicitly, therefore, in wanting to be our “own” self, so to say, we do not want to be what we are – our true self that is. In Theunissen’s reconstructive language, what is basic according to Hannay, is Theunissen’s second and derived form, wanting to be what we are not, our “own” self.

So far, it may not be easy to see what, if anything, is of importance in this disagreement. In order to see what *is* important, however, we will have to know why Hannay believes that the question of what form of despair is basic needs so much argument. The reason is that, for Hannay, Theunissen’s reconstruction is in reality a kind of existentialist “reduction” of Kierkegaard, so that the self, which we do not want to be is our own structural constitution as a self, and not, as it ought to be, the self as standing humbly before God. Theunissen’s analysis, so Hannay, “leaves it something of a mystery why the notion of a God-established self should make all the difference”(31).

One question, not explicitly discussed by Hannay, is what kind of primacy Theunissen is referring to in claiming that not wanting to be what we are is the basic form. Theunissen is not explicit about this point either, but it seems reasonable to say that the *kind* of primacy he is referring to when claiming that the first form of despair is basic, is what one might call a *logical* primacy. The proposition saying that we do not immediately want to be what we are, is logically basic to the proposition saying that we want to be what we are not. This, certainly, seems true, and Hannay admits that (25). But this *logical* point does not imply that Theunissen has got the “ontological” order wrong. On the contrary, a

philosophical argument which begins with the “obvious”, does not claim that its starting point is ontologically basic. If Hannay is right, you will have to buy Kierkegaard’s whole Christian packet in order rightly to understand his starting points, while Theunissen, on the other hand, wants to reconstruct Kierkegaard on a non-theological ground.

This difference should become even more clear in light of Hannay’s remarks about his own method. Hannay wants to read *The Sickness unto Death* “retro-analytically”, which means, he says, that wanting to be oneself as a kind of defiance can be “read into” the less conscious forms of despair (26). The difference between a retro-analytical reading on the one hand, and a reconstructive one on the other may seem trifling. But it is not. Hannay’s retro-analytical reading is an interpretation of what he takes to be Kierkegaard’s expressed intentions, Theunissen’s reconstructive reading is an effort to explain the different forms of despair from one (or two) premises which are non-theological (they have a certain Sartrean touch), and which demonstrate their value in the reconstructive interpretation of Kierkegaard’s text. This does not mean, of course, that Theunissen is committed to the view that there is no theological ontology “behind” all these different forms of despair. The point is, that if his reconstruction should succeed, he has removed one sceptical argument against Kierkegaard’s project: that the acceptance of his analysis of us humans presupposes the acceptance of his theological premises. Simply put: according to Hannay we despair because we do not want to stand humbly before God; according to Theunissen we should try to understand the different forms of despair as refusals to be the difficult kind of beings which we are.

Arne Grøn is, like Hannay, represented with two essays in the *Yearbook 1996*. The first, “Der Begriff Verzweiflung”, contains a series of critical points against Theunissen’s analysis, primarily his transcending criticism. In the second, “Kierkegaard’s Phänomenologie”, Grøn presents his own view, his basis for the criticism put forward in the first essay. Grøn, it seems to me, places himself somewhere between Theunissen’s reconstructivism on the one side and Hannay’s retro-analytical approach on the other. Grøn’s interesting interpretation of unconscious despair is retro-analytical, but not determined by what Grøn takes to be Kierkegaard’s expressed intention. The idea of a theological self is strictly speaking an external standard, and Grøn, like Theunissen, wants to understand the process of the forms of despair without assuming it, at least explicitly.

Grøn is, however, quite explicit about what he takes to be Kierkegaard's method in *The Sickness unto Death*. He refers to it as a negative phenomenology, although followed by a question mark. Kierkegaard describes a following form of despair as containing the "truth" of the foregoing one, and this is the Hegelian, phenomenological part of the method; but there is no description or theory about the positive end-state or aim of the process, and that is the negative part. But one problem in this connection is to determine the correct starting point of the process of escalating forms of despair. (Remember Climacus and his criticism of speculative thinking at this point.) One natural candidate is what Kierkegaard calls immediate despair, or despair over something, a shocking experience beyond your control. In this kind of despair, Kierkegaard claims, we are in despair, but we do not yet understand what despair "really" is and what it is "really" about. Now beginning to understand of what kind this immediate form of despair "really" is, gets the process started; what is implicit is made explicit. One problem discussed by Grøn in this connection is the role of the other form of immediate despair, i.e. Kierkegaard's claim that the immediate, happy individual "really" is in despair in spite of the fact that this individual may say about himself that he is happy and not in despair. Grøn follows Kierkegaard on this point as well, and he even suggests that this immediate, unreflective consciousness represents a most dangerous form of despair. In conclusion of his analysis of this form, Grøn says that unconscious despair represents "eine gefährliche Möglichkeit: der Versuch sich nicht als Geist zu verstehen" (102). According to Grøn, this form of despair, unconscious despair, does not belong to the escalating process, it is a "dangerous possibility" outside the whole process: an individual who remains in a state of spiritlessness.

This complex relationship between immediate despair over something on the one hand, and unconscious despair on the other, is discussed further by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn in "Am Anfang steht die Verzweigung des Spiessbürgers". As the title indicates Cappelørn goes one step further in including the unconscious despair of the Spiessbürger in the escalating process. Unconscious despair is not a form which is placed outside the other forms of despair, but is a "genuine" kind of despair in the sense that the Spiessbürger hides the possibility of becoming a self from himself, so that he belongs to the figures who lacks possibility, the kind of despair described by Kierkegaard as necessity's lack of possibility.

I will now turn to some of the essays written by researchers connected with the Centre:

Heiko Schulz has written an interesting, but a bit opaque essay with the title “To Believe is to Be. Reflections on Kierkegaard’s Phenomenology of (Un-)Freedom in *The Sickness unto Death*”. The basic distinction in his essay goes between the *experience* of freedom on the one hand, and freedom in the *metaphysical* sense on the other. We can never know, he argues, that we are free in the metaphysical or objective sense, all we have is a certain experience of freedom, and, he says, this experience is all that we need as well, since to experience freedom is to be free. This certainly is a thesis which will need a lot of conceptual clarifications to be acceptable, but Schulz is obviously familiar with the essential contributions to the discussion of free will in our century. Although it is plausible to claim that we are unable to know for certain whether we are free in the metaphysical sense or not, I find his definition of metaphysical freedom highly implausible. Schulz thinks that we would know that we were metaphysically free if we could decide for certain that our choices and actions, combined with the belief that *we* are performing these choices and actions, really changed the shape of the world. But this, of course, we can know. I can stand up and open the window, and I know that this action of mine changed the shape of the world. What I cannot know for certain, however, is whether I could have done otherwise, so that in the moment of choice different alternatives were in fact open to me, and not only something I believed to be open to me. Certainly, I believe, in the moment of choice, that I have different alternatives, but I can never know for certain that I could have performed them, in the absolute and not conditional sense of “could” that is.

Joakim Garff’s essay, “Johannes de silentio: Rhetorician of Silence”, deals with Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*, and with a problem which seems to be rather underestimated in that work: incommensurability. Garff’s problem is how to express the sublime in the pedestrian. How is it possible, Garff asks, to describe Abraham without including him in the “realm of communication from which he has been teleologically suspended”(189). Garff’s hypothesis is that the author wants to accomplish this task by letting other characters mime the story of Abraham. Garff discusses three such characters, all present in the work. The first is the tax collector, the second is the character known as “that man”, and the third is the insomniac. Among these three the insomniac represents a special case. While the other two, and the tax collector especially so,

represent characters who is assumed to perform the double movement of faith, but who nevertheless are indistinguishable from anyone else, the insomniac is the first character in Kierkegaard's work who disputes the "thesis that inwardness is incommensurable – and the first to transform inwardness into action"(198). The insomniac is the man who, after having heard the story of Abraham on Sunday, intends to do likewise on Monday. This literal repetition is, so I read Garff, an ironic misunderstanding of the message, and the insomniac becomes a central figure for Garff, since he represents a possible starting point in Kierkegaard's own development towards "the undoing of inwardness"(204). Garff does not intend to say, however, that the manifestation of inwardness is a process in which something assumed to be incommensurable is made commensurate. The manifestations themselves, both by the insomniac and by Kierkegaard himself in 1854 and 1855, are paradoxical manifestations, representing "a frightful disparity with the social order"(207). Garff's analysis invites, I think, to a closer discussion of the concept of "incommensurability" in *Fear and Trembling* and other works.

As one can see from the title of Thomas A. Pepper's essay, "Abraham: Who Could Possibly Understand Him?", Pepper's topic is closely similar to Garff's. It is interesting to compare these two contributions, since Pepper moves, as I read him, in the exact opposite direction of Garff. While Garff focuses on the paradoxical manifestation of incommensurate inwardness, so that there is, after all, something for us to see and evaluate, Pepper circumscribes faith as drastically beyond all knowledge and understanding. This is especially so for us, and even for the pseudonymous author himself, since he is like a messenger who does not understand the message, like "that man" in the atonement, who can retell the message without understanding what it means. How is faith, then, transferred from father to son? Even that is beyond conceptual understanding, not only for us, but for Abraham as well. In the afterthought of reflection, what has happened between him, God and Isaac is inaccessible even to Abraham. So far as I can see, Pepper draws the extreme logical consequence of the criticism of the view that the author should be in a privileged position in relation to his own actions and "products".

Although I would read the first four versions of the story about Abraham in another way than Pepper does, reading his close analysis of the book's title, the subtitle, the name of the author, the epigraph, the foreword, the atonement and finally the first four variations of the story of Abraham functioned as a kind of eyeopener: not seeing the whole

book, or the whole Kierkegaardian work for that matter, brings “subversive” aspects of the text to the fore.

Dorothea Glöckner’s essay, ““Die glückliche Liebe”” – her title is in quotation marks – is about the problematic concept of repetition in Kierkegaard’s work. There are, certainly, different forms of repetition in Kierkegaard’s works, the difficult thing is to know what connects them, “explains” them so to say, and what is the relationship between the “lower” and the “higher” forms of repetition. Here a reconstruction in Theunissen’s sense would be interesting. That repetition is a kind of reunion and reconciliation seems clear, but why does Kierkegaard connect *this* idea with the subsumption of numerically different things under a concept? These two ideas seem to belong to different worlds.

Pia Søltoft’s essay bears the title “The Unhappy Lover of Subjectivity”, and it deals with the figure Johannes Climacus as the author of *Philosophical Fragments* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Søltoft sees a remarkable difference between these two works. The Climacus of the *Fragments* transcends his own self-inflicted interiority in uniting the Socratic and the Christian perspectives in a deeper understanding of the likeness of all human beings, the *Postscript* moves gradually towards a more and more inward and non-reciprocal understanding of ethics. There has been done too little work on Kierkegaard as an ethical philosopher, and especially, I guess, from the perspective of Søltoft. She is trying, as I understand her essay, to extract some essential moral wisdom from Kierkegaard.

I think Darío González is right in arguing for the view that madness is a sort of “category” in Kierkegaard. The different forms of madness described by Kierkegaard are all located in or between the two concepts of finitude and infinity. “Higher madness” has to do with infinity without finitude, or a “bad” infinity. It may express itself in an endless repetition of the same, or an upheaval of all distinctions “in the same”. Further there is a kind of madness which is found when we relate the two concepts of infinity and finitude to each other in wrong or mad way. Such madness we would have, for example, if someone took infinite interest in some finite object.

The next three essays are contributions by established Kierkegaard scholars. Eberhard Harbsmeier writes about Kierkegaard’s theory of communication in his edifying speeches: “Das Erbauliche als Kunst des Gesprächs”; Niels Jørgen Cappelørn gives us a complete historical overview of one aspect of Kierkegaard’s relation to his local church: “Die ur-

sprüchliche Unterbrechung. Søren Kierkegaard beim Abendmahl im Freitagsgottesdienst der Kopenhagener Frauenkirche”; and Alastair McKinnon, whose works have assisted me on many a occasion, has some very interesting observations on intuitive interpretations versus analyses based on the absolute and relative frequencies of words and phrases: “The Relative Importance of God and Christ in Kierkegaard’s Writings”.

The *Yearbook 1997* from the *Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre* is, like its predecessor, divided into four parts, and with the same systematic as the predecessor. The essays from the yearly seminar in August 1996 deal with the *second* part of *The Sickness unto Death*. The relevant essays are written by C. Stephen Evans, M. Jamie Ferreira, Arne Grøn, Alastair Hannay, George Pattison, Thomas A. Pepper, Joachim Ringleben, Jon Stewart. These essays do of course discuss the same topic, the connection between despair and sin that is, but there is no explicit discussion between the contributors, no outspoken disagreements.

I will begin with Arne Grøn’s essay “The Relation Between Part One and Part Two of *The Sickness Unto Death*”. According to Grøn the relation between the two parts represents a problem. Apparently the relation is simple, but on closer scrutiny it is not. Apparently the first part deals exclusively with the human self on Socratic and philosophical premises, and the second part with the Christian qualifications of this human self. Now there is a lot to be said about the relationship between the human and the Christian in Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous works, but his over-arching model is surprisingly stable. The Christian perspective manifests itself not as a simple continuation of the humanly possible, but as a, from the human perspective, impossible possibility. So Grøn draws a line from the analysis of despair to the definition of faith as the double-movement of resignation and faith in *Fear and Trembling*, pointing out that the two elements of the double-movement are now despair – giving up all hope – and faith – hoping in spite of the fact that it looks humanly impossible. Now one problem, according to Grøn, is that the description of the progressive forms of despair in the first part of *The Sickness unto Death* contains theological assertions about God and faith, so that the simple opposition of the two parts does not seem to be true. According to Grøn, however, this presence of two perspectives in the first part confirms his Hegelian reading of *The Sickness unto Death*: the escalating forms are described both from the inside – i.e. from the perspective of the despairing figure – and from the outside – i.e. from the perspective

of the author and “us”. “We” know something which the despairing figure does not know, that man is destined (!) to be spirit (43). But, and this is an important addition, the standpoint of spirit is not just added to the immanent development, it is itself the aim and meaning of that development. On this reading one should expect, perhaps, that the second part contains a positive elucidation of faith and spirit, the standpoint of the author and “us” in the first part, but this is not so. The second part “reiterates” (45) the first, but on a new level. The crucial point is that despair now is identified as sin “before God”. So the negative method is maintained, and Grøn must conclude that we have to do with a method which deviates from the Hegelian in that the aim of the whole process remains unactualized, and he deplores the fact that the work should be regarded as unfinished from a theological point of view.

In his clear essay with the title “Zur Aufbau-logik der Krankheit zum Tode” Joachim Ringleben presents a similar view concerning the relation between the human and the Christian in *The Sickness unto Death*. But Ringleben, who also writes from a theological standpoint, is even more explicit than Grøn on the issue concerning the relation between the two parts and the two domains. He claims that the whole construction of escalating forms of despair depends on the unavoidability (“Unentrinnlichkeit”) of the relationship to God for a being who relates itself to itself (115).

If these two authors are right, it seems that Kierkegaard’s pseudonym Anti-Climacus is a kind of “necessitarian” with respect to the relation between the human, Socratic level and the Christian. This would certainly place a heavy burden on the transitions from one form of despair to the next, and especially, I think, on the transition from despair over something to despair over oneself in the first part. But more important is the existence of a certain ambiguity in the ideas destination and unavoidability here. Do Anti-Climacus regard the development from the human to the Christian as a kind of necessary development of what is “already there” in a vague and unrealized form, or should one say that the necessity in play here is more of a moral kind, so that the unavoidability Ringleben is referring to is a moral necessity more of a Kantian type? Some would say both, but those who say so, certainly have some questions to answer before they can combine the two models. To them, i.e. the “compatibilists”, the escalating forms of despair in the first part must represent failures in the effort to become a self, and not “necessary” steps on the route towards humility. If they should protest, and claim

that these *failures* are necessary steps towards the aim, they ought to explain how this aim, in Hannay's words, "of standing humbly before God", can be present at the beginning in an implicit form. Moreover, the presence and unavoidability of something do not prove the moral normativity of that thing. There are, as it seems, at least three levels at work here, the psychological, the conceptual and the moral, and a necessity on the first and the second level certainly does not imply a necessity on the third, and vice versa.

The Hegelian reading of *The Sickness unto Death* is confirmed by Jon Stewart's instructive essay "Kierkegaard's Phenomenology of Despair in *The Sickness Unto Death*". This work, Stewart concludes, is "profoundly Hegelian in point of methodology and structure"(143). The question is, of course, how profound? As the quotation indicates Stewart thinks that we have to do with a systematic similarity, if not identity, of method, but not of substance. Although opposites imply each other in the analysis of despair in *The Sickness unto Death*, the synthesis of opposites is achieved not in conceptual thinking, but in faith. Stewart's view on this issue will not be controversial to many readers of Kierkegaard, more controversial is another claim he makes, that Kierkegaard possibly introduces "movement" into logic in *The Sickness unto Death*. Although it is a fact that the *Hegelian* dialectic is a dialectic of identity, a dialectic which depends on the use of claims of identity, it is yet to be shown that Kierkegaard – or Anti-Climacus – is proceeding by means of such claims of identity as well. If he does, he should say that each "figure" of despair purports to be the whole essence of despair, and so be the sole condition of the next figure for that reason.

George Pattison's essay "'Before God" as a Regulative Concept" is clearly relevant to the main issue here. Pattison makes no references to Hegel and Hegelian internalism, but, as the title of his essay suggests, the Kantian reading of the expression "before God" represents evidently a step back from the tendency to read metaphysical and Christian ontology into Kierkegaard's analysis of the self already in the first part. Pattison seems to advocate an externalist reading of Kierkegaard, and although he talks about Christian existentialism generally in the following passage, it illustrates, I guess, the case in point: "Christian existentialism is fundamentally *responsive* and therefore fundamentally committed to the belief that there is something to be responsive or answerable to"(76). But although Pattison's contribution can be read as a corrective to the more internalist interpretations of *The Sickness unto Death*, it may not be easy

to see, from his essay, how the expression “before God” understood as a regulative concept only could explain all the existential implications Kierkegaard develops from it.

So far as I can see, there is a possibility of some serious disagreement among these contributors. C. Stephen Evans, whose essay “Who Is the Other in *Sickness Unto Death*?” starts the whole book, presents an ontological interpretation of the expression “before God”. Evans is talking very confidently about Kierkegaard as a Christian philosopher, and, as it seems, he is transforming Kierkegaard’s purely formal definition of the self into something like substantial essentialism. He is saying, for example, that God is the ontological foundation of the self and the ethical task of the self, and that may look like a strong internalist interpretation. The aim of our development is what we already are in the ontological sense. But this impression is only apparent, since what is already there in the self, so to say, is no material substance, but a formal one: it lies in the “nature” of the self to be a relational self, which not only relates to itself, but which is, in fact, wholly dependent on the other. The theological self, then, is the self who stands “directly” before God as the other (9). So Evans writes: “The ontological structure of the self is relational, ... It is not possible to be a self apart from a relation to something outside the self from which the self derives its identity”(9).

There are several other highly interesting contributions in this yearbook: M. Jamie Ferreira: “Imagination and the Despair of Sin”; Alastair Hannay: “Kierkegaardian Despair and the Irascible Soul”; Thomas Pepper: “Prepositions of Death: Kierkegaard’s *The Sickness Unto Death* Read with Duras’ *La Maladie de la mort*”; Noel S. Adams: “The Significance of the Eternal in *Philosophical Fragments* in Terms of the Absolute Paradox”; Stacey Elizabeth Ake: “Some Ideas Concerning Kierkegaard’s Semiotics: A Guess at a Riddle Found in *Practice in Christianity*”; Darío González: ““Act” and “Occasion”: On the Ontological Structure of *Coming into Existence*”; Pia Søltoft: “Love and Continuity: The Significance of Intersubjectivity in the Second Part of *Either-Or*”; Søren K. Bruun: “The Concept of “The Edifying” in Søren Kierkegaard’s Authorship”; Jacob Bøggild: “Breaking the Seals of Slumber: An Inquiry into a Couple of Examples in Kierkegaard and Paul de Man”, and Hermann Deuser’s opposition to Arne Grøn from Grøn’s doctoral disputation is also printed in the yearbook.

I would also like to mention the impressive amount of scholarship

demonstrated in the third part of both yearbooks. Here the editors of the new Danish edition of Søren Kierkegaard's writings present the text-critical guidelines of the new edition, and the textcritical philosophy behind this new edition as well, a textcritical philosophy which is called "critical conservatism" in an excellent essay by Johnny Kondrup.

There has been a lot of talk about method and methodical considerations in this review, and some Kierkegaard enthusiasts may experience such considerations as a rather boring business. But although the question of method is more than one thing, it seems to be, in all its different forms, a question about knowing what we do in doing what we do. And that, we now know, is where the problems start.

Kjell Eyvind Johansen

Arne Grøn

Subjektivitet og negativitet: Kierkegaard

*Gyldendal. Kopenhagen 1997, 443 S.
(Deutsche Zusammenfassung, S. 419-32)*

Dieses Buch stellt eine *Lektüre* Kierkegaards im eigentlichen Sinne dar. Arne Grøn dringt in das systematische Zentrum eines formal wie inhaltlich wahrhaft vielfältigen Werkes vor, aber nicht um die Kierkegaardsche Gedankenwelt aus bequemer Distanz zur Mehrdeutigkeit der Texte darzustellen. Damit reiht sich das Buch ein in eine Tendenz, die in den letzten Jahren eine nicht mehr existenzphilosophische oder existenztheologische, sondern *textuell* ausgerichtete Kierkegaardrezeption einleitet. Diese Tendenz hat sich in einer vermehrten Aufmerksamkeit für die poetologische, rhetorische und metaphorische Dimension des Kierkegaardschen Werkes manifestiert. Das Buch *Subjektivität und Negativität* weicht jedoch auch wesentlich von dieser neuen Linie ab. Daß das Werk Kierkegaards bei näherem Hinsehen etwas weit Komplexeres aussagt, als man geläufig annimmt, ist zwar auch eine Pointe bei Arne Grøn. Aber sein Buch unterscheidet sich wesentlich von einem textualistischen Zugang, der sich zu Kierkegaards Selbstverständnis und den Teilen seines Werkes, die allgemein als die Essenz seiner Schriften gelten, überwiegend kritisch verhält. Grøn tut das Gegenteil. Ernimmt die Herausforderung durch den Textualismus an und begeben sich in das Labyrinth der Texte,

freilich mit dem ganz anderen Motiv, nämlich dem, die Position Kierkegaards als einem Denker der Subjektivität zu konsolidieren.

Grøn kann auf Johannes Climacus verweisen, der sehr gelegentlich in der *Nachschrift* die "Subjektivitäts-Theorie" als den Ort benennt, "wo die eigentlichen religiösen Kategorien hingehören". Die Worte gleichen einer Vorstellung des innersten thematischen Kerns im Kierkegaardschen Gesamtwerk. Dennoch zögert Grøn aus guten Gründen ein wenig, wenn er sein Anliegen als Rekonstruktion einer *Theorie* beschreibt. Nicht allein deshalb, weil es schwer ist, von Kierkegaards Werk zu behaupten, es lege eine 'Theorie' im üblichen Sinne dieses Wortes vor, sondern auch von der angegebenen Thematik selbst her. Wenn Kierkegaard sich in dem wiederfindet, was man breit 'Subjektphilosophie' nennt, so ist das mit der Modifikation zu verstehen, daß diese Bezeichnung in erster Linie auf die epistemische Schlüsselposition des Subjekts von Descartes bis Husserl verweist. Die Thematik Kierkegaards ist mit einer weit älteren Tradition verknüpft, in der die Subjektivität und ihre Sache in erster Linie den Titel eines Dramas darstellen, eine Tradition, wo das Individuum in einer religiösen Optik gesehen wird, näher bestimmt im Lichte der Möglichkeit von Heils und Verderben.

In *Subjektivität und Negativität* ist zumeist nicht von Heil und Verderben im religiösen Sinne die Rede. Das Erlösungsdrama, um das es in dem Buch geht, ist wie die Kierkegaardschen Werke überwiegend in anthropologischen Bestimmungen formuliert. Die "Subjektivitäts-Theorie" liegt in der säkularisierten Ausgabe des Dramas verborgen, die heißt: 'Die Aufgabe ist, ein Selbst zu werden'. Bei Grøn umfaßt die 'Theorie' somit ein Werden und ein Selbstverhältnis, die mit einer Norm zu tun haben. Und ein Selbst, das der, der ein Selbst werden soll, jeweils schon ist. Der Begriff 'Negativität' im Titel des Buches zielt besonders auf das Verfahren Kierkegaards: Nicht durch das befreiende Beispiel, sondern durch Beispiele der Unerlöstheit, der *Verzweiflung* zeigt Kierkegaard die Konturen seines Subjektivitätsbegriffs auf. Bei ihm besteht kein Zweifel: Wenn die Krankheit Verzweiflung heißt, heißt das Heilmittel Glaube. Der also nicht notwendigerweise ein Ziel in sich ist: Das gesunde – das heißt wahre – Selbst ist das Ziel. Gesundheit aber ist dennoch gleichbedeutend mit dem, was Kierkegaard "die schwierigste aller denkbaren Aufgaben" genannt hat, nämlich ein Christ zu werden. So befindet sich das Buch mitten in einer Kierkegaardschen Thematik, deren 'Bedeutbarkeit' man schwerlich in Frage stellen oder umgehen kann, deren extreme Gestaltung aber auf Widerspruch gestoßen ist. Vor allem Wider-

spruch gegen die Verschlossenheit und Selbstbezogenheit in der leidenschaftlich festgehaltenen Perspektive: erste Person singularis.

Bekannt ist die Kritik des jungen Adorno aus dem Ende der zwanziger Jahre an der "objektlosen Innerlichkeit" Kierkegaards, eine Kritik, die sich – in ethischer Form – in dem Vorwurf K.E. Løgstrups aus den fünfziger Jahren wiederholte: Kierkegaards Begriff der Nächstenliebe gebe "einen guten Sinn, wenn das Gottesverhältnis dazu dienen soll, den Menschen davon zu entbinden, mit dem anderen Menschen etwas zu tun zu haben. Die Liebe zum Nächsten soll dazu dienen, sich die Menschen in der effektivsten Weise vom Leibe zu halten". Sowohl von der Kierkegaardkritik Adornos als auch Løgstrups galt, daß sie sich nicht zuletzt gegen seinen Einfluß auf die jeweiligen Zeitgenossen richteten, das kulturelle Klima in der Weimarer Republik bzw. die Existenztheologie der Nachkriegszeit in Dänemark. Beide lasen Kierkegaard polemisch, das heißt in einer systematischen Unterbelichtung der Punkte, an denen man sich mit seinem Anliegen hätte einverstanden erklären können.

Grøn hat in diesem Sinne nicht ein kritisches Anliegen, auch wenn er seine Darstellung der "Subjektivitäts-Theorie" als ein Anliegen darstellt, das sowohl *mit* als auch zuweilen *gegen* Kierkegaard durchzuführen ist. Das Buch ist deutlich von Motiven getragen, die mit der Polemik gegen Kierkegaard in einem Zusammenhang stehen. Grøn springt ihm bei, indem er eine Reihe von Bestimmungen in seinem Denken herausstellt, die in Richtung auf einen erfahrungsbetonten und sozial vermittelten Subjektivitätsbegriff weisen. Kierkegaard darf nicht mit einem abstrakten Individualismus und einem ebenso abstrakten Freiheitsbegriff identifiziert werden. Die ethische Dimension in seinem Denken trägt keinen dezisionistischen Charakter, wie z.B. Alasdair Macintyre behauptet hat. Kierkegaards Lehre vom Werden des Einzelnen, der Innerlichkeit, der Entscheidung ist weit von der Idee eines selbstmächtigen und selbstgenügsamen Subjekts entfernt, sie ist vielmehr in Voraussetzungen begründet, die die 'Aussonderung von den anderen' modifiziert, die zur Bestimmung des Einzelnen gehört. Die Konstitution des Einzelnen enthält ein dialogisches Prinzip. So besteht Grøn darauf, daß der Subjektivitätsbegriff Kierkegaards keineswegs als ein Abschied von 'dem Konkreten' im Hegelschen Sinne als etwas mit der Ganzheit Zusammenge wachsenem zu verstehen ist.

Daraus ist eines der seit langem wesentlichsten und lehrreichsten Bücher über Kierkegaard entstanden, die hierzulande erschienen sind. Die Form ist die der besonnenen, nahezu meditativen Denkbewegung. Man

ist versucht, den Stil des Buches als eine Art Redundanz in voranschreitender Bewegung zu nennen. Grøn hat es nicht eilig. Die kreisende Bewegung der Kapitel um Textstellen, die angeschlagen, wiederholt, entfaltet werden und auch Grøns eigene Sprache prägen, resultieren in einem langsamen, umständlichen, aber auch imponierenden und gut gesteuerten Argumentationsverlauf. Der Wille und nicht zuletzt auch die Fähigkeit zur Gründlichkeit sind schlagend. Wenn es richtig ist, was Wittgenstein geschrieben hat, daß “im Rennen der Philosophie gewinnt, wer am langsamsten laufen kann”, kann kein Zweifel daran bestehen, daß Grøn ein Siegertyp ist. Insofern sein Buch – im besten Sinne des Wortes – eine Wiederholung Kierkegaards ist, ist es eine Wiederholung in slow motion.

Dies ist zweifellos auch die glaubwürdige Form in bezug auf das Anliegen des Buches als Rekonstruktion einer Theorie, die nirgends explizit bei Kierkegaard formuliert ist. Eine Rekonstruktion, deren Material ein Werk ist, das in einem gewissen Sinne die philosophische Vernunft gesprengt hat, das heißt den theoretischen Monolog in eine Mannigfaltigkeit von Gestalten und Stimmen aufgespalten hat. Und wo die Frage bekanntlich ist, wann Kierkegaard durch seine wechselnden Masken nicht eine Auffassung zur Diskussion stellt, sondern seine volle Einsicht in das Phänomen formuliert, das er analysiert und darstellt. Grøns Antwort scheint mit einer Art von ‘formellem’ Kriterium verbunden zu sein, nämlich inwieweit eine bestimmte Analyse im Werk thematisch am meisten *durchgearbeitet* ist. Es scheint mir freilich, daß Grøn selbst dieses angemessene Kriterium außer Acht läßt, wenn er wiederholt den Leser daran erinnert, daß die Darstellung der *Nachschrift* unter dem Vorbehalt zu verstehen sei, daß Climacus “rhetorisch” sei. Als könne der Gegensatz zwischen *durchgearbeitet* und *weniger durchgearbeitet* in den Gegensatz zwischen ernsthaft und rhetorisch übersetzt werden.

Wie bereits angedeutet, findet Grøn die exemplarische Entfaltung des Kierkegaardschen Subjektivitätsverständnisses in der *Krankheit zum Tode*. Dieses Werk ist der “Grundtext” des Buches und wird zudem als das “philosophische und theologische Hauptwerk” Kierkegaards bezeichnet. Die explizite Aneignung unter heutigen theoretischen Bedingungen ist keine einfache Sache. Besonders wegen des idealistischen Rahmens: Das erlöste Selbst, das mit einer Vorstellung der Selbsttransparenz verbunden ist (das Selbst, das durchsichtig in der Macht gründet, die es gesetzt hat). Wie ist diese prägnante Figuration des Einzelnen in seiner Absolutheit zu verstehen? Ist es dieses Selbst, welches negativ – in defizienten modi – durch die verschiedenen Formen der Verzweigung Ge-

stalt gewinnt? Oder darf man sich damit begnügen, die Figur als einen Grenzbegriff zu verstehen? Zu einem nachidealistischen Begriff von Subjektivität gehören ja bekanntlich Formen von Selbsterfahrung, wo sich Dissonanzen und Inkonsequenzen gerade nicht auflösen, wo das Selbst eben nicht transparent werden kann, wo es gerade nicht "mit sich selbst zusammenwachsen" kann (um nun eine von Grøns Lieblingsmetaphern in dieser Sache zu gebrauchen). Solche Erfahrungen sind außerordentlich gegenwärtig bei Kierkegaard und machen in der Darstellung Grøns Negativität – als Abstand, als Verlust, als Leiden, als Abwesenheit – zu einem entscheidenden Denkmodus für die Bestimmung des Phänomens Subjektivität. 'Positiv' geht es dabei nicht umsonst darum, daß es möglich werde, seine Negativität auf sich zu nehmen, d.h. seine "gebrochene" Identität zu übernehmen. Aber wenn Kierkegaard unter dem Namen *Glaube* Erlösung und Selbsttransparenz in Aussicht stellt, ist zu fragen, ob er dem Erfahrungsinhalt treu bleibt, mit dem er sich in Kontakt befindet. Wenn der Gedanke von dem erlösten Selbst überhaupt in einen Bezug zu einem glaubwürdigen Erfahrungshorizont gebracht werden soll, muß er modifiziert werden: Etwas weniger als Selbsttransparenz müßte dies auch leisten können.

Kierkegaards eigenes Bemühen, eine idealistische Begrifflichkeit mit einem nachidealistischen Erfahrungshorizont zusammenzudenken, wirkt produktiv in der Darstellung Grøns weiter in der Form einiger Betonungen, die überzeugend den Kierkegaardschen Subjektivitätsbegriff konkretisieren und nuancieren. Was jedoch verwundern kann, ist die Frage, wie dies alles in einem Zirkel bleiben kann, in dem es offenbar undenkbar ist, daß der *Selbstvergessenheit* eine positive Bedeutung zuerkannt wird. Die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich selbst zu richten, gehört mit dem Mißverhältnis des Selbst zusammen, mit der Verzweigung, es setzt aber voraus, daß die Aufmerksamkeit selbst ein Gut ist. Sie ist nicht nur eine Voraussetzung für das Erkennen der Krankheit, die einer jeden Heilung vorausgehen muß. Die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich selbst hinter sich zu lassen bedeutet nicht Heil, sondern Verderben. Diese Augustinische Voraussetzung bei Kierkegaard wird nicht zur Diskussion gestellt, sondern vielmehr dadurch akzentuiert, daß Grøn die *Geistlosigkeit* als das "fürchtbarste" darstellt. Unter diesem Begriff wird die Möglichkeit diskutiert, sich gar nicht zu der Sache zu verhalten, nur so "dahinzuleben", ohne daß sich die Aufgabe oder das Problem, ein Selbst zu werden, überhaupt stellten. Diese negative Möglichkeit, daß die Bestimmung verfehlt wird, nimmt einen zentralen strategischen Platz in der Darstellung Grøns

ein. Entscheidend für Grøn ist, daß die Geistlosigkeit, wie das “Mißverhältnis” der Verzweiflung, die Bestimmung des Menschen als Geist bestätigt. Aus dieser Bestimmung herauszufallen, bedeutet natürlich kein Dementi der Bestimmung, solange dies eben als Geistlosigkeit bezeichnet wird. Aber vielleicht könnte man es auch etwas ganz anderes nennen, z.B. etwas, was nicht von vornherein als eine Privation von “Geist” definiert war.

Es lag nahe, auf verschiedene Formen qualifizierter Verlorenheit hinzuweisen. Z.B. die Selbstvergessenheit in der Arbeitskonzentration, in der Aufmerksamkeit auf den anderen, in der Gegenwärtigkeit, der Hingabe. Oder – nicht weniger totalisierend als die Verzweiflung – die selbstlose Kontemplation in einer ästhetisch-metaphysischen Erfahrung, für die Arthur Schopenhauer, ein Zeitgenosse Kierkegaards, eintrat. Auch wenn man die letztgenannte Form von Erfahrung für diskutabel hält, leuchtet es nicht ein, sie sogleich als eine Form von “Geistlosigkeit” zu interpretieren. Es könnte in diesem Zusammenhang auch Anlaß sein, zu überlegen, was hinter der Gleichsetzung von Nicht-Verzweiflung und Selbsttransparenz bei Anti-Climacus steht. Vielleicht die Auffassung, daß das Selbst in der Aufmerksamkeit auf sich selbst sich selber im Wege steht, daß die Aufmerksamkeit auf sich selbst mit ihrem Anteil an der Negativität der Verzweiflung ein Teil des Problems ist. In diesem Falle könnte Selbsttransparenz als eine Formel für die Aufhebung der Aufmerksamkeit auf sich selbst (also doch ein Stück Selbstvergessenheit) verstanden werden, vgl. den Charakter der Durchsichtigkeit als “Ruhe”. Man muß unter allen Umständen hoffen, daß diese Ruhe nicht als eine Aufmerksamkeit auf sich selbst verstanden werden darf, bei der man seinem Gott dankt, weil alles in Butter ist.

Nach Grøn ist die *Krankheit zum Tode* in ihrem Status als Hauptwerk Kierkegaards durch *Der Liebe Tun* zu ergänzen, einer Schrift, die sich auf demselben Niveau befindet und damit – als erbauliche Schrift – als das ‘positive’ Gegenstück zu gelten hat. Es bleibt jedoch hier – wie in der berühmten Fußnote Heideggers in *Sein und Zeit* – im Großen und Ganzen bei der Versicherung, daß diese und andere erbauliche Schriften Kierkegaards philosophisch lehrreich seien. Bei Grøn handelt es sich vielleicht trotz allem um eine Einlösung dessen, was ein solcher Hinweis verspricht, indem das erbauliche Nebenstück zweifellos dazu beiträgt, die Bedingungen für Grøns Lektüre des Buches über die Verzweiflung zu liefern. Ein anderer Text, der in derselben Weise zwischen den Zeilen gegenwärtig ist, ist Michael Theunissens *Der Begriff der Verzweiflung* (1993).

Der Gegensatz Theunissens zwischen einer "transszendierenden" und einer "immanenten" Kritik gleicht einer vorgehenden Kennzeichnung des Verhältnisses zwischen seinem eigenen Buch und dem von Arne Grøn. Wo Theunissen die *Krankheit zum Tode* dazu verwendet, sich einer Sache zu nähern, für die es im Kierkegaardschen Werk keinen heute verpflichtenden Maßstab gibt, will Grøn Kierkegaard nicht nur verteidigen, sondern ihn auch gegen sich selbst in Schutz nehmen. Dieses indirekte – und defensive – Anliegen kann in Teilen des Buches eine Unklarheit schaffen darüber, was eigentlich entfaltet wird: Da es sich nicht hundertprozentig um eine Theorie Kierkegaards handelt, ist es dann die von Arne Grøn? Wenn es die von Arne Grøn ist, ist es offenbar eine Theorie, die er eben dadurch zu artikulieren vermag, daß er Kierkegaard u.a. gegen die "Korrekturen" Theunissens verteidigt.

All dies sind lediglich Untertöne in der gewählten Form der Darstellung, die die Tugend besitzt, eine wirklich klassische philosophische Monographie über ihr Thema zu sein: Eine stramm systematisch gesteuerte Reflexion, in der die Diskussion mit anderen Auslegern im Großen und Ganzen auf einzelne Bemerkungen in den Fußnoten beschränkt bleibt. Auch wenn diese anspruchsvolle Form von Grøn so überzeugend gehandhabt wird, könnte man sich wünschen, daß er unterwegs etwas öfter seinen eigenen Rhythmus unterbrochen und Raum für distanzierende Sichtweisen geöffnet hätte: Außer dem, was wir hier angedeutet haben auch eine *historische* Reflexion über die Voraussetzungen und Grenzen der "herausgelesene" Theorie. Ein Wunsch, der nur die Deutlichkeit des Buches betrifft und also nicht als ein Ausdruck des Ärgers darüber verstanden werden darf, daß Grøn nicht ein ganz anderes Buch geschrieben hat.

Jørgen Dehs
(Übersetzung: Eberhard Harbsmeier)

Alastair McKinnon
The Kierkegaard Computer Workshop

Inter Editions, Montreal 1999

Alastair McKinnon, McGill University, Canada, has devoted his life to Kierkegaard research. For decades he has successfully used computers in his through examination of Søren Kierkegaards Writings. Alastair McKin-

non was made a Knight of the Order of Dannebrog in 1995 by the Queen of Denmark 1995, in recognition of his diligent and precise work. He retired some years ago, but has for a while been working hard in order to publish a tool for computer-based investigations of the Kierkegaard texts. The workshop, which is based on years of experience, comes with a short manual under the heading: *The Kierkegaard Computer Workshop*.

An introduction to the workshop is available from the internet at <http://www.skcu.com>. From this site you may download a demo under the menu point *Sample Package*. When done, the demo reveals itself as a copy of Kierkegaard's *Frygt og Bæven (Fear and Trembling)* from 1843 displayed by a program named *KDS (Kierkegaard Display & Search)*. The enclosed *readme.txt* file explains the operation modus of *KDS*. In the lower left corner it is indicated that we are studying the work *FB*, which is the marker for *Frygt og Bæven* according to McKinnon's very useful title code system. Next you see the page and the line number according to the Danish 3rd edition, which is the copy text of this computer edition. Moreover, if you push the F8 function key, you toggle between page number for the Danish 1st edition, the Danish 2nd edition, and an English, German, and French translation. (It may be noted that the most recent Danish edition *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* is not yet incorporated: "Frygt og Bæven" in *SKS 4*, Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre, G.E.C. Gad, Copenhagen 1998). Most impressive is the following feature: if F7 is pressed, an English translation of the highlighted word is supposed to appear in the lower right corner! This most valuable tool for less than fluently Danish speaking scholars is, however, not yet available.

From the web site the full computer workshop can be ordered at a total cost of \$ 700. There are special rates for students, colleges and universities and you may buy separate packets. If you have alternative access to the collected work, e.g. the IntelLex version (which is actually based on the McKinnon version), supplying it with the 16 diaries (journals and papers) together with the *KDS* would be a fair bargain: \$ 290.

The complete cd-rom contains around 60 MBytes of information and it can easily be run from a modern Windows 98 computer to which you are encouraged to load it on the disk. If you are short of space, all programs may be run directly from the cd. Also old Windows 3.1 or even DOS machines run this software. Press ae, and the first of *Afsluttende videnskabelig Efterskrift's* 589 pages appears on the screen, ready to be studied. Although a DOS program, the *KDS* is wrapped in a windows interface so that it may appear at your desktop as a neat little open

book icon, allowing easy access to 35 of Kierkegaard's works and 16 diaries. But there is more to it than displaying and searching.

Using this package, you can build your own concordance. As a test case, we choose to study the key Kierkegaard concept of *anxiety* and for that reason to investigate Kierkegaard's use of the word *Angest*. For this purpose we use the program *EXT*. We specify not only *Angest*, but also the alternative spelling *Angst* as well as the definite and genitive forms *Angesten* and *Angestens*. We concentrate upon the two of the author's works and therefore specify the file names *BA.TXT* for *Begrebet Angest (The Concept of Anxiety)* as well as *FB.TXT* for the earlier mentioned work. We furthermore specify that we want to extract all *full sentences* in which these words appear. *EXT* will now produce two files named *BAAN* and *FBAN* containing the sentences, all marked with page and line numbers of the edition you prefer. Alternatively you might have wanted to include the adjacent lines of text or the entire paragraph containing the words in question. In the same manner you may construct files containing extracts from the diaries of the period of interest. For various reasons this demands that you use a separate, similar program called *EXTP*.

As the reader may understand, you are forced to pin-point the texts of interest. There is no easy way to cover everything, so this is no tool for the quotation hunter. For the same reason you should keep the aforementioned files apart. You may collect them into one *angest* file – there is a program, *JOIN*, for that – but then the only information on their origin (which was the prefix of the file name) will disappear. But this is not all. The package invites further studies.

The manual suggests, that the reader do two tutorials (p. 20 and 21). During these, we are introduced to the finer concepts of statistics such as aberrant word frequency: Words that appear relatively more frequently than they should, i.e. than they do in other Kierkegaard texts. Plotting such frequencies along imaginary multiple dimensional axes provides a textual-statistical image of the works, that mirrors the polarity of the works. To gain insight on this method we recommend a recent paper by McKinnon in *The Søren Kierkegaard Newsletter*, No. 38, July 1999: "Unfolding Kierkegaard's Writing". We quote: "(...) this function reflects the nature of these works and is so complex that even a literary genius such as Søren Kierkegaard could not contrive it". All tools for this and similar kinds of work is given on this cd-rom.

The Søren Kierkegaard Computer Workshop is recently presented on the internet and hence deserves a review in *Kierkegaardiana*. There is

no reason, however, to hide the fact that these computer tools are not new. They are DOS based programs, working as well on modern Windows 98 systems as they ever did. But apart from the briefly mentioned windows interface for *KDS* there is no mouse or menu, no drag-and-drop, easy guides or smart-wizards or whatever a present day computer user may expect. In this connection one may be puzzled about some minor peculiarities of the programs. Why, for instance, is it necessary to use two separate extract programs for the works and the diaries? Another objection that may be raised – especially from the scholar who may want to carry on the work and even extend the tool box – is that the file format used is a closed one, so to say that it is not directly exchangeable with any other known file format. In other words these text files or the concordances produced do not load into MS Word or WordPerfect or any other text processing system in daily use. Neither is it a simple ASCII file. If you want to print it, extract it, compute it or in short do anything with it, you have to use the supplied programs for it.

Thanks to Alastair Mckinnon this tool is now available and hopefully it will find its way to many Kierkegaard-scholars. We confidently leave the last words to Alastair McKinnon. In the beginning of the manual you will find a short list of aphorisms. One of them reads: “We need to find some way to use computers as computers, to treat text as vision and to take Kierkegaard seriously; in fact, to solve one of these problems is to solve them all” (p. 4).

Søren Bruun and Karsten Kynde

Alastair Hannay & Gordon D. Marino (eds.)
The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, 428 pp.

Jonathon Rée & Jane Chamberlain (eds.)
Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader

Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1998, 186 pp.

There is something intriguing about the Danish word *receptionshistorie*, a lovely term for what, in the English-speaking world, is referred to as sec-

ondary (and often tertiary) academic literature. Reception-history bespeaks how a thinker – theologian, philosopher, or social critic – has been received by a group of scholars of a certain culture, generation, and language. Was the thinker received warmly or coolly? Understandingly or disdainfully? With open arms or with clenched fists? By its very nature, the word reception-history makes clear something that is not immediately obvious when the same genre is called the secondary literature; namely, that *something* is received by *someone*. In other words, reception-history, as a concept, has hidden within it the notion that the scholarly endeavour of creating commentary and supplying interpretation is just as much a human interaction as a scientific process.

In fact, one might even say that it is not merely the reception, but the reconception, of a thinker that becomes apparent through the secondary literature, since such literature also reveals how said thinker was reconceived within a particular place, time, and age. As such, what also becomes visible is that reception-history or secondary literature is the result of a mediation between a text (often encountered only in translation) and the particular cultures, generations, and languages of the receiver(s). Thus, secondary literature is not merely an artifact of effective-history, it is also a production of the living Jamesian doubts and beliefs of its producers. This being the case, one would be hard pressed to find a thinker for whom such a Jamesian function is more true than Søren Kierkegaard.

The receiver-specific nature of reception-history must be kept in mind as we consider the two volumes of commentary under review here. They are the products of different generations of scholars (regardless of the age of the commentators included in the volumes) whose philosophical orientations are so different as to verge on being almost diametrically opposed. And this is a good thing. In fact, it is probably a wonderfully Kierkegaardian thing, for would it really be even possible to come to a definitive objective position about a thinker who rallied so strongly for the subjective? Such objectivity would no doubt only mean that the position in question was probably wrong, and – perhaps – before Kierkegaard we are all wrong? Maybe that is precisely the point.

Perhaps the most startling thing about *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard* is the reason for its existence. According to the blurb on the backcover, we are told that among “the many myths that have attached

themselves to his work is the belief that Kierkegaard was an irrationalist who denied the value of clear and honest thinking.” It seems that Kierkegaard was not simply an “irrationalist”; he was a deceiver as well. And it would appear that the goal of the *Cambridge Companion* is to dispel this myth, thus showing Kierkegaard to be at once rational and straightforward, logical and plain-speaking. Anglo and American. And, in this, it is a success.

The *Cambridge Companion* opens with an essay by Bruce H. Kirmmse entitled “‘Out With It!’: The modern breakthrough, Kierkegaard and Denmark”, an analysis of Kierkegaard’s life and work as expressed by and reflected within the concentric rings of society, family, and self. It is, essentially, an interactive biography, showing how both Kierkegaard’s life and works were affected by his interactions with the personal and socio-cultural environment which surrounded him. What makes this essay especially appealing are the narratives concerning Kierkegaard’s relationship with Bishop Mynster and P.C. Kierkegaard’s relationship with the *memory* of his younger brother, Søren.

In “The unknown Kierkegaard: Twentieth-century receptions”, Roger Poole attempts the impossible – an overview of not merely the when’s and where’s, but also the how’s, of Euro-American Kierkegaard reception. And he very nearly succeeds. Starting historically with the Danish, and then moving into the German and French understandings of Kierkegaard, he proceeds onto the Anglo-American reception, giving a wonderful synopsis of the history behind what Poole calls the “blunt reading” of Kierkegaard, a reading where the religious aspects of the text have been emphasized at the expense of the text’s more aesthetic elements. In so doing, and before commenting upon the current deconstructive reception of Kierkegaard, Poole tells the not oft-told tale of Charles Williams’ crusade to get Kierkegaard translated into English in the 1930’s. In itself, this tale more than makes up for the strange absence of both Karl Barth and Paul Tillich in the section on Kierkegaard’s influence on German theology, an absence rendered even more peculiar by the inclusion of Dietrich Bohoeffler, Barth’s student.

The next three essays – George Pattison’s “Art in an age of reflection”, Merold Westphal’s “Kierkegaard and Hegel”, and “Neither either nor or: The perils of reflexive irony” by Andrew Cross – serve to elaborate and situate a particular concept within the Kierkegaardian con/text inasmuch as that concept relates to an individual’s developing subjectivity. In

Pattison's article, it is the role of art in Kierkegaard's works, its aesthetic, psychological, and historical applications, that is examined. The intricate dance between Kierkegaard and Hegel, a true *Aufhebung* on Kierkegaard's part, inasmuch as his use of Hegel seems to have been "a cancellation that preserve[d] and a preservation that cancel[led]" (p. 103), is the subject of Westphal's contribution to the *Companion*. And in Cross's essay, the nature of irony, in its liberating as well as exclusionary forms, whether verbal or existential, is pursued throughout Kierkegaard's authorship.

The next four articles are didactic or exegetical essays about recurring philosophical concepts in the Kierkegaardian canon. One could say that we start with reason (Evans), move on to passion (Roberts), from which comes faith (Ferreira), so that we end in freedom (Jackson). Yet, C. Stephen Evans, albeit working with true ethical passion in his efforts to reconcile the real and the ideal as found in the *Postscript*, narrowly avoids turning Kierkegaard into a Peircean pragmatist in his "Realism and antirealism in Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*". This is followed by "Existence, emotion, and virtue: Classical themes in Kierkegaard", in which Robert C. Roberts makes brilliant use of Aristotle *qua* foil in an exegetical essay about the different concepts of feeling and passion at work (and at play) in the Kierkegaardian authorship. In "Faith and the Kierkegaardian leap", M. Jamie Ferreira deftly describes the natures and kinds of the leaps or qualitative transitions to be found in the works of Johannes Climacus, creating a schema or key for their better understanding and identification. And in "Arminian edification: Kierkegaard on grace and free will", Timothy P. Jackson does a wonderful job demonstrating how Kierkegaard's notion of grace is consistently an Arminian one, and what this means for freedom and the will, which he explains by drawing upon and juxtaposing the Augustinian notions of *libertas* and *liberum arbitrium*. For people teaching introductory or survey courses on Kierkegaard, the Roberts and Jackson articles, in particular, are to be highly recommended.

The next group of articles might best be deemed the "existential" essays. Each in turn deals with a particular Kierkegaardian 'category' that is more or less peculiar to a certain book. The evocative nature, both psychologically and textually, of Kierkegaard's call to authenticity is described in "'Developing' Fear and Trembling" by Ronald M. Green. The puzzle of both the book and the concept of repetition is discussed

in “*Repetition: Getting the world back*” by Edward P. Mooney. In both of these essays, the literary sources, the artistic and existential implications, and the psychological importance of the text itself as well as its arguments is examined. In Gordon D. Marino’s “Anxiety in *The Concept of Anxiety*”, the dizzying intricacies of that “maddeningly difficult book” (p. 308) are doggedly pursued through hell and high water, including a valiant attempt to untangle that freedom which is entangled in itself. One small flaw in the article, although no fault of the author, is the printing error on p. 310, which states that by “1831, Kierkegaard was in the habit of publishing an ‘upbuilding discourse’ in his own name for every book he published pseudonymously.” Methinks the date should read 1843. In “Kierkegaard and the variety of despair”, Alastair Hannay compares Judge William’s concept of despair as found in *Either/Or* with Anti-Climacus’ notion of despair in *The Sickness Unto Death* and contrasts them both with the Hegelian notion. Hannay concludes that, for Kierkegaard, despair is related to suffering, not to scepticism. Philip L. Quinn, in “Kierkegaard’s Christian ethics”, takes as his point of departure those mysterious observations made by Vigilius Haufniensis concerning the “second ethics” found in *The Concept of Anxiety*. To elucidate these ethics, Quinn draws upon S. Kierkegaard’s *Works of Love* and the ultra-Christian Anti-Climacus’ *Practice in Christianity* – “the pseudonymous author whose voice was closest to [Kierkegaard’s] own” (p. 374) – as well making the strong point that since Kant’s understanding of love is “love that is a matter of feeling” (p. 352), it cannot be commanded. On another, text-critical, note: the example of Jeffrey Dahmer, a noted serial killer, found on p. 362, is so culturally-bound as to be unintelligible. The inclusion of such culturally specific references reveals what I believe to be the unreflected Anglo-American bias of the *Companion*.

And yet, the last two articles in the *Cambridge Companion* are theological in nature. They are the only articles in the book not authored by Anglo-Americans. The first article, “Religious dialectics and Christology” by Hermann Deuser, a noted C.S. Peirce scholar and Protestant theologian, operates under the wonderfully refreshing, almost New Criticism-like premise that Kierkegaard knew and meant what he was doing. This allows Deuser to outline Kierkegaard’s religious thinking systematically in religious, Christological, and critical aspects. The *Cambridge Companion* concludes with an article by Klaus-M. Kodalle, the renowned Hobbes scholar, whose essay “The utilitarian self and the ‘useless’ passion of

faith” is not merely the shortest paper in the book, it is also the most striking. One hesitates before plunging into an article that begins with the observation that “pressure emanating from a need can substantially distort discussion in matters of truth” (p. 397). However, there is one peculiar *lacuna* in the article, and that is the fact that Kodalle does not mention Kierkegaard’s much-touted “secret note” when speaking about the mystery of an individual’s existential center and then instead uses, as an example of such a mystery, Pascal’s *Mémorial*. But in all other aspects, the article is a joyous romp through the world of “effortless discipleship” (p. 410), and save a Kantian moment or two, fundamentally deconstructs much of what has come before it in the *Companion*. Yet what else is to be expected from an article whose fundamental premise is the observation that “[t]he Absolute is pointless” (p. 398)?

In *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*, on the other hand, traditional Kierkegaard scholarship is being deconstructed from the start. These writers are the rebel readers of Kierkegaard. Have no doubt, this tome that might just as readily been entitled *The Oxford Companion to Kierkegaard*. These Kierkegaard interpreters are decidedly not Anglo-American in orientation; rather, this volume of commentaries revolves around one of the few truly successful Franco-German mergers, namely the Heidegger-Derrida axis. And while this approach is at times refreshing and at other times disconcerting, it is always illuminating. Moreover, by assiduously avoiding the theological-epistemological bias that has traditionally dominated the Anglo-American reception of Kierkegaard, and instead stressing his stylistic and critical faculties, the essays in *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader* bring Kierkegaard into contemporary philosophical discourse, a fact reflected by the translation of several key essays from the French, showing Kierkegaard in dialogue with contemporary and post-modern thinkers.

The book opens with an historical review article by Paul Ricouer, “Philosophy after Kierkegaard”, from 1963. This is a truly wonderful article, calling as it does, not merely for a “new” reading of Kierkegaard but also for a “new” reading of the philosophical enterprise itself since Kant, as this would be the only way in which a “new” reading of Kierkegaard could be brought about. As Ricouer says, a “new approach to Kierkegaard must also be a new approach to German idealism” (p. 15).

While the second article of the *Reader*, “Existence and Ethics” by Emmanuel Levinas, cannot properly be called an article on or about Kierke-

gaard, it is an article that gives the reader a glimpse of Kierkegaard's influence on Levinas and Levinas' subsequent views of Kierkegaard. Although such an article would no doubt be of interest to Levinas scholars, it is probably of limited value to students of Kierkegaard. The third article, "Kierkegaard on Death and Dying" by Wilhelm Anz is a marvel, of sorts. One marvels. One simply marvels. One marvels at observations like "Kierkegaard brought great insight to his descriptions and elaborations of the trivial and everyday forms of such *dividedness*: for example, curiosity, gossip or idle talk (...)" (p. 44). Really? Kierkegaard did this? Perhaps Heidegger should have included another footnote at the head of Part One, Section 5, &&35-36ff, of *Sein und Zeit*? Yet this article is worth reading, if only for the experience of reading a Heideggerean interpretation of Kierkegaard that is so strong that Kierkegaard himself disappears.

While David Wood's article "Thinking God in the Wake of Kierkegaard" might appear to be theological in nature, it is actually a tale of contemporary Continental Kierkegaard *receptionshistorie*. It is the story of how Kierkegaard and his God have been received and re-used by the 20th-century thinkers Wittgenstein, Sarte, and Derrida. In the wake of Wood comes another apparently theological reading of Kierkegaard which is also a disguise. Joakim Garff's "The Eyes of Argus: *The Point of View* and Points of View on Kierkegaard's Work as an Author" has the notable distinction of being the only article by a Danish author in either the *Critical Reader* or the *Cambridge Companion*. It is also a literary-biographical reading of Kierkegaard, in itself a precarious undertaking, for how does one write a biography of a literary figure whose literary production consisted in re-writing his own biography? Moreover, the particular case of *The Point of View* presents its own sweet difficulties, the first of which is the fact that by writing this book and planning for its posthumous publication, Kierkegaard not only completed the re-writing of his own biography, but he also began the directing of his/its *receptionshistorie*. In other words, Kierkegaard has effectively rendered all secondary literature about his work tertiary. Furthermore, and this is the gist, I suspect, of Garff's article, how does one go about believing (in) the religious declaration of an author who has also declared, equally strongly, that he is also quite capable of deceiving his hapless reader *into* truth?

Any author who can coin the term 'Lamarckian Calvinism' is, no doubt, an author worth reading, and George Steiner is such an author. Moreover, that he should say, in his article "The Wound of Negativity: Two

Kierkegaard Texts” that he finds “current modes of ‘psycho-biography’ fatuous” (p. 105) makes his piece a most fitting companion to Garff’s. The two texts under discussion for Steiner are *Fear and Trembling* and *The Book on Adler*, both of which reflect Kierkegaard’s own wrestling with his personal demons. This article is noteworthy in another way: it is primarily, i.e., on some basic level, religious, and yet it comes to the radical conclusion that the life of faith necessarily results in some kind of suspension, if not of the religious, then, at the very least, of religion. As Steiner says, “No synagogue, no ecclesia can house Abraham as he strides, in mute torment, towards his appointment with the Everlasting” (p. 108).

“Kierkegaard and the Novel” by Gabriel Josipovici is by turns insightful and infuriating. A study in the role and meaning of the novel in the world of (post-)modern philosophy and literature, Josipovici touches upon important Kierkegaardian themes such as the nature of the truth and authority of the story-teller, the truth and deceit which exist in novels and stories themselves, and the relation between the story and the story-teller, the novel and the novelist, but once again the shadow of Heidegger looms so large that the line between what is Heidegger and what is Kierkegaard is substantially blurred. Nonetheless, Josipovici does shine, as in his observation that Kierkegaard uses pseudonyms “not to confuse his readers, not to play games with them, but to bring out the subjunctive nature of what is being said” (p. 123).

“We Are Not Sublime: Love and Sacrifice, Abraham and Isaac” by Sylviane Agacinski is an absolutely wonderful article, yea, verily, almost sublime. However, it is also a strange article. Strictly philosophical, it builds upon Kant and the nature of the sublime, using precise aesthetic categories in order to develop a wholly religious and subjectively religious interpretation of the Abraham and Isaac story. It is quite stunning; it should also be mentioned, though, that when Agacinski reaches the point in the article where love is discussed, the subconscious application of either Adorno’s acosmic interpretation of *Works of Love* or some misapplication of Kantian categories threw this reviewer, at least, completely off course. To conclude that love as a duty will always be egocentric (see p. 146f) is to have missed the (ostensibly Christian) point of *Works of Love*, for it is neither the cosmos nor the other that one gives up, it is that most painful sacrifice of all which is called for: the giving up of the self.

Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader concludes with an article from *The Gift of Death* by Derrida: a cynical reader. In “Whom to Give to (Knowing Not

to Know)", Jacques Derrida, having explored the physiological basis for fear and trembling as well as having established the apophatic nature of God, undertakes an apparently ethical and ostensibly Hebraic (and, for some reason, therefore also Muslim) interpretation of the *akedah* or the sacrifice of Isaac. All of this is done in order to meditate upon the meaning of both Abraham's silence and his words. But by and large the article is uneven. Moments of genius, such as "Abraham must assume absolute responsibility for sacrificing his son by sacrificing ethics, but in order for there to be a sacrifice, the ethical must retain all its value; the love for his son must remain intact, and the order of human duty must continue to insist on its rights" (p. 161) stand beside such "non-genius" observations that neither Jews nor Christians nor Muslims can "ignore or erase the sacrifice of Isaac recounted in Genesis, nor in the Gospel of Luke" (p. 160), which is something we all can ignore, since the story of the *akedah* is not to be found in the Gospel of Luke. Granted, there is still a sacrifice to be found there, but it is a sacrifice of somebody else's son. It is precisely this sort of unevenness that makes one think that perhaps the moments of insight are equally as fortuitous as the oversight concerning the Gospel of Luke. Case in point, is Derrida aware of the fact that in his pursuit of apparent erudition (for example, the *Philippians* 2:12 quote about "fear and trembling" is interspersed with the Latin and latinized Greek versions) that the perpetual inclusion of the Latin "*holocauste*" after the words "burnt offering" smacks of an anti-Semitic eschatology that is downright offensive to many readers? Once is illustrative, but such repetition awakens a socio-political mood that Derrida probably does not intend to evoke. And thus one is left wondering: if Derrida does not really mean this, what else does he not really mean?

On another note, a quite literal one, it should be mentioned that the editorial notes to the *Critical Reader* are exceptional and, unlike the *Cambridge Companion*, the *Critical Reader* has a chronological listing of Kierkegaard's published works (with their pertinent pseudonyms), something which would be very handy for the neophyte reader of Kierkegaard. Both books have excellent bibliographies, with the listing of secondary literature being much more complete in the *Cambridge Companion*.

Let us agree then with Kierkegaard, for the sake of discussion, that he can either be read aesthetically or religiously. If this is the case, then his text is rather like that famous two-handed trunk, one smooth and one rough, which the Stoics called life. In the same way that one chooses a

handle in order to pick up the trunk, so, too, it is the reader who picks up Kierkegaard's text, and through his own choice, determines the reading and the meaning to be derived from it. But ironies abound, for it seems, from the two commentary works reviewed above, that an aesthetic reading involuntarily leads to a religious interpretation of Kierkegaard's project, and a religious reading runs the risk of becoming aesthetic. And perhaps that, too, is the point?

Stacey Ake

Céline Léon and Sylvia Walsh (eds.)
Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard

The Pennsylvania State University Press.
Pennsylvania 1997, xviii + 347 pp.

Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard is the eighth volume in a series of edited collections of essays, some original and some previously published, offering feminist reinterpretations of the writings of major figures in the Western philosophical tradition. This series is called *Re-reading the Canon* and is a feminist re-reading project, with the very important insertion that it is not only readings by women researchers. A traditional feminist re-reading project will often rest upon the presupposition that women researchers, because they are women, are able to reach other results in their readings than their male colleagues. In this sense one could, with reference to Johnatan Culler's *On Deconstruction* (1983), call the feminist re-reading project a deconstructive project.

But in the preface to the Kierkegaard interpretations, Nancy Tuana points to another problem specific for philosophical works that separates the re-readings from a purely deconstructive project, as she calls attention to the fact that almost all the well-known philosophers in the Western tradition are men. Therefore feminist philosophers have begun to look critically at the canonized texts of philosophy and have seen that the discourses of philosophy are not gender-neutral. This calls for a reevaluation of the canon and a recovery of 'lost' texts, but also for a re-reading of the existing canon from a feminist perspective.

Anyway this does not quite capture the essence of the Kierkegaard volume, because here the issue is not (only) to focus on the readers, who

are both male and female, though with a preponderance of the latter, but also (and maybe mostly) to investigate the pattern of sex roles and the representation of gender in the text itself. On the one side the significance of a feminist reading (male or female) is stressed, on the other the importance of the text's own statements about gender is put forward. And this makes the reading of the re-readings an interesting and rewarding experience, because they open up a problematic field in the Kierkegaardian texts that has always been there, but hidden from the reader's eyes. But even though it is a fact that Kierkegaard's first published piece was about women's liberation, I find it a to be an overstatement, when Mark Lloyd Taylor ends his article, 'Almost Earnestness? Autobiographical Reading, feminist Re-Reading, and Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*' by stating: "Given the gendered texture of the body of his writings, I must conclude that a reading of Kierkegaard not informed by feminism, at least in the minimal sense intended here, represents a misreading." (p. 192)

The similarity between the 14 articles in this volume is that they are all very well written and have a respect for the distinctive character of the Kierkegaardian texts. Almost all the articles distinguish themselves by close readings and careful investigations of the passages the interpret.

The differences among the article lies in their interpretations of *where* Kierkegaard or his pseudonyms stood on the subject of women and the relation between the sexes and *how* he himself and (or in opposition to) his pseudonyms looked at the gender problems. Kierkegaard's own ambiguity in these matters reflects in this way the variety and differences in the interpretations. On the one hand, Kierkegaard insists on an ultimate and fundamental equality of sexes before God and he even sometimes singles out the feminine as the paradigm of true religious existence. On the other, his writings are also full of patriarchal remarks about woman that are highly problematic for a feminist reading.

It has been very difficult for me to choose a few essays for a closer review, as there are so many good ones to choose from. I have decided to single out two essays: One that regards Kierkegaard's view of women to be positive, and one that focuses on the negative aspects for a feminist reading.

Agreeing with the emphatic title of Birgit Bertung's essay, 'Yes, a woman *can* Exist!', Robert Perkins addresses, in 'Woman-Bashing in Kierkegaard's *In Vino Veritas*' (p. 83-102), the same question of whether Kierkegaard was a misogynist, but from a different angle, and answers it

with a big 'No'. Perkins carries out a close reading of 'In Vino Veritas' and interprets this piece as a modern reinscription of Plato's *Symposium*. In *Symposium* Plato was concerned with male homosexual relations, whereas 'In Vino Veritas' focuses exclusively on heterosexual accounts by the five speakers (p. 89). Perkins finds that if these speakers are right in observing that women tend to misunderstand the concept of existence more often than men, it is because of the constraints society places on them and not because of a biological difference. The connexion between *Symposion* and William Afham's recollection of the banquet is very informative, well executed and convincing. But even if the conclusion is very sympathetic, I must say that I'm not quite convinced that according to the speakers, society alone is to blame for women's situation. That may be the case in the first four speeches, but certainly not in the speech of Johannes the Seducer, referring to the myth about Pandora by Hesiod. Even when Johannes leaves the myth, he states that women are not equal to men, but a subsequent being, derived from man. In fact here the society is the factor that gives women a right, she did not have of her own, as Johannes emphasizes that only in marriage does she gain equality with man, in that they both become interested in temporal matters, as man through marriage loses the striving towards infinity, a striving that is exclusively characteristic for the male, according to Johannes.

A more critical reading of Kierkegaard's view of women is delivered by Leslie A. Howe in 'Kierkegaard and the Feminine Self'. In fact, according to Howe's analysis of the different forms of despair in *The Sickness unto Death*, this essay could have been called: 'No! A woman can't exist'. In this essay Howe explores Kierkegaard's views on the nature of the feminine self and offers some answers to the question how women fit into Kierkegaard's analysis of human selfhood (p. 218). She concludes that according to Anti-Climacus woman lacks consciousness, which has a fatal consequence for woman's selfhood: "If woman does not possess the basic requirements for becoming an ethical individual, it is also true that she does not become a self in any profound sense, as the requirements are the same: self-consciousness" (p. 229). Howe also states that even the passionate advocate for love and marriage, Judge William, who Perkins ended up by praising in this way: "Not *in vino* but in the banter of lovers at early morning tea – *veritatis*" (p. 100), referring to the final scene in *In Vino Veritas*, regards women as instrumental in providing both aesthetic enjoyment and ethical opportunity. To Judge William: "Woman is a factor in the environment within which man develops.

Woman has no decisive significance save in relation to man, whether this relation is positive or negative: just like the rest of the natural world” (p. 230).

Howe ends up by concluding that Kierkegaard is plain wrong about the essential nature of woman (p. 241). The reader must look forward to finding out for him- or herself how Wanda Warren Berry, Birgit Bertung, Julia Watkin, Céline Léon, Sylviane Agacinski, Mark Lloyd Taylor, Sylvia Walsh, Jane Duran and Tamsin Lorraine, the contributors to this volume, relate to such a statement.

Pia Søltøft

Jan Arnald, Ingemar Haag, Jan Holmgaard (eds.)

Aiolos Nr. 6-7: “Kierkegaard”

Tidsskrift för litteratur, teori och estetik

[Journal for literature, theory and aesthetics]

Gotab, Stockholm 1997 and 1998, 189 pp.

Publication of literature about Kierkegaard is comparatively scarce in Sweden. Yet, there is in this country an evident interest in Kierkegaard and his thinking. This has been observed by the editors of *Aiolos*, a new Swedish review of art and literature. The almost 200 pages of the latest double issue for 1997-98 is completely devoted to Kierkegaard's authorship. It contains five contributions of Danish scholars, and one written by one of *Aiolos*' Swedish editors, Jan Holmgaard. The issue closes with a translation into Swedish of Kierkegaard's *On My Work as an Author*.

The first and largest of the essays, *The Thinker of the Style*, is by Poul Erik Tøjner. It has previously been published in Danish in *Kierkegaards æstetik* by Tøjner, Garff, Dehs, Copenhagen 1995. Tøjner characterises Kierkegaard's authorship as self-reflecting and ironic through and through. Irony is also the topic of the contributions by Ole Egeberg and Peer Sørensen, *Listening as if there were a Meaning* and *The Clouds in Autumn*. Those who do not have access to *Aiolos* can find both these essays in *Experimenter. Læsninger i Søren Kierkegaards Forfatterskab*, red. Ole Egeberg, Århus 1993. Egeberg discusses the concept of irony on the basis of Kierkegaard's dissertation, *The Concept of Irony*, and Schlegel's theory on irony. Attention

is drawn, not only to Kierkegaard's obvious interest in irony, but also to the non- and anti-ironic aspects of Kierkegaard's authorship and thinking. In *The Clouds in Autumn*, Sørensen presents his reading of Kierkegaard's *Eulogy of Autumn*. He points out that this oration, in spite of being written in 1846, contains the same themes as *The Concept of Irony* and the first part of *Either/Or*, also that it has the ironic playfulness of the early authorship. *The Eye of the Mirror* by Jan Holmgaard is centered around that episode in *The Seducer's Diary* where the seducer happens to be in the same shop as a beautiful girl whom he observes with sidelong glances – not her, but her reflection in a mirror on the wall. Holmgaard takes this situation as the point of departure for a winding series of meditations and reflections on the relation of enjoyment to reality and to that recollection that lives its own life. Lars Erslev Andersen's essay *Repetition*, has the subtitle "On the moment of reading". Andersen discusses poetic reading, situated between freedom and the norms of convention. Finally, there is a short but very valuable guide by Joakim Garff for whomever searches for Kierkegaard in his texts. Garff thinks that, in spite of Kierkegaard's assurances to the contrary, there is very much of Søren Kierkegaard in the pseudonymous authorship, both reflections of his own concrete life and of his personal ideas. In the *Papirer* however, we meet a very self-conscious Kierkegaard in a "carefully calculated posture". Garff's text, "*To produce was my life*". *Problems and Perspectives within the Kierkegaardian Biography*, can be read in an English translation in *Kierkegaard Revisited*, Ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Jon Stewart, Berlin and New York 1997.

Anyone setting out to read *Aiolos* will fairly soon experience a growing feeling of satisfaction, if not saturation. This is partly due to the dense language in several of the contributions, but it is also owing to vacillation between very close reading of small fragments of text from Kierkegaard's work and in-depth study of literary theory. This makes it difficult to form an overall picture of the content and the drift of argument.

Several authors seem to exaggerate the characterisation of Kierkegaard as an ironic author. Poul Erik Tøjner's essay is an example of this. Tøjner wants to show how content and form, the "what" and the "how", in Kierkegaard's texts coincide. He asserts that Kierkegaard's authorship is designed to function as a seduction of the reader. According to Johannes the seducer, there is a marked affinity between literary production and seduction. This is also Kierkegaard's view, according to Tøjner. The means of seduction is irony. Tøjner argues for his opinion by producing a read-

ing of the first three of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works, *Either/Or*, *Repetition* and *Fear and Trembling*.

There are good grounds for a general and fundamental critique of an excessively ironic reading of Kierkegaard's works. Ironic language is parasitic on ordinary communication, in which the speaker tries to make language and intention or thought correspond. Anyone who constantly expresses himself ironically will finally bring the idea of his communicating to nothing by passing into a new and inverted language. On his way to this terminus he will leave his listeners or readers behind, bored and irritated.

According to Tøjner's account, to enter into Kierkegaard's authorship means becoming part of an elaborate hide-and-seek in which ideals are raised only to be shattered by new ones, without any direction or visible purpose in this confusion. Kierkegaard wants to bring his readers to "the point of silence", in Tøjner's view, by having produced a text that is ironic throughout. He seduces his readers by letting seriousness time after time transform itself into buffoonery. According to Tøjner, there is of course a point in all this. After having seen the ideals of conventional and unconventional reality being undressed and having been exposed to all this nothingness, the reader will become aware of the silence. And it is only in this silence that the divine can be heard.

Despite its poetic qualities, I don't think that this rendering of the content of Kierkegaard's works is true to their meaning. Tøjner has not been sufficiently attentive to the various senses and possible purposes of seduction. Also, I don't think that the ironic method in itself is capable of putting the reader in a state of numinous listening to divine silence. Rather it would summon forth the empty echo of the collapsed world, the echo that the aesthete of *Either/Or* aches for as he marches seven times round life, blowing on the horn. Tøjner's description of Kierkegaard's authorship is however valuable taken *quantum satis* and if supplemented with the appreciation that even in Kierkegaard's early works there is a great amount of positive content, substance and direction.

Aiolos' issue on Kierkegaard will hardly bring about a marked increase of knowledge of Kierkegaard's authorship in Sweden. Many of the texts are difficult reading, at times unnecessarily difficult, for anyone who does not already have a considerable knowledge of Kierkegaard's works and modern literary theory. But, it is readily granted, the artfulness of the language and the great learning of the contributors are admirable.

Roy Wiklander

Habib C. Malik
Receiving Søren Kierkegaard
The Early Impact and Transmission of his Thought

Washington D.C. The Catholic University of America Press, 1997, 437 pp.

In this book, Habib Malik addresses an as yet little-investigated question: “why and how did [Kierkegaard] become the ‘father of twentieth-century existentialism’” (xvii)? His answer provides a fascinating case-study in philosophical canonization, and as such it will be of interest not only to students of Kierkegaard, but also to historians of western philosophy in general. There are problems with his argument, though, which I will discuss below after summarizing his findings.

To say the least, Kierkegaard’s present-day reputation was not established immediately. Indeed, as Malik demonstrates in his first chapter, Kierkegaard’s contemporaries paid almost no attention to his writings. *Kirkekampen*, the so-called “attack upon Christendom” which Kierkegaard launched against the state church late in his life, did provoke widespread discussion. But even then the attention was generally negative and, as Malik shows, did more to damage Kierkegaard’s legacy than to abet it.

Following his death, only what Malik calls a “slow and tortuous” process introduced Kierkegaard’s work to the major philosophical circles of Europe (x). Kierkegaard’s first positive audience was in Norway, where the Pietist dissenters used his writings from the *Kirkekamp* period as a mandate for their own revolt against the state church. For some years, Kierkegaard’s works were cited enthusiastically by Norwegian radicals and were even disseminated to expatriate communities in the American Mid-West. Yet, by Malik’s account, such popular interest did not provoke any serious consideration of his philosophy in mainstream circles. Rather, its primary effect was to associate his name with radicalism and thus, ironically, to discourage nearly all but free-thinkers and atheists from considering his thought during the coming decades.

Kierkegaard’s fortunes changed only as the free-thinkers themselves gained in popularity and influence. One critic in particular was instrumental in this development: namely, Georg Brandes, a Danish literary critic with nihilist leanings and some influence in Germany. Brandes’ work on Kierkegaard – several books and articles – was far from impartial. In fact, his express goal was to produce an atheist rendition of Kierkegaard – or, as Malik puts it, to “isolate” Kierkegaard’s “genius... from

the religious ‘trappings’ ...surrounding it” (235). Yet, whatever its defects, Brandes’ work – in conjunction with such background events as the publication of Kierkegaard’s journals and papers at his brother’s behest beginning in 1869 – did also attract fresh attention to Kierkegaard and provoked a spate of new printings and critical treatments both in Denmark and abroad. Finally, by the second decade of the twentieth century, Kierkegaard’s work had been discussed and even translated in influential German-language journals and had attracted the positive attention of such notable figures as Kafka, Rilke, Lukács, Wittgenstein, Jaspers, Barth, and Heidegger.

Malik’s book lays out this story of Kierkegaard’s rise to influence in impressive detail. The depth and scope of his research alone deserve commendation. However – to turn now to the failings of the book – Malik’s analysis of this research is often far less careful. Indeed, his conclusions often seem to contradict the very evidence he presents. On the one hand, his book makes very clear that Kierkegaard’s name did not always signify what it does today and that his rise to fame and importance depended as much on haphazard events and eccentric personalities as it did on any sober evaluation of his philosophical merits. “Warning is given,” he writes, “against reading too much structure and coherence into a reception that had very little of either” (xxi). Yet, on the other hand – and in seeming contradiction to his own warning – Malik repeatedly asserts that Kierkegaard’s canonization was somehow necessary and *inevitable*. “Every truly outstanding figure in the history of thought,” he writes, “must at some point... stimulate another significant mind” (142). Hence, it follows, Kierkegaard’s rise to fame was predestined: the history of his reception is complex only because his work was long “misreceived” and ignored.

But what *is* philosophical significance if not a function of reception? Given the very complexity of the history that Malik describes, it is difficult to share his confidence in the inevitability of Kierkegaard’s canonization. Indeed, were it not for all the “misreceptions,” it seems entirely possible that Kierkegaard’s work might have fallen out of use altogether and never had any influence at all. After all, critics like Brandes, however biased and misguided, produced an understanding of Kierkegaard that appealed to the early twentieth century. There is no reason to presume that he would necessarily have been “recognized” without such efforts.

Moreover, in order to argue that Kierkegaard’s current status was inevitable, one would have to presume that some absolute, objective significance could be attributed to his work. Malik indeed seems to pre-

sume some such benchmark interpretation of Kierkegaard, for he argues throughout the book the early interpretations of Kierkegaard were incorrect and that they therefore obscured the significance of a thinker whose work should have had immediate impact. Yet Malik offers only the most cursory statements of his own views on Kierkegaard. These statements are never accompanied by any real textual analysis, nor even by any substantive discussion of the more recent scholarship. And without such discussion it cannot be clear why Malik's view of Kierkegaard is better than those he dismisses as "misreceptions."

In fact, Malik's statements on Kierkegaard often do little more than repeat old clichés that have lately been called into question. Malik writes, for instance, that Kierkegaard was "a fundamental reaction primarily against Hegel" (208). Yet in a forthcoming book and several published articles,¹ Jon Stewart has debunked this view, arguing instead that Kierkegaard cannot properly be understood as a critic of Hegel, since much of his writing is in fact in sympathy with Hegel's, and since many statements that have been interpreted as Hegel criticisms were in fact addressed only to Danish contemporaries. Now, it may be that Malik has good reason to support the more standard view of the Hegel-Kierkegaard relation. And he may also have good reason to presume that Kierkegaard's canonization was inevitable. But he should not presume these views without defending them.

Historical research like Malik's naturally raises the question of how our own presuppositions – including the presupposition of Kierkegaard's "genius" – have come into being. Malik himself does not pursue such reflections. Nevertheless, his book provides a solid factual basis for them, and for this reason alone it will be a valuable resource to future scholarship.

Zachary Price

1. Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel Reconsidered*, *Kierkegaard Studies*, vol. 4 (Berlin/New York: Verlag Walter de Gruyter, 1999). "Hegel's View of Moral Conscience and Kierkegaard's Interpretation of Abraham," *Kierkegaardiana*, vol. 19 (Copenhagen: 1998). "Hegel und die Ironiethese zu Kierkegaards *Über den Begriff der Ironie*," *Jahrbuch für Hegelforschung*, Bd. 3, 1997.