

# Reviews

## Database Edition of Søren Kierkegaards Samlede Værker InteLex Corporation, GAD, DKK 4500

The *Samlede Værker* are now available in a database edition. This is very paradoxical, and it raises an important question. Who, after all, cross your heart – and, for that matter, cross your mind! – does not feel an immediate urge to protest against the fact that something like 20 volumes are now reduced almost to an incredible lightness and can be put in your breast pocket, or wherever you might find it convenient to put 5 diskettes? The whole business seems almost a crime against nature. And is Kierkegaard, the knight of inwardness, to be crunched down into bits and software and other electronic neologisms? Doesn't this short-circuit our genius, who loathed systems and was by nature a Luddite? True, his big brother was named P. C. Kierkegaard, but that he, Søren, should suffer such a fate!

It doesn't take much effort to come up with a lot of fussy misgivings, and, as so often is the case, doubts present themselves right away. And luckily, in this case, the point of it all presents itself right away as well. Not only is Kierkegaard hard to figure out, he also difficult to get into. And, once inside, it is difficult to find your way around. This has been borne out by the bitter experience of everyone who has spent hours trying to track down one of Kierkegaard's – not quite unforgettable – sayings. It can be a struggle of epic proportions. Nowadays, to find what you need you no longer have to run from pillar to (non-electronic) post or from Victor Eremita to Anti-Climacus. No, you can use electronics to leap over the place where Kierke's guard is down, and land a second later in deepest Kierkegaard.

The product is named PAST MASTERS, and it is of course American. And despite the fact that Kierkegaard stands alone, he comes to us via PAST MASTERS as part of a large and celebrated group that includes such equally unique gentlemen as Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Hume, Machiavelli, Rousseau, and a number of others. I understand that Wittgenstein is in the pipeline. The ideas of the masters

seem to be here to stay in the form of the electronic book. For this, Kierkegaard can give thanks to Alastair McKinnon, who almost a generation ago began work on the database from which the present edition has been produced.

FOLIO VIEWS, as the program is called, does not work like an ordinary word processor, but divides the text into so-called *folios*, i.e., in accordance with typography – paragraphs, tables of contents, footnotes, variant readings, poetry, and the like – which are displayed in windows called *views*. Because the database is organized according to these folios, it does not record the overall frequency with which a word appears, but rather its frequency of appearance within a given section. For example, the word “paraply,” which is Danish for “umbrella,” only occurs in one section of the entire authorship, but within that section the word “paraply” occurs four times.

The database stores all of Kierkegaard’s works as one long, continuous text, which makes it possible to carry out even quite complex searches for words or sentences, searches which would normally take an hour, in a few seconds. Simpler searches produce a result quite literally the same second the search word or phrase is typed. Kierkegaard’s footnotes have been separated from the text and grouped as endnotes. You gain access to them on the screen by placing the cursor on the note indicator in the main text and pressing <Return>, whereupon the note appears in a window as a scrollable text. If opening a window obscures the word in the text to which the note is attached, the window size can be reduced with the help of the arrow keys, which also makes it possible to move the windows as if they were pictures on invisible, but movable, stands.

The search function is the principal feature of the program and is ingeniously simple. At the table of contents of the *Samlede Værker* the cursor is placed opposite the work to be read, and when <Return> is pressed the work appears on the screen in a window which can be enlarged to cover the entire screen. A status line provides references to the three Danish editions – which in book form, of course, are not synchronized by page or even by volume – as well as to the English, French, and German translations. These coordinated references, which can be called up on the screen as a complete set of parallel references, are not only an asset of obviously enormous value for every translator, but are also very practical for the so-called general reader, because Kierkegaard literature often contains references to an edition which is not immediately available.

A search is started by pressing the <Space> bar, which causes three windows to open. On the left side there is a square window called WORDS; at the right there is rectangular window called RESULTS; and stretched across the screen under both of these is a narrow window called QUERY, in which the cursor is already poised and blinking impatiently. The search word is typed in, which sets the search process in motion. As soon as the word is typed in, the RESULTS screen displays the number of MATCHES, i.e., the number of times the search word(s) appears in a given work, as well as the number of "folios" in the which the word appears in Kierkegaard's entire canon.

Thus, if you search for the word "Berlin" in *Gjentagelsen*, you learn that the word is found in six folios there, but in addition to this it also appears in another 13 folios in the entire canon. If you would like to know where these are, merely press <Return>, whereupon all the folios are displayed on the screen with the sought-for (and now found) word(s) shown in boldface. Because a search for words like "Menneske" (2552 folios), "Gud" (1806 folios), or other of Kierkegaard's most frequently used concepts will set enormous masses of text in motion, it is possible to have the many occurrences displayed in a short, variable context. To see how the word appears in its full context, press the <Return> key, after which the folio in question is displayed in a window. A more complete and effective concordance could not be imagined – much less created.

Because, as mentioned, the database has assembled all of Kierkegaard's works in one continuous text, VIEWS functions as a "scrolling dictionary" of every single word in Kierkegaard's canon – a sort of Kierkegaardian encyclopedia. By baring everything to the gaping stare of the curious reader, this window of course invites a certain voyeurism, but at the same time it makes it possible to modify and supplement a search so that it can include related forms – most frequently, definite forms – of the search word. Alternatively or additionally, the search can take account of Kierkegaard's often rather inconsistent spelling, e.g., the above-mentioned "umbrella," which is frequently spelled "paraply," also occurs as a "paraplui."

And despite the fact that the computer keyboard allows you to have at your fingertips what you previously had to keep in your head, the latter implement is not something which you can cleverly do without. The database is, in fact, clever and quick as a bunny, but it does not understand distinctions. To give an example: while we are still at the zoo we might note that Kierkegaard appears to have an ex-

aggerated admiration for “apes,” which in Danish are “aber,” who monkey around in no fewer than 44 folios, while the “camel” must be satisfied with six folios, and the “parrot” with two. Further investigation, however, will disclose that not one of the 44 “aber” are apes, but are in fact the German word for “but.” Something similar happens with the word “hat,” which means something different in German than it does in Danish, and a “kant,” which is the Danish word for “edge,” is of course not just something that a table has, but is also the name of the synthetic philosopher from Königsberg. “Regine,” whom Kierkegaard says he wants to take with him into history, is in no danger of a similar confusion—she does not, in fact, occur in the canon at all!

If your tastes are a bit more sophisticated, you can investigate whether – and if so, how frequently – two or more words occur in the same folio. Or whether the one word or the other occurs. Or whether one word occurs, but *not* another. In addition, you can isolate sentences and their frequency of occurrence: for example, “God is love” (18 folios) or “God is dead” (0 folios). There are other things of this sort, including useful “wildcards,” which make it possible to carry out searches for all words which begin, for example, with “inderlig,” but this is not the place for me to wander off into intricacies. For one thing, the description of the simplicity with which these operations can be carried out makes it sound more complicated than it actually is. And for another thing, the diskettes are accompanied with a manual which illustrates the entire process. The manual includes a series of learning exercises that explain everything worth knowing, from installation of the program, to correct use of the mouse, to printing out your results. Learning the program requires neither a degree in computer science nor the patience of a saint, but merely a bit of feeling for how to deal with computers. The hardware requirements are well within the range of what is generally available nowadays: an IBM-compatible computer; 512K RAM; DOS 2.0; a hard disc (the program takes 10 megabytes total); and, quite understandably, a monitor (a monochrome monitor will suffice, but a color monitor is preferable, particularly if you want to work with several windows at a time).

Although, as can be seen, the program comes close to perfection, this does not mean that there aren't a few warts here and there. For example, it is annoying that in copying a portion of text to a word processing file, the marker codes which are used so frequently (e.g., boldface type) disappear without a trace, and that the letter ø ends

up looking like the ones they have on the Swedish side of the Öresund. Another problem is that the entire thing is based on the third edition of the *Samlede Værker*, which, as is well-known, is not the most reliable in the world, and the spot checks I have carried out have not been encouraging. Nor is the omission of the commentary which accompanies that edition such a good thing – even though the loss of Peter P. Rohde's mixed bag of verbosity could almost be seen as a gain. Although it is beyond the scope of a discussion of the program itself, there is the matter of the product's price. It is rather a bear of a price, or at least it is hard to bear, and it certainly gives one pause. The program is priced beyond the reach of most individual budgets, especially because in most cases it will supplement rather than replace the printed edition.

This objections must not, however, obscure the fact that a database edition of the canon signals a minor revolution, because we now have a completely new and far greater flexibility in working with Kierkegaardian texts than has heretofore been possible with printed editions. And it is tempting to believe that Kierkegaard has finally been made accessible in his true medium. For, after all, what could be more obvious than to study "the intriguing secret of the machinery" by means of a machine! And to find out what Kierkegaard himself has to say about "the machinery," all you have to do is call him up down in the database, from which he immediately sends up several replies. This one is certainly the best: "I am myself again, the machinery has been set in motion."

*Joakim Garff*

*Søren Kierkegaard:*

**Either/Or: A Fragment of Life**

Abridged and translated by Alastair Hannay.

Penguin Classics, Harmondsworth, 1992, 633 pp.

"A new literary comet ... has soared in the heavens here – a har-binger and a bringer of bad fortune. It is so demonic that one reads and reads it, puts it aside in dissatisfaction, but always takes it up again, because one can neither let it go nor hold onto

it. 'But what is it?,' I can hear you say. It is *Either/Or* by Søren Kierkegaard. You have no idea what a sensation it has caused. I think that no book has caused such a stir with the reading public since Rousseau placed his *Confessions* on the altar. After one has read it one feels disgust for the author, but one profoundly recognizes his intelligence and his talent."

This was the reaction of Signe Læssøe in a letter to her friend Hans Christian Andersen, written not long after the publication of Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*. This was Kierkegaard's literary breakthrough and his most sensational work. It made his reputation and to some extent imprisoned him.

*Either/Or* is undoubtedly still Kierkegaard's most widely read book, and it remains a standard avenue of access to Kierkegaard's oeuvre. Penguin's publication of an inexpensive paperback edition of the book is therefore especially welcome. Alastair Hannay, who has earlier published translations of *Fear and Trembling* and *The Sickness Unto Death* in this same series, once again does a first-rate job in rendering Kierkegaard's Danish into English. The translation reads smoothly, and, in the places where I have compared it against the original, it has proven to be faithful.

Given the fact that the Princeton University Press edition of *Kierkegaard's Writings* is nearing completion, one might ask: Why does the world need more English translations of Kierkegaard? Since the Princeton translation of *Either/Or* is also supple and accurate, why is there a need for the Penguin edition?

There are several excellent justifications for the Penguin editions in general and for this edition of *Either/Or* in particular. First of all, for the many English speakers who read Kierkegaard and who have no Danish, the availability of two fine, modern translations makes it possible to "triangulate" difficult or obscure passages by consulting both translations. Thus it is always a good thing to have two high-quality translations.

Perhaps more important is the fact that, as mentioned, in our day as in Kierkegaard's, the most travelled path to his enormous and complex authorship is without doubt *Either/Or*. (The other most frequently read works are probably *Fear and Trembling* and *The Sickness Unto Death*, which not surprisingly are also part of Hannay's contributions to the Penguin Classics series.) But given the nature of the book, we

are immediately confronted with problems concerning affordability and sheer bulk, and for the first-time reader of Kierkegaard, the Penguin edition of *Either/Or* has several key advantages here.

The first of these advantages is price. The Penguin *Either/Or* has an American list price of US\$14.95, while the two-volume paperback edition of the Princeton version has a list price of US\$34.90 (hard-cover price US\$147.50!). This price difference will clearly be a major consideration when assigning *Either/Or* as one text among many others in an undergraduate course. The Princeton volumes are nicely produced and contain a wealth of scholarly material, but one nonetheless wonders whether the possession of a *de facto* monopoly has induced Princeton University Press to be somewhat cavalier in their pricing policies. It is a shame to have to hesitate in assigning a classic work like *Either/Or* (or other of Kierkegaard's works) simply because of cost. A bit of competition may have a salutary effect here.

Another consideration has to do with the great mass of supplementary scholarly materials which are included with the Princeton edition volumes. In the Penguin edition, 587 pages of text are accompanied by 45 pages of supplementary material, while in the Princeton edition 797 pages of text are accompanied by 450 pages of such materials. While these materials are unquestionably of great value to the English-language scholar and researcher (and quite often also to those who can read the Danish original!), they undoubtedly serve to increase greatly the price of the Princeton edition. Furthermore – although this does not quantify into dollars and cents – the scholarly bulk of the Princeton editions undoubtedly has an intimidating effect on undergraduates and first-time readers who may be fearful of so much erudition. The Penguin volumes present the beginner and the non-expert with an inexpensive and compact alternative, which can be thrust into the pocket and taken along on the train or airplane or kept casually on the night table for reading in bed. How well I remember being captivated far into the night by those first volumes – *Either/Or*, *Fear and Trembling*, and *The Sickness Unto Death* – all in inexpensive, handy pocket editions from Anchor Books! I have long since forgiven Walter Lowrie for whatever errors there were in his translations. He launched the readers who would eventually supersede him, and he did so with editions which were affordable and portable. It would be a good thing if the new Penguin editions encouraged Princeton to bring out low-cost, slimmed-down versions of their fine new translations.

Having said all this, I have still detoured around a major and controversial issue concerning the Penguin edition of *Either/Or*, namely the fact that it has gained much of the above-mentioned advantage in price and bulk by means of the device of abridgement. When and to what extent is an abridgement of a classic work like *Either/Or* justifiable? Before this question can be settled certain others must be answered: What is the nature of the abridgement? How does it affect the author's intention and the plan of the original work? And, not least, who is the intended audience for the abridged edition?

The first question may be answered simply. The abridgement consists primarily of three elements: minor cuts, principally some of the "Diapsalmata;" the elimination of the essay "The First Love;" and many cuts in Judge Vilhelm's essays in Part Two, so that those pieces are compressed by ca. 30%.

The matter of the author's intention and the plan of the work is more complicated. As he points out in his "Introduction," translator Hannay is well aware that "purists" will object to any truncation of the original. He counters such objections by noting that his version "is at least better than the far more drastic abridgements usually resorted to, patched out of passages quoted out of context." No one could disagree with this, and the most odious of abridgements are surely those which reprint *only* "The Seducer's Diary." But there is still the question of faithfulness to the plan of the original. Here Hannay is forced to grapple with a major hermeneutical issue that has dogged the study of Kierkegaard from the very beginning, namely the degree to which Kierkegaard has the right to dictate to readers concerning how his works are to be read. Since Kierkegaard was so self-aware and so insistent concerning this matter, it has generally been the tendency of scholars to allow him more "authority" over how he is to be read than is normally granted to other authors and other texts. Thus, in their "Historical Introduction" to their translation of the Princeton edition of the work, Howard and Edna Hong cite with approval *Pap. IV A 214*, where Kierkegaard states that *Either/Or* has "a plan, from the first word to the last," just as they accept at face value Kierkegaard's retrospective self-interpretation in "A First and Last Explanation" (appended to *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* in 1846), his preface to the *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays* (1851), and subsequent statements in his journals and autobiographical pieces. These pronouncements would seem to require the un-



questioning acceptance of the “integrality” of Kierkegaard’s entire authorship and therefore of *Either/Or* as published in 1843. This would mean that that work ought to be reprinted only in its full published form, thus disallowing any abridgement.

Hannay, however, is not so sure that these *ex poste* self-interpretations ought to accorded such a privileged position. He argues that *Either/Or* was written “some time before the notion of a ‘leap’ into a decisively Christian point of view crystallized in Kierkegaard’s writings,” and that it consequently did not have the “clear-cut target” which Kierkegaard subsequently assigned to his works. Hannay proposes quite persuasively that “the writing [of *Either/Or*] itself may not have followed any conscious plan or strategy discernible in the work as we now have it” and that we are thus justified in producing a one-volume abridgement if we can do so without “a serious loss of meaning.” As Hannay puts it,

“Kierkegaard’s own insistence that the work be read in its entirety or not at all ... should be read in context. Kierkegaard is complaining that although they have been provided with both an ‘either’ and an ‘or’, his critics have shown interest only in the ‘either’, some only in the ‘Seducer’s Diary’. By saying ‘read it all or not at all’, Kierkegaard means first of all ‘read at least *both* my “either” *and* my “or”’.

To Hannay, this means that he can be true to Kierkegaard’s intention by producing a single volume which contains almost all of Part One (“either”) and a condensed version of Part Two (“or”) which is “designed to bring the line of Vilhelm’s argument into greater relief.”

In my view, Hannay succeeds splendidly in fulfilling his promise. Part One reads smoothly and has much of the electricity of the original. Part Two *is* a radical abridgement, but retains the fundamentals of Vilhelm’s argument as well as enough of the earnestness – and even the turgidity – of the good Judge’s style to be true to the original. What we have is a reasonably priced, expertly translated, pocket-sized, one-volume abridgement of a classic work. The brief introduction deals deftly with the problems raised by the work’s multiple pseudonymity. The notes, largely taken over from the third Danish edition of Kierkegaard’s *Samlede Værker*, are rudimentary but have no pretention of being more than this. The question of intended

audience is of key importance here. While specialists and others who can read Danish will of course continue to read Kierkegaard in the original, and English-language scholars will use the Princeton editions, Alastair Hannay's Penguin Classics edition of *Either/Or* will be a standard work for college and university courses and will serve as one of the principal avenues of approach for the general reader who wants to make Kierkegaard's acquaintance, whether on an all-day train ride or in an all-night reading marathon.

Bruce H. Kirmmse

*Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong:*  
**Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments**  
 Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1992.

**K**ierkegaard's *Writings* is the name given to the series of new translations of Kierkegaard's works for which Howard V. Hong is the general editor and for which he, together with his wife Edna H. Hong, are the primary translators. This series is published by Princeton University Press and described by them as "[t]he definitive, systematically translated, scholarly edition of Kierkegaard's works."<sup>1</sup> The impression among philosophers is that these translations are significant improvements on the previous ones.

It is not my intention here to take exception to the claim that the new translation of the *Postscript* represents an improvement over the previous translation, but to clarify in what respects this is true. First, it is a more literal translation of the original text and thus often brings the scholar closer to this text than did the previous translation. Second, it includes references in the margins that correlate the pages of the English text with those of the first Danish edition of Kierkegaard's *Samlede Værker* (Collected Works) and thus facilitates easy reference to the Danish text. Finally, it occasionally includes references to the relevant Danish expressions in brackets when translations of these expressions may be considered problematic.

Unfortunately, style is often sacrificed to literalness of translation. Despite this literalness, however, there are instances in which the new translation of the *Postscript* fails to alert the reader to impor-

tant distinctions in the Danish texts. The space allotted this review is limited. I will thus not attempt to catalog the difficulties with this translation, but will offer merely a few samples of the kinds of problems the reader can expect to encounter.

The Honges are, in general, conscientious in their efforts to avoid imposing their own interpretation of the substance of the text on the reader. As I explained above, one of the respects in which this translation is a clear improvement on the previous translation is that it includes references to the relevant Danish expressions when translations of these expressions may be considered problematic. The Honges have endeavored to alert their readers to what few English-speaking Kierkegaard scholars have recognized, and that is that there are four important and interrelated expressions the significance of which translations of Kierkegaard have tended to obscure. These expressions are '*vorden*,' '*tilblivelsen*,' '*eksistens*' and '*tilværelsen*.' The first two expressions have traditionally been translated into English as 'becoming,' while the third and fourth expressions have traditionally been translated into English as 'existence.' Considerations of brevity do not permit me to detail the various senses in which these expressions are used by Kierkegaard. It will suffice in this context, however, merely to point out that while the Honges have often included the Danish expression in brackets after the word they have chosen to translate it, the difficulty is that they have not always done this and that means that there are still passages in the translation which cannot be properly understood without reference to the original text.

There are even instances in which the decision not to include the Danish expression makes it appear that Kierkegaard contradicts himself. This is the case, for example, in the section entitled "Possible/Actual Theses by Lessing" where the Honges' translation reads "[n]othing historical can become infinitely certain to me except this: that I exist (which in turn cannot become infinitely certain to any other individual, who in turn is only in the same way infinitely cognizant of his own existence) which is not something historical" (CUP, 81/SV VII, 63). Existence (i.e., '*eksistens*'), according to Kierkegaard, however, is always historical. The difficulty is that the expressions the Honges have translated here as "exist" and "existence" are actually "*er til*" and "*Tilværelsen*," rather than '*eksistere*' and '*eksistens*.'

But if the new translation of the *Postscript* fails to make the distinctions among the above terms sufficiently clear, it actively obscures the senses in which at least one expression is used by Kierke-

gaard. The Hongs use two English words, 'certainty' and 'certitude,' to translate the single Danish expression '*vished*.' There is no doubt that this expression is used by Kierkegaard to refer to both an objective and a subjective phenomenon, but the Hongs have not, unfortunately been consistent in their employment of the two expressions. Take, for example, the following quotation: "If someone objectively inquires into immortality, and someone else stakes the passion of the infinite on the uncertainty ... who has more certainty?" (CUP, 201/SV VII, 168). Immortality cannot be *both* certain *and* uncertain. To the extent that the Hongs have interpreted '*vished*' to refer to subjective conviction as well as to the relations between statements or propositions, the latter reference should not be to 'certainty,' but to 'certitude.'

There are, finally, a few difficulties with the new edition of the *Postscript* that relate to the second volume. The first concerns the fact that the references to Kierkegaard's *Journals and Papers* use Roman rather than Arabic numerals to indicate the relevant volumes. The volumes of the *Journals and Papers* are identified by Arabic numerals. Scholarly convention is that references should agree with their source in this respect. The reader who is unaware that there is only one edition of Kierkegaard's journals and papers in English may thus be misled into thinking that the references in the second volume of the new edition *Postscript* refer to a different edition of the *Journals and Papers*.

The index is also somewhat disappointing. It is large and includes helpful subheadings, but it is far from comprehensive. There is, for example, no entry for "real" or "reality," despite the fact that "reality" (*realitet*), as distinguished from "actuality" (*virkelighed*) is an important concept in Kierkegaard's authorship and appears at several places in the *Postscript*.<sup>3</sup> Even the entries which are included occasionally give a false impression of comprehensiveness. There are many references, for example, under the headings of "certainty/certitude" and "uncertainty," but the reader needing to locate Kierkegaard's claim that the certainty/certitude of faith "has within itself the infinite dialectic of uncertainty" will not find this reference under either of these headings.

There is, as I explained at the beginning of this review, no question that the Hongs' translation of the *Postscript* is an improvement on the earlier translation. It is important, however, that readers be alerted to the fact that it cannot serve as a substitute for the original text. It is clear, of course, that the Hongs never intended it to have such a

function. They have made every effort to encourage the reader to refer to the original Danish text. They have even gone to the extent of including page correlation tables to all three editions of Kierkegaard's collected works in Danish so readers who do not have access to a first edition may with a minimum of inconvenience refer to one of the other translations as well.

This translation of the *Postscript* will both encourage and facilitate a more profound appreciation of the substance of the concerns expressed therein. Critical appraisal of it does no disservice to the years of research and toil that went into its production. Indeed, anything less would be a disservice to two people whose contribution to Kierkegaard scholarship has been, and continues to be, so great.

*Marilyn G. Piety*

### Notes

- 1 Books in Philosophy, Vol. 3, No. 2, 61.
- 2 The conflation of these two expressions is also a problem in German translations of Kierkegaard where both have historically been translated as 'Werden.'
- 3 Cf., e.g., CUP, 93/SV VII, 73; CUP, 171/SV VII, 142 and CUP, 328/SV VII, 283.

*Søren Kierkegaard:*

**Ou bien...Ou bien...,**

**La Reprise, Stades sur le chemin de la vie, La Maladie à la mort,**  
édition établie par Régis Boyer, traduction de Pierre-Henri Tisseau,  
Laffont, Collection "Bouquins", Paris, 1993, 1.324 pp.

*Chantal Anne:*

**L'amour dans la pensée de Søren Kierkegaard.**

**Pseudonymie et polyonymie,**

L'Harmattan, Collection "La philosophie en commun",  
Paris, 1993, 143 pp.

**I**l fallait s'y attendre, Kierkegaard est devenu un classique! De Kierkegaard, les lecteurs francophones disposent d'une excellente et désormais canonique édition des œuvres complètes en 20 volumes, avec traductions de Pierre-Henri Tisseau et de Madame Else-Marie

Jacquet-Tisseau, et dotées d'introductions de Jean Brun: œuvres complètes patronnées par un comité franco-danois constitué par F.J. Billeskov Jansen,† Mogens Hermannsen, Peter Kemp, Henri Gouhier, Paul Ricœur et †Jean Wahl (Editions Orante, Paris). Comme on le voit, ce n'est pas peu!

Le professeur Régis Boyer, patron des études scandinaves à la Sorbonne, vient de soustraire *Ou bien....Ou bien...* des volumes 3 et 4 de cette grande édition (l'ancienne *Alternative*); du volume 5, c'est *La Reprise* ou, suivant ici aussi l'ancienne appellation, *La Répétition*; du volume 9, ce sont les *Stades sur le chemin de la vie*, et enfin du volume 16, *La Maladie à la mort*.

Coincer ces quatre œuvres essentielles en un seul volume, encadré d'une préface et d'une chronologie, voilà ce que propose cette édition extrêmement manipulable et de grand tirage. Kierkegaard en "Bouquins", présenté par un scandinaviste chevronné et largement diffusé en cette sorte de collection de poche, c'est plus que la gloire! Aussi n'est-il pas nécessaire d'en donner un compte rendu par le détail puisque déjà deux articles parus dans deux journaux prestigieux s'en chargent: Robert Maggiori dans *Libération* (21 octobre 1993) sous le titre de *Le petit Søren de Copenhague* et Philippe Sollers, dans *Le Monde* (19 novembre 1993), avec un texte sur *Kierkegaard et le paradoxe absolu*.

Sollers lui attribue intelligence, souplesse, drôlerie, foi, et continue à le cliquer en le comparant à l'autre grand «K» – Kafka de Prague – tout en le désignant comme «un romancier de la pensée»... Ce n'est pas si mal pour le petit Søren de Copenhague...

Le remarquable numéro *Kierkegaard* des "Cahiers de Philosophie" de Lille, remarquable par l'intérêt thématique des sujets traités et par la qualité des participants, incluait – parmi tant d'autres<sup>1</sup> – une étude de Chantal Anne intitulée *Mises en scène de l'éternité* (pp. 95-118) et posait peut être ainsi les jalons initiaux d'une méditation sur l'amour d'après Kierkegaard. En tout cas, l'auteure nous donne aujourd'hui *L'amour dans la pensée de Søren Kierkegaard. Pseudonymie et Polyonymie*, ouvrage dans lequel elle se propose de cerner l'expérience individuelle de l'amour, expérience manifestée thématiquement (p.9) dans la *pensée* de Kierkegaard. Ici comme ailleurs, lorsqu'il est question de Kierkegaard, on en revient toujours à cette base pivotale entre l'expérience d'un côté et la réflexion de l'autre: va et vient perpétuel et puisque le thème est l'amour, toute la gamme y passe. Variations sapides et ténues, la plupart du temps douloureuses, ayant

pour fonction d'exprimer les conséquences physiologiques, psychologiques et spirituelles d'une intelligence qui se mesure à l'aune d'un triple mouvement. D'abord, celui qui va de la dialectique de l'intériorité en passant par l'ironie (pp. 29-38; pp. 117-124); puis l'amour repérable dans le mouvement de la nature, c'est-à-dire de la sexualité (féminité, mariage) (pp. 39-89) et enfin dans le mouvement religieux où l'amour – comme le religieux lui-même – se trouve déchiré par le paradoxe (pp. 91-115). En effet, qu'est-ce que l'amour sinon une nostalgie plus ou moins consciente de l'unité primitive, supérieure, et les moyens vécus et pensés de la re-prendre constamment?

Le *Journal du Séducteur* se termine en l'occurrence sur cette approche de l'amour en tant qu'*unité* supérieure parce que justement l'amour incite à la réunion des contraires – et pas seulement au *contact* des contraires – il est en effet l'élément de cette réunion.

En ce sens, Cordelia est sans doute aussi absente que l'absence valéryenne:

“Tout autre n'a pour moi qu'un cœur mystérieux,

“Tout autre n'est qu'absence”.<sup>2</sup>

elle est un moment de l'amour, assez opaque d'ailleurs, suscité par le désir et détruit par lui, alors que Johannes s'alimente d'une forte constance charnelle. Du *Banquet* au *Journal du Séducteur*, de Platon à Kierkegaard, la trajectoire du démoniaque ne s'efface plus de cette question de l'amour et Kierkegaard se trouve être passionnément conscient de l'opposition entre l'esprit et la chair. Il ne faut y voir aucun mépris pour le corps, seulement une disposition qui l'aligne sur les étapes d'une dialectique du dépassement et de la reconversion, d'aucuns diront de «déviation».

Le christianisme a bloqué l'alliance libre du corps, poussant celui-ci à ne s'exprimer désormais que comme *abstraction*: dans le lieu exaltant du mysticisme, dans la fin'amor de l'idéalisme courtois, et qu'à la renaissance française, un Pontus du Tyard identifiera, par l'entremise de Pasithée, à l'*Idée des Idées (Erreurs amoureuses)*. D'où l'entrée de la séduction comme une forme de théorisation (phénoménologie) du *malentendu* corps/esprit, profane/ sacré et que Platon a voulu condenser par sa doctrine de l'androgynat, doctrine de l'«union parfaite»...

Ne trouve-t-on pas dans le *Livre sur Adler (Œuvres Complètes, tome 12, p. 61)*: “(...) le Magister Adler présente certains traits étrangement féminins:(...)”, phrase à laquelle Ch. Anne se réfère (p. 51) dans son livre. Aussi l'auteure discute-t-elle de la *prétendue* misogynie

de Kierkegaard et en arrive à faire de lui un auteur non-misogyne (pp. 51-52). Sans vouloir me faire l'avocat du diable, comment Ch. Anne en arrive-t-elle à conjurer la foudre de certaines remarques: "Qu'est-ce qu'une jeune fille peut craindre? L'esprit. Pourquoi? Parce que l'esprit constitue la négation de toute son existence féminine" (*Journal du Séducteur*)? Une telle ironie cynique se fait dans le chuchotement et le murmure à l'oreille: confidence-conseil, fortement teinté de démonisme et que ne désavoueraient ni Mme de Merteuil des *Liaisons dangereuses* de Laclos, ni le maître à penser Versac des *Egarements du cœur et de l'esprit* de Crébillon Fils et ni enfin le "pédagogue" Dolmancé de la *Philosophie dans le boudoir* du marquis de Sade. Il va de soi que nous croyons aux propos chuchotés, et par par la médiation de l'ironie, nous embarquons sur cette nef qu'agite l'inquiétante houle de la passion et du désir, de la conscience et de l'action. Et la question se repose dans toute son ampleur: être tout en dedans ou tenter de projeter sur la généralité (det Almene) l'ombre d'un geste, d'une action, assujéti soi-même aux psychologies *spéciales*, n'étant pas précisément stendhalien dans ses efforts de cristallisation: Kierkegaard ne se sent ni en état de sacerdoce avec l'église officielle, ni en état de mariage avec l'amour qui lui est dévolu<sup>3</sup>... L'amour est certes difficile puisqu'il remue tant de choses qu'il convient de répéter – de *repandre*: c'est-à-dire ne pas devenir autre, non, devenir *soi-même*, trouver dans l'Autre un Même qui est moi: tirer vers soi cette essence de ce qui constitue l'humain et le divin, le profane et le sacré. Car l'amour au sens kierkegaardien est *polyonymique*, c'est ce que nous apprend Chantal Anne dans son livre et elle nous en donne la définition suivante: "(...) effet ironique d'une dénonciation de l'anonymat et de l'impersonnalité des messages objectifs. En tous les cas donc, c'est un existant qui écrit. Un existant, c'est-à-dire selon le pseudonyme envisagé, un individu (...)" (p. 21). Mais qu'est-ce que l'anonymat, et qu'est-ce que le pseudonyme? Dans l'anonymat, l'identité n'existe pas: on dit une lettre anonyme, c'est-à-dire une lettre non-signée, sans nom. Le pseudonyme est et a un nom; chez Kierkegaard, ce nom possède comme une sorte de surplus de sens servant à établir un rapport psychologique à une fonction: Vigilius Haufniensis, Hilarius Bogbinder, etc... Bref, il a un nom qui n'est pas le sien, est quelqu'un qui s'emprunte à un autre et ainsi circule d'une identité à une non-identité qui reste une manière d'identité. Le pseudonyme désire rayer, détruire, la face paternelle et souscrire à un autre référent qui est l'œuvre elle-même, et non le nom propre (chez Kierkegaard, la faute



paternelle). En réalité, anonyme et pseudonyme sont sur la même longueur d'onde et conjuguent une même perte identitaire au profit du seul texte. Constatons que si le pseudonyme permet le renversement, il enclenche pareillement le travail du lecteur: le sujet se lisant lui-même: "Il n'y a donc pas dans les livres pseudonymes un seul mot qui soit de moi-même; je n'ai de jugement à leur sujet que celui d'un tiers, de connaissance de leur signification qu'en tant que lecteur, pas le moindre rapport privé avec eux... Car mon rapport à eux est l'unité d'un secrétaire et, ce qui n'est pas sans ironie, de l'auteur de l'auteur, ou des auteurs.."4

Que ne peut-on ne pas dire dans l'*illusion* qu'un autre le dit pour soi?!... D'évidence, il y a là une trace à suivre et, somme toute, l'esthéticien et l'éthicien sont tancés par le religieux: les défaillances de l'esthétique et de l'éthique sont ainsi "couvertes" par lui, que génère l'amour.

Chantal Anne a très largement conçu son sujet, et son livre fournit un excellent tableau d'ensemble de la problématique de l'amour chez Kierkegaard. Ses analyses sont, pour la plupart, sobres et honnêtes, secondées par une information consciencieuse, faite d'ailleurs à partir de citations caractéristiques. Entreprise utile, accessible à tous, conduisant à une méditation *accompagnée* sur Kierkegaard, c'est-à-dire sur ce qu'il pense des Pseudonymes et sur ce que les Pseudonymes pensent de lui à propos de l'épineuse question de l'amour.

Jacques Caron

### Notes

1. *Les Cahiers de Philosophie*, 8-9, Lille, automne 1989. Numéro préparé par Jacques Mes-sage avec textes de S. Agacinski, Ch. Anne, F.J. Billeskov Jansen, H. Birault, A. Clair, J. Colette, M. Cornu, F. Frandsen, B. Groethuysen, A. Grøn, P. Kemp, J. Lafarge, R. Laporte, J. F. Marquet, J. Message, M. Olsen, H. Politis, P. Ricœur, L.H. Schmidt, J. Starobinski, M. Sultana, M. C. Taylor, H. B. Vergote et N. Viallaneix. Je me propose, dans le numéro 18 des *Kierkegaardiana*, de rendre compte des textes de ces *Cahiers*, ainsi que de *Penser le singulier* d'André Clair et des *Lectures philosophiques de Søren Kierkegaard* de H.B. Vergote.
2. Paul Valéry: *Fragments du Narcisse* in *Œuvres*, Edition établie et annotée par Jean Hytier, "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade", Gallimard, Paris, 1959, tome I, p.128.
3. C'est là la position adoptée par Suzanne Brøgger, auteure de *Fri os fra Kærligheden* (Délivrez-nous de l'amour), dans une chronique parue dans *Politiken* (15 janvier 1985) sous le titre de *Man kan ikke blive gammel med Søren* (On ne peut vieillir en compagnie de Søren): "(...) toute son œuvre est une monumentale campagne d'opposition contre l'église et contre le mariage..." ("er hele hans forfatterskab en monumental modstandskampagne mod kirke og ægteskab").

Sur le même sujet que celui de Chantal Anne, on pourra se référer avec profit à l'ouvrage de Birgit Bertung qui annexe à sa réflexion sur Kierkegaard, non seulement S. Brøgger, mais aussi Karen Blixen: *Om Kierkegaard, kvinder og kærlighed – en studie i Søren Kierkegaards kvindesyn* (1987) (Sur Kierkegaard, les femmes et l'amour – une étude sur la conception de la femme chez Søren Kierkegaard).

4. *Post-Scriptum*, Gallimard, Paris, p.245. Cité par Marcelin Pleyne dans son *Lautréamont*, Seuil, Paris, 1967, p. 113.

*Shmuel Hugo Bergman:*

**Dialogical Philosophy from Kierkegaard to Buber.**

Translated by Arnold A Gerstein.

Foreword by Nathan Rotenstreich.

State University of New York Press, Albany 1991.

**T**his book is a re-issue of a series of lectures given by Shmuel Hugo Bergman at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1962. The book's tight and chronological composition reflects Bergman's wish to tell the history of the fall and redemption of human consciousness.

The first part deals with the development of philosophy before Søren Kierkegaard, but its central point is the philosophy of Kierkegaard, especially his concept of irony and his pseudonymous writings: *Either/Or*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Repetition* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.

The second part of Bergman's book is called "transition", and here Bergman discusses philosophy from Feuerbach to Rosenstock as a transition from idealism to dialogue.

The third part is devoted to dialogical philosophy from Franz Rosenzweig to the origin of "I-Thou" in the philosophy of Martin Buber.

**A**ccording to Bergman "the fall" took place, not in one event, but as a "mutation" (p. 5), a sudden change in the consciousness of man around the beginning of the sixth century BC. This happened when the Greek consciousness shifted from mythical consciousness into cognitive awareness.

Thus the consequences of "the fall" were that the human "I" became abstract and propelled itself out of its surroundings, which thereby became alien.

And these consequences continued to develop during the Middle Ages until the magnification of the self reached its climax in the modern period. Kant and German idealism viewed the "I" as a self-contained whole. The consequence of this is that the world becomes a world of egos without any connecting relationship between them: "There is no dialogue in the world" (p. 9).

This is the background against which Bergman introduces Kierkegaard – not only the philosophy of Kierkegaard, but the actual person Mr. Kierkegaard!

Bergman takes over the *Postscript's* criticism of Hegel for not having a place in his system for his own existence. (In fact, Bergman takes over all Kierkegaard's criticisms of Hegel). According to Bergman, philosophy prior to Kierkegaard had created an abstract "I", but had forgotten the personal and concrete "I". For Bergman Kierkegaard is his philosophy, which leads him to a very strong biographical reading.

But even if one chooses to ignore the biographical information, the point is that Kierkegaard represents a turning point in philosophy. He transforms the abstract and objective "I" into a concrete subject, and at the same time he changes the self-contained "I" into a created and thereby dependent "I". A response to a call of the self is the opening of the self-contained self. The dialogical relation to God makes the self a concrete and individual subject.

To choose oneself is a moral duty. The decision by means of which the self chooses itself and accepts this duty is a twofold operation that unites to become one (p. 73). Because the consciousness of duty isolates, the first part of the process of choosing oneself is self-isolation. On the other hand, the "I" is bound to the content of the duty by a concrete situation, which recreates the "I's" connection to its surroundings. According to Bergman this is what Judge Wilhelm in *Either/Or* represents. What happens is a "revitalizing of the universal". But this is only morality, and morality does not require any absolute duty to God, as for example, is the case in *Fear and Trembling*. Man has many sorts of duties in his relation to many different things, and here man is the center. But in fact the center moves from the "I" to God, which creates a conflict or a "suspension of ethics". Ethically there is no absolute duty to God except for the believer (p. 86).

The dialogue between Abraham and God is a totally internal event. Here the same twofold movement takes place – the resignation and the returning to Sarah – but according to Bergman there is no

unifying aspect because the last movement is problematic for Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard succeeds in making the "I" a concrete subject, because he sees the relationship between man and God as a dialogical relationship, but he overlooks the fact that the individual cannot exist as an individual unless connected to other people (p. 101).

Perhaps this categorical denial of the complementary aspect of the dialogical relationship between man and man in Kierkegaard's writings could have been avoided if Bergman had formulated man's duty to God not only in accordance with the Deuteronomic command (Deut.6:5), but had also taken into account Matt.22:39: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", as Kierkegaard writes an entire book on this commandment.

Had Bergman made use of *Works of Love* in his study, it would perhaps also have prevented him from interpreting Kierkegaard as close to Judaism and Hasidism.

According to Bergman, Kierkegaard managed to make the subjective "I" concrete and individual through the dialogue with God, but he left this "I" in solitude, because he failed to allow morality and faith to co-exist.

In making the "I" individual and concrete, Kierkegaard laid the foundation for dialogical philosophy and its transition from Feuerbach to Rosenstock.

The I-Thou relation in Feuerbach's philosophy is basically found in thought. Thinking is essentially dialogical (p. 147), because thinking is an answer to a question. The thinking "I" is not in solipsistic isolation, because to think is to engage in a discourse. There is no thinking "I" without a "Thou".

This insisting that there is no "I" without a "Thou" is of course basic to dialogical philosophy, including the variant developed by Franz Rosenzweig, with his *Star of Redemption*. In his interpretation of Rosenzweig, Bergman again tends to adopt a biographical point of view. In Rosenzweig's system *The Star of Redemption* the three elements – God, world and man – are partly self-contained ("Protokosmos"), but are also partly open to one another in a dynamic relationship, "a constant intercommunication" (p. 200).

Dialogue between man and God is created when God calls man and man responds. But man is only a whole person when he knows how to separate himself from this mythical experience and goes back into the world, giving to the world the love he has been granted. Man

has to transform the love of God into an I-Thou relation, thereby giving the world a social and personal form. According to Bergman, this last step was the one Kierkegaard failed to take. Again it seems appropriate to refer to *Works of Love* and the constantly asserted demand for transforming love of God into love of one's neighbour as the first "Thou".

Bergman ends his book with Buber, for whom he has the greatest sympathy. To Buber the "I" and "thou" do not exist separately. What exists is the relation I-Thou. (Logically, of course, there is something which preceeds both "I" and "Thou", but that is a problem Bergman do not wish to discuss.) To use Bergman's terminology: "The I and Thou co-exist" (p. 225).

To Buber (and Bergman) the external world is not an object for some transcendental ego, but is the world in which man is engaged. God is the absolute "Thou", and "the other" is a mediation between man and God. The relation to God is a dialogical relation that connects man and God, man and man, and man and the world.

**B**ergman is a solid and profound interpreter of Kierkegaard, but the forte of the book is clearly its excellent introduction to dialogical philosophy and its origins, with Kierkegaard presented as the founder of the idea of the dialogical relation to God.

Both Bergman's language and his argument are clear, which makes it a pleasure to have him as a guide through the history of dialogical philosophy.

*Pia Søltoft*

*Otto Bertelsen*

**Det Archimediske Punkt**

Uddrag af Søren Kierkegaards Enten-Eller  
og To opbyggelige Taler med noter.  
C.A. Reitzel, København 1992. 137 S.

**D**ieses kleine und (im guten Sinne) anspruchslose Buch will eine Lesehilfe sein für den heutigen Kierkegaardleser: Es bietet eine kurze Übersicht über Kierkegaards *Entweder Oder* und die beiden *Er-*

*baulichen Reden* aus dem Jahre 1843, die diese Werke für den heutigen Kierkegaardleser erschließen will. Die Darstellung besteht dabei im Wesentlichen aus Zitaten, die der Verf. mit kurzen Texten verbindet. Eine Art Lesehilfe für Nichtfachleute, die Kierkegaard lesen wollen.

Die getroffene Auswahl ist jedoch sehr einseitig, da der Verf. mit dem ersten Teil von *Entweder Oder* überhaupt nichts anfangen kann und ihn für den heutigen Leser für uninteressant hält. Dem ersten Abschnitt des zweiten Teils über die ästhetische Gültigkeit der Ehe ergeht es nicht viel besser. Das Buch von Bertelsen ist deshalb in Wirklichkeit nicht eine Einführung in *Entweder Oder* als Gesamtwerk, sondern eine Art Paraphrase des zweiten Abschnitts von *Entweder Oder* II über das *Gleichgewicht zwischen dem Ästhetischen und dem Ethischen in der Ausarbeitung der Persönlichkeit*. Und auch hier ist die Auswahl durch das Anliegen des Verf.s geprägt, nachzuweisen, daß Kierkegaard von Anfang an einen "religiösen Standpunkt" eingenommen habe, der dann in den beiden erbaulichen Reden voll zum tragen kommt. Das Buch stellt eine sehr traditionelle Auslegung von *Entweder Oder* dar und steht damit im Gegensatz zu vielen neueren Autoren, die gerade den ersten Teil von *Entweder Oder* als den wesentlichen und interessanten hervorheben. Aus der Sicht einer neueren mehr ästhetischen Kierkegaardinterpretation erscheint die vorliegende Darstellung der ethischen Religiosität doch etwas hausbacken.

Eberhard Harbsmeier

Lorraine Clark:

**Blake, Kierkegaard and the Spectre of Dialectic.**

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1991. xii + 238.

There is a strong case to be made for a comparison between Blake and Kierkegaard. To be sure, there are striking differences between the almost crude barbarity of much of Blake's writing and the urbane polish of Kierkegaard's thoroughly reflective and witty prose – or between Blake's visionary enthusiasm and Kierkegaard's ironic scepticism. In the one we have a paradigmatic case of "a man without a mask" and in the other a "man of masks *par excellence*" (pp. 11-12). Such differences can be themselves a provocative start-

ing-point for a comparative study, but there are striking convergences between the “philosopher-poet” and the “poet-philosopher” (pp. 12-13) that make such a project still more inviting. These convergences are particularly timely in the current intellectual climate since, as Lorraine Clark comments, both can equally be described as “proto-deconstructionist” and as “anti-deconstructionist”, representing what has been called the “protodeconstructive crisis” in nineteenth century thought (p. 8). This crisis in turn has to do with “...the tension between nihilism and religion that is the informing energy of romanticism” (p. 14), a tension stretched to breaking-point by both authors. Similarly, both Blake and Kierkegaard show an ambiguous attitude to dialectics, utilizing yet criticizing a means of understanding existence that proceeds towards final harmony by means of dialectically related contraries.

The introduction to the study states quite clearly that it “is written not for Kierkegaardians but for Blake scholars and romanticists” (p. 16), and it is therefore perhaps inevitable that the Kierkegaard component should be the more unsatisfactory. The treatment of “dread,” for example, is particularly weak – doubly regrettable, since it is given a central role in elucidating Blake’s “Spectre” (see Chapter Two: “The Spectre as Kierkegaard’s concept of dread”). “Dread” is defined as “spiritual passivity, a state of mental torpor” (p. 49), “a nameless fear of life and change, a fear which stops one from acting” (p. 54). From the point of view of Kierkegaard studies this is plainly inadequate. It is similarly incautious to say (of Kierkegaard at least) that “Blake and Kierkegaard reintroduce Being for the sake of Becoming; they reintroduce reason for the sake of the will” (p. 187).

Many of these problems could have been avoided by a tighter definition of the book’s scope: if the use of Kierkegaard had been limited to particular texts or particular concepts (rather than setting out to juxtapose an overall reading of Kierkegaard to an overall reading of Blake) then more might have been achieved. Yet there are interesting things here, and the project of examining both authors with regard to contemporary crises of culture and religion is worthwhile. It is to be hoped that by alerting readers of Blake to Kierkegaard’s existence and vice versa Lorraine Clark’s book will play a part in generating further discussion of the agreements and disagreements of both authors.

*George Pattison*

George B. Connell and C. Stephen Evans (editors):  
**Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community:  
 Religion, Ethics, and Politics in Kierkegaard**  
 Humanities Press, New Jersey 1992, xxii + 245.

In his "Preface" to the *Fragments*, Climacus expresses his hope that no "meddling" of "an uproarious, bustling oaf" might "prevent a kind and well-disposed reader from unabashedly looking to see if there is anything in the pamphlet he can use..." This hope might be generalized to encompass the entire authorship and to indicate an appropriate approach to it: looking to see if there is anything one can use, anything with which one might *constructively do something* in one's own circumstances. The contributors to this meticulously edited volume approach Kierkegaard in this way – informed, respectful of detail and tone, nuanced, adventuresome, willing to venture application of Kierkegaardian categories and formulations to contemporary issues. As Mark Lloyd Taylor writes in his essay, "Given the nature of Kierkegaard's authorship ... it would not seem out of place to suggest ... one area in which these books [*Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition*] might contribute to contemporary theology." These words signal the character of this collection. Though not entirely free from the force of Kierkegaard's ironies concerning scholarship and existence (what author could be? Kierkegaard himself was not), the authors are aware of and sensitive to them and, hence, free in part. Less hope exists for reviewers.

In their clear and orienting "Introduction," editors George B. Connell and C. Stephen Evans provide a substantive tour through the thirteen essays of their book, a tour which itself could serve as an effective review. To allow a book's editors to write their own review is to imply high regard for the work. Indeed, the collection is surprisingly good, taking Kierkegaard's thought out of various vacuums – social, political, intellectual – where it never did belong. One might contend that "foundations" is too firm or "vision" too grand (though there are shaky foundations and humble visions); but the implications of Kierkegaard's thought for "community" are rich and real, a realization to which much Kierkegaard scholarship has been, until recently, all but blind.

"The Religious Vision," "Ethics," and "Social and Political Thought" are the three parts, announced in the subtitle of the volume, into which the essays are arranged. The unity of the whole is



painstakingly sought; the editors have carefully cross referenced the essays, added some footnotes, and provided a detailed index. A few of the essays range over Kierkegaard's authorship; while most give special attention to a certain work or works, including *Either/Or II*, *Fear and Trembling*, *Repetition*, *The Concept of Anxiety*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, *On Authority and Revelation*, *Works of Love*, and *The Sickness Unto Death*.

Part I, "The Religious Vision," includes three essays. Michael Plekon's "Kierkegaard the Theologian: The Roots of His Theology in *Works of Love*" presents Kierkegaard as "a theologian of the Church," attributing to Kierkegaard a "creational," "trinitarian," "iconic," "incarnational," "practical," "communal," "paschal, eucharistic, and ecclesial" theology. That would seem just about to cover it. Plekon's reminders of Kierkegaard's orthodoxy are well taken, but does he not make "the rough places plain"? Plekon makes bold claims, pours historical theology into them, and then offers disclaimers: "Kierkegaard does not develop...", "Kierkegaard does not explicitly..." Why not? Perhaps because Kierkegaard is about something a bit different, by way, for instance, of the centrality of *risk* in the life of faith, from the agenda Plekon prescribes.

Stephen N. Dunning, in "Who Sets the Task? Kierkegaard on Authority," introduces Kierkegaard's concern to recognize *limit*, in this case, the limitations of thought. Limitation recurs in other essays: limitation of "the finite" (Mark Lloyd Taylor), of virtue (Edward Mooney), of politics, "majoritarianism," and "the Established Order" (Bruce Kirmmse), of reason and, again, politics (Michele Nicoletti). Dunning helpfully distinguishes Kierkegaard's approach to authority from the "irrationalism" and "fideism" which so readily and wrongly haunt it. The limitation of thought is not imposed from without (though resolution may be required to halt reflection), but "Kierkegaard endorses that which is contrary to thought only after thought." Hence, "contrary" acquires a specific meaning: not "irrational" but opposed to thought's desire to remain in control, to disregard its own limits. This important point emerges also in the essays of Merold Westphal, Eric J. Ziolkowski (see note 44), and Bruce Kirmmse (see note 32 – from the editors?).

Mark Lloyd Taylor's "Ordeal and Repetition in Kierkegaard's Treatment of Abraham and Job" evidences in some detail the interrelatedness in Kierkegaard's authorship, the extraordinary intricacy of ways the works work together, and is a splendid rendering of "repeti-

tion." *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition* are brought together, where Kierkegaard placed them, as two approaches to the transcendent possibility of repetition, to "the permanent suspension of the ethical that is sin," and to forgiveness (Wanda Warren Berry's essay is relevant here). Taylor comes so close, one wonders what insight he might bring to Climacus' declaration in the *Postscript*, "Repetition is basically the expression for immanence..." The essay concludes with suggestive comments on a scriptural hermeneutics of repetition.

Part II, "Ethics," is also comprised of three essays. George B. Connell's "Judge William's Theonomous Ethics" successfully makes the case, in effect, for the essential relationship between Part I and Part II or for the rootedness of ethics in "the religious vision," bringing together in order better to distinguish Kant and Judge William. An illuminating discussion of aspects of a relationship between divine power and human freedom results.

Abraham trudges off toward Moriah again in this volume. "Getting Isaac Back: Ordeals and Reconciliations in *Fear and Trembling*" is Edward Mooney's reminder that receiving is more difficult than giving. Mooney wishes not to domesticate the teleological suspension of the ethical but to find it in the life of "the shopman" and "the everyday" as well as in the life of Abraham. Many Isaacs populate this sprawling essay. Mooney seeks to show that not the least of the Isaacs a knight of faith may receive back is the Isaac of oneself. The Isaac of society returns as well through the Isaac of the suspension of *suspension*. So we are in the presence of bold interpretive translations. Some are fruitful. Others may be reductive. Do Kierkegaard and Johannes de Silentio have more investment in non-allegorical Abrahams, Isaacs, and Gods than is here allowed? Meanwhile, Mooney asks a telling question: "Can we exercise receptivity?"

"Subjectivity and World in *Works of Love*" is Louise Carroll Keeley's sensitive return with Kierkegaard from "acosmism" to "world and community" in the demanding, often cryptic, lines of *Works of Love*.

Part III, "Social and Political Thought" contains seven essays – just the right number. Merold Westphal's intriguing, provocative "Kierkegaard's Teleological Suspension of Religiousness B" identifies a "Religiousness C," but only after introducing, as givens, "Kierkegaard I" (who "has Johannes Climacus tell us that" external suffering is not religious) and "Kierkegaard II" (external suffering for religious conviction is the mark of true faith). Westphal's penetrating depiction of the "stages" (is Westphal's use of "stages" rather than "spheres"

significant?) as forms of “the desire to preside over” (to preside over happiness, goodness, truth, our lives) is accompanied by repetition, the application of a “teleological suspension,” as Kierkegaard’s equivalent of Hegel’s *Aufhebung* and as the suspension of lordship *at each stage*. Hence, we are poised before a possible “teleological suspension of Religiousness B.” Perhaps. But perhaps one reason for not rushing to embrace this arrival on the scene is that Kierkegaard never spoke of it. Suppose one distinguishes instead between outside (Climacus) and inside (Kierkegaard) awarenesses of Religiousness B. Some of the contrasts Westphal indicates – Christ as Paradox/Pattern; offense of loftiness/lowliness – might be accommodated thereby. Others remain challenging, such as the different evaluations of suffering; but an attempt to address them within the context of Religiousness B might at least postpone the marketing of “Religiousness C” T-shirts.

Eric J. Ziolkowski’s consideration of “Don Quixote and Kierkegaard’s Understanding of the Single Individual in Society” interestingly parallels Westphal’s focus on the difference between the handling of suffering in and after *Postscript*. Ziolkowski notes “a striking shift” in Kierkegaard’s construal of Don Quixote, from aesthetic to religious, after *Postscript*.

Stephen Crites writes delightfully. A winning weave of wit and insight makes “*The Sickness unto Death: A Social Interpretation*” fun and earnestness. The announced “social interpretation” is justified by an effective reading of “relational self,” a reading allowed by refusal to turn “*Mennesket er Aand*” into a lone individual. Crites translates, “Human being is spirit,” and shows convincingly that the “entire dialectical structure [of the text] is as applicable to the intersubjective and social life of human beings as it is to the individual life finally inseparable from it.” Staying close to the text, Crites is able to show how formulations of Anti-Climacus (who becomes “Dr. Nobody” in a perceptive discussion of this last-minute pseudonym) concerning freedom, despair, faith, necessity, and God and possibility may be instructively applied to “lovers,” “an institution,” and “society.” The “social interpretation” works. Indeed, says Crites, “... an individual human being can be a self-relation only because he or she can also be related to others.” No wonder Anti-Climacus is Dr. Nobody.

Bruce Kirmmse’s “Call Me Ishmael – Call Everybody Ishmael: Kierkegaard on the Coming-of-Age Crisis of Modern Times” and Michele Nicoletti’s “Politics and Religion in Kierkegaard’s Thought:

Secularization and the Martyr" are strikingly complementary. As noted above, Kierkegaard's concern for limit is central in each. Against a complex historical backdrop painted in economic, sociological, and political strokes, Kirmmse reminds us why "honesty" is Kierkegaard's cry in the context of the need to chasten political promise and pretense with an honest recognition of the limits of political power. Further, there is "individualism" – and there is "individualism" – an individualism of competitive self-interest and an individualism of openness and potential equality, which, says Kirmmse, "... is anything but asocial" and for which Kierkegaard is fighting even or especially in the "otherwise ... uncharacteristic ... attack on Christendom."

Nicoletti's essay of analogies of relationships – between religion and politics, the infinite and the finite, and faith and reason—encounters essentially the same Kierkegaard. The "martyr," free of "the logic of triumphing in temporality," recognizes Ishmael but allows for the reception back of yet another Isaac: politics.

"Finally Forgiveness: 'Kierkegaard as a 'Springboard' for a Feminist Theology of Reform" almost adumbrates a systematic theology. Wanda Warren Berry has chosen every word of her title and most every word of the essay with the care Kierkegaard claims to exercise. "Springboard" (*not* authority) comes *via* Mary Daly and is meant "to provide an optimal starting point, one with propulsive power, for one to jump off into one's own movement." Depending only a little on the interpretation of "one's own movement," "springboard" is what Kierkegaard manages to become again and again in this volume. Berry sees the point exactly: "Thus Kierkegaard might well approve of being treated as a springboard both because such imagery recognizes the fact that we are all concrete and need to recognize our starting points, and because it forbids us to use him slavishly as an authority rather than as a midwife." Almost as if pain urges the precision of her language, Berry highlights a Kierkegaard using language metaphorically in theology, a crucial distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation, Kierkegaard's fundamental "...concern to delineate faith as a courageous and mature strength," and, most impressively, *forgiveness as a teleological suspension of the ethical*. Berry is right to want dialogue between *Fear and Trembling* and *Works of Love*. Her discussion of forgiveness and her enactment of it – "reform rather than revolution" in feminist theology – is stirring.

In the final essay, Charles Bellinger's "Toward a Kierkegaardian

Understanding of Hitler, Stalin, and the Cold War," forms of anxiety (before the good, before the evil) are attached to existence spheres (aesthetic, ethical) and modes of temporality (future – possibility, past – sin) and then astutely employed to focus forms of violence, "Nazism" and "Stalinism." Bellinger's concluding statement fittingly speaks for the volume as a whole: "...my hope is that at least a few persons will see Kierkegaard not as an impossible 'individualist' but a profound visionary of the actualities and potentialities of human community."

These essays were among those presented at an international symposium on "Kierkegaard as a Religious Thinker" sponsored by the Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, in June, 1988. This pleasant gathering made clear what its literary issue also attests: in work *with* as well as on Kierkegaard, Kierkegaard scholarship is alive and well.

*David Cain*

*Jörg Disse*

**Kierkegaards Phänomenologie der Freiheitserfahrung**

Alber Verlag, Symposion, Freiburg 1991, 219 S.

Dieses Buch unternimmt den Versuch, anhand von Kierkegaards pseudonymen Hauptwerken die, wie Disse meint, in der Kierkegaardforschung zu kurz gekommene Thematik der Freiheit im Sinne einer konkreten Freiheitserfahrung herauszuarbeiten. Bereits in der Einleitung macht Disse darauf aufmerksam, daß er Freiheit nicht als abstrakt-begriffliche Idee verstehen will, sondern – in Anlehnung an Hegels Phänomenologie – als vollzogene Erfahrung darstellen möchte. Freiheit wird von ihm als ein Vermögen verstanden, das vom konkreten Menschen in seiner jeweiligen Situation verwirklicht werden kann. Die Darstellung der Erfahrung konkreter Freiheitsvollzüge mit Hilfe einer phänomenologischen Methode folgt nicht der spekulativen Dialektik Hegels, sondern orientiert sich an der Stadienlehre Kierkegaards.

Den Gegenstand der Untersuchung grenzt Disse gegenüber einem Begriff einer 'Freiheit an sich' ab, zudem distanziert er sich auch von der Willensfreiheit, die ihm nur "die praeparatio zum eigent-

lichen Reich der Freiheit" ist (S. 10). Auch in bezug auf Kierkegaards Freiheitsverständnis nimmt Disse eine einschränkende Verlagerung vor, da er sich nicht an Kierkegaards verwirrend vielfältigen Freiheitsbegriff hält, sondern statt dessen Existenzanalyse auf die Freiheitserfahrung hin auslegt. Besondere Bedeutung erhalten dabei die verschiedenen Existenzstadien, die Disse als theoretischen Ausdruck verschiedener Grade von Freiheit versteht. Den Werdegang konkreter Freiheitserfahrung, wie sie in diesen Stadien erscheint, verfolgt Disse mit Hilfe seines phänomenologischen Verfahrens, das beim konkret existierenden Menschen und dessen konkreten 'In-der-Welt-Sein' ansetzt, wie er dies in der Sprache Heideggers formuliert.

Disse will durch die Verknüpfung von Kierkegaards Existenzanalyse mit seiner Stadientheorie einen Beitrag zur philosophischen Freiheitsthematik leisten. Das heißt nun nichts anderes, als daß er auf eine Aktualisierung Kierkegaards abzielt, obwohl an keiner Stelle seiner Abhandlung davon die Rede ist. Daß es sich bei diesem Buch um mehr als eine bloße Kierkegaardinterpretation handelt, geht aus dem Ansatz seiner Überlegungen hervor, die Fragestellungen aufgreifen, die bereits für Kierkegaard Denkanstöße bildeten. Es wäre zu fragen, warum Disse, der am Leitfaden dieser Problemstellungen gründliche und präzise Analysen von Kierkegaards pseudonymen Hauptschriften vornimmt, es bei diesen Analysen beläßt, obgleich es doch eine Herausforderung sein sollte, auch den korrektiven Charakter der kierkegaardschen Texte aufzuzeigen.

Sieht man sich diese Fragestellungen genauer an, die sich damals wie heute aufdrängen, so läßt sich eine Antwort finden: Sie ergeben sich aus dem lebendigen Vollzug von Freiheit innerhalb des jeweiligen Existenzstadiums. Sie finden in den Verhältnissen von Freiheit und Endlichkeit sowie Freiheit und Gottesverhältnis ihren Ausdruck, wobei zunächst die Beziehung des Menschen zu seiner Endlichkeit den neuralgischen Punkt abgibt. Disse ist der Überzeugung, daß sich gegenüber der Endlichkeit, der es darum geht, Begrenzungen zu schaffen, d.h. das Freiheitsstreben in gleicher Weise zu bremsen wie herauszufordern, zwei grundsätzliche Verhaltensweisen feststellen lassen, "die der Mensch auf der Suche nach authentischer Freiheitserfahrung einzunehmen vermag" (S. 13). Die eine stellt Disse als eine an die Stoa anknüpfende Position vor, der es um eine 'innerliche Freiheit' geht, die sich in Abhängigkeit zu einem höheren Wesen weiß, während die andere Position die der Moderne ist, die Freisein nur als Autonomie anerkennt. Problematisch sind beide Formen von Freiheit in bezug auf die

Endlichkeit, da beide durch einseitiges Fortschreiten in immer größeren Abstand zur Endlichkeit geraten und diese dadurch vergleichgültigen. Disse hält trotz dieses Mangels daran fest, daß "keines der beiden Momente ... völlig wegfallen" dürfe (S. 13). Um nun an den beiden Verhaltensweisen vor allem in ihrem Bezug auf die Endlichkeit Korrekturen vorzunehmen, bringt er Kierkegaards Existenzauslegung ins Spiel.

Der sich hieraus ergebenden Argumentationsstruktur ist einerseits zuzustimmen, andererseits müssen auch kritische Einwände erhoben werden. Bemerkenswert ist, daß Disse die Existenzauslegung Kierkegaards, die den Menschen als eine Einheit von Gegensätzen versteht, gegen einen abstrakten Freiheitsbegriff aufbietet, wie er insbesondere im Autonomiebegriff der Moderne vorliegt, um damit der konkreten Freiheitserfahrung zum Durchbruch zu verhelfen. Die in der Einheit der Gegensätze stattfindende Doppelbewegung vermag durch den Aufstieg zur Unendlichkeit und den Wiederabstieg in die Endlichkeit den Menschen zu einem konkreten Selbst zu befreien. Durch die Doppelbewegung wird die Verflüchtigung der Endlichkeit verhindert. Wer diese Bewegung vollzieht, bleibt der Endlichkeit verpflichtet, in der er die Unendlichkeit existierend auszudrücken hat. So richtig es ist, auf den Existenzbegriff Kierkegaards zurückzugreifen, da dieser eine angemessene Antwort auf die Frage nach konkreter Freiheitserfahrung gibt, so ungenügend erscheint es mir, daß Disse es versäumt, darauf hinzuweisen, daß Kierkegaard diese Existenzauslegung als Korrektiv verstanden wissen wollte. Er hätte dann den Negativismus Kierkegaards in seine Interpretation einbeziehen müssen. Dies aber geschieht eben nicht, obwohl es doch eben dieser Negativismus ist, der in seiner Polemik gegen einen abstrakten Lebensbegriff erst den Begriff der Existenz hervorbringt und diesem zugleich den Charakter eines Korrektivs verleiht. Daß dieser Negativismus hier nicht thematisiert wird, überrascht um so mehr, als Disse sich häufig auf den *Climacus* der *Nachschrift* beruft, welcher ihm die für seine Interpretation zentrale Theorie des 'ganzen Menschen' liefert – zugleich aber auch das Vergessen des wirklichen Menschseins beklagt. Wenn Disse die konkrete Freiheitserfahrung zu Recht in einem Ineinander von Abhängigkeit und Unabhängigkeit ansiedelt und damit auch der Endlichkeit gerecht wird, so kommt dieses Ineinander nicht ohne Kierkegaards negative Methode zustande. Disse ist selbst der Ansicht, daß Kierkegaards 'ganzer Mensch' zusammenhält, was die genannten Freiheitsformen dadurch strikt trennen, daß sie Freiheit und Leben abstrakt machen, da nur Teilaspekte der menschlichen Existenz zur Geltung

kommen. Womit man bei Kierkegaards Typologie der Verzweiflung angekommen wäre. Das Korrektiv des kierkegaardschen 'ganzen Menschen' zeigt sich auch unter einem zeitlichen Gesichtspunkt, denn in ihm finden wir das vormoderne christliche 'innerliche Freisein', das in einem vollkommenen Wesen gründet, sowie moderne Autonomie, wenngleich diese auf das Moment des Wählenkönnens verkürzt ist.

Neben Kierkegaards Existenzauslegung bildet das phänomenologische Verfahren, mit dem Disse den diskontinuierlichen Prozeß der Freiheitserfahrung in den unterschiedlichen Existenzstadien nachzeichnet, den anderen Faktor seiner Kierkegaardinterpretation. Dieses phänomenologische Verfahren, in dem Disse ausgezeichnete Analysen gelingen, stellt sich als eine Krisenbewegung dar, in der unter ständiger Berücksichtigung des Synthesepaares Unendlichkeit/Endlichkeit der Verweisungszusammenhang von Freiheit und Abhängigkeit herausgearbeitet wird. Auf seiner Kreisbahn durchläuft das phänomenologische Verfahren die unterschiedlichen Existenzstadien, wobei der 'ganze Mensch' – das gegenseitige Durchdringen der menschlichen Vermögen "Wille, Gefühl, Phantasie" (S. 38) sowie Reflexion – wie ihn *Climacus* in der *Nachschrift* herausstellt, zum Maßstab konkreter Freiheitserfahrung wird. Den Anfang der Kreisbewegung, die zugleich den Beginn des Verweisungszusammenhangs von Freiheitserfahrung und Abhängigkeit darstellt, findet Disse in der Liebe und der Ehe, wie sie *Assessor Wilhelm* in *Entweder/Oder* darstellt. In der Liebe zwischen Mann und Frau, die als Abbild des Verhältnisses des Menschen zu Gott gilt, beginnt die Kreisbewegung konkreter Freiheitserfahrung, die in jeder umfassenden Freiheitserfahrung zu ihrem Abschluß gelangt, "in die uns Gott durch die Erfahrung seiner Liebe hineinnimmt" (S. 158). Am Ende des Weges schließt sich der Kreis, der Mensch ist zu sich selbst befreit, und wie zu Beginn erfährt der konkrete Mensch wiederum Freiheit als Abhängigkeit, diesmal jedoch als Abhängigkeit von Gott.

Durch das phänomenologische Verfahren gelingt es, das Ineinander von Abhängigkeit und Unabhängigkeit konkreter Freiheit aufzuzeigen. Das Verfahren ist gleichwohl nicht unproblematisch, was weniger an den Analysen und Deutungen liegt, sondern an einer Ungeheimtheit in Disses Überlegungen, die den Ausgang bei *Assessor Wilhelm* als zweifelhaft erscheinen lassen. Disse weist darauf hin (S. 12), daß das Freiheitsstreben im Reich der Endlichkeit der Bedrohung durch den anderen Menschen ausgesetzt ist. *Assessor Wilhelm*s Verständnis von Liebe und Ehe sieht den anderen Menschen nun gerade



nicht als Bedrohung, sondern als Ermöglichung konkreter Freiheitserfahrung. Allerdings müssen, so der Assessor, die jeweiligen Individuen "religiös entwickelt" sein (S. 32), da sonst die schönste Liebe und Ehe zur Hölle wird, wie man vom *Pseudonym A* erfahren kann, jener negativen Gestalt, die Disse überhaupt nicht zu Worte kommen lässt. Hier scheint mir der wunde Punkt von Disses Interpretation zu liegen. Zu sehr vertraut er dem Assessor *Wilhelm*, der sich nicht einmal seiner eigenen Verzweiflung bewußt ist, zu umstandslos übernimmt er auch dessen Voraussetzung von der 'religiösen Entwicklung' der Individuen, deren Fehlen alle die negativen Pseudonyme ebenso einklagen, wie es Kierkegaard in der *Literarischen Anzeige* selbst tut.

Trotz dieser Einwände ist das Buch von Disse lesenswert, da es zum einen in den Analysen wichtige Einsichten schwieriger Passagen vermittelt, wie sie insbesondere im *Begriff Angst* und in der *Krankheit zum Tode* vorliegen, und zum anderen im letzten Kapitel "Freiheit und Objektivität" einen interessanten Beitrag zur Diskussion um den Begriff der Subjektivität liefert, den Disse mit – aber auch gegen Kierkegaard aufwerten möchte, indem er in die "affektiv-volitve Natur des Menschen" (S. 159) das vernünftige Moment einbringt, um so der Gefahr des Irrationalismus zu entgehen.

*Hermann Schmid*

*Mary E. Finn:*

**Writing the Incommensurable:  
Kierkegaard, Rosetti, and Hopkins.**

University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press (1992), 180 pages.  
In the "Literature and Philosophy" series, Anthony J. Cascardi, editor.

Very well. To begin, then, *Writing the Incommensurable* tells us how Gerard Manley Hopkins and Christina Rossetti make us feel the palpable wound of the "humanly incomprehensible God" (145). (And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss). It traces the outlines of our wreckage, and Hopkins's, better than Hillis Miller, in his several attempts, and limns Christina Rossetti's darkness more surely than several feminist readers. Though well aware that "what always turns out to be in danger of sacrifice, at least in poetry, is not the

writing, but the devotion" (99), Finn shows how the structure of both Hopkins' and Rossetti's poems (and sets of poems) allow a fuller measure than recent critics consider by placing them against the structures of *Repetition*, *Fear and Trembling*, and *Either/Or*, and against the problem of original sin explicated in *The Concept of Anxiety*. The chapters which open each poet against *Repetition*, "Wreck and Reprise: Hopkins" and "Wreck and Reprise: Rossetti" are particularly fine inter-essays, which readers of all three writers will find worthwhile.

So much for my report. There is a superstructure which I would consider, though in its best moments the book's metaphysical thesis – dough, crust, dust – falls to the residuary worm. The "fundamental thesis of [Finn's] study [is] that the pseudonymous works of Kierkegaard and the poetry of Rossetti and Hopkins explore the disruption between the material and the divine worlds, and the isolation of the individual believer such a disruption engenders" (167). Thus it follows, for example, "that 'The Wreck of the Deutschland' is about ... the failure of language as the means by which the language user can communicate what he or she believes to be metaphysical or religious truth" (104): Religious or poetic language user, language, event, belief or truth, one spoken to – a reader.

I wonder if this implied structure is a) heuristic, and b) agreeable to Kierkegaard, or Hopkins (Rossetti I do not know as well). According to a Hopkins psalm "The world is charged with the grandeur of God." This charge is double, the world is "charged" in at least two senses: charged, electrically – it shines forth like shook foil, and charged morally – to gather to a greatness. If this is so, then language too suffers from that same double charge – heightened, however, by this: that since a moral charge is not noticeably a natural one, it must be the charged word itself which charges the world in each sense, and so it *must* be that all words founder – they are funded by Impossibility: Impossibly underfunded for the charge they must undertake, our words fail, or they fail more entirely by refusing to take it up – attempting refusal. Even refusal fails, for the great insulating earth, "which generations have trod, have trod, have trod," is never spent, but "sheer plod makes plough down sillion / Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear, / Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold vermillion." So, at least, Hopkins: We cannot tread out this charge.

That radically "ascetic moment" in language, that unrepayable, unrefundable charge (made visible in Michelangelo's pre-electrical painting) is not merely figured by medieval eremites like Simon Sty-

lites (cf. chapter 3), but is explicitly linked to language in a writer familiar (as she notes) to all three subjects of Finn's study: Augustine.

You take back what you find although you never lost it; you are never in want, but you rejoice in gain; you are never covetous, yet you exact usury. Excessive payments are made to you, so that you may be our debtor – yet who has anything that is not yours? You pay debts although you owe no man anything; you cancel debts and lose nothing. What have we said, my God, my life, my holy delight? Or what does any man say when he speaks of you? Yet woe to those who keep silent concerning you, for even those who speak much are as the dumb (*Confessions* 1.4.4).

I am not sure at all, then, that Ms. Finn is correct in thinking that the problem Kierkegaard, Rossetti and Hopkins share is "nineteenth century religiosity" as it appears in "the maelstrom that is nineteenth century subjectivity" (5). Nor is it simple, or most precisely, that the question ("How may I, Johannes Climacus, participate in the happiness promised by Christianity?") is a "profoundly personal expression" (6), but *that it is raised* in the charged linguistic being which both "yields art as the attempt to answer the question," in more simple religious spirits, and also, in the more reflective – Kierkegaard, Hopkins, Rossetti – "yields art not [as the answer] to the question itself, but [as the answer] to the problem [expressed in] asking the question" (6). As Johannes Climacus says "the question is asked by one who does not even know what could have led him to ask it." Johannes' statement, in turn, exhibits that when considered subjectively the charge will appear as anxiety.

It would be, then, this demand, this charge, this divine imperative exacting its usury, charging every word, which makes the religious poet's voice "exclude itself from its own redemptive vision" (81). For in fact, the charged word of Hopkins' poem is but a *reminder* of our constant charge. That is all the work a poem can accomplish. It makes nothing happen. It is neither a presentation nor a representation: it hasn't got change left for charity to artistic causes. It is the charge that is constant: a redemptive vision is not where we, or the speaking poet, are at. As Finn says of the climactic line of Hopkins' "Wreck" ("And the word of it Sacrificed"): "there *is* a controlling word – 'And the word of it' *is the word* 'Sacrificed' – and *there is not* because 'the word of it' has been sacrificed. The words for the 'act of

wording,' all 'audible shadows' or 'sakes' ... of each other and of the central 'word of it' (though inadequate, being marks 'of man's make') gather around but do not fill the in the gap that may exist in the center of the stanza" (118, last italics mine, others hers). Her further remark, quoting Geoffrey Hartman, that in Hopkins "language is shown to be *contentio* in essence – there is nothing disinterested or general about it; its end as its origin is to move, persuade, possess" (119), also hits the mark. It is, then, all the more surprising that she misses it in her connection to Kierkegaard. For while Kierkegaard would agree that "if the moment of salvation really arrives for a 'single individual,' at that moment the individual becomes incommunicado, its story removed from the realm of *publice juris*, like a 'book under divine confiscation'" (81), there is a problem in that Finn means this statement as "the dilemma of subjective faith" (82). I think Kierkegaard's texts are incorrectly read in this subjectivist, existential (though religiously existential) fashion. (See also p. 12, where Finn draws Kierkegaard and Heidegger together, and p. 94, where Hopkins' *Sermons* puzzle about how language "can communicate the 'stricter sense of *self* and *me* and *mine*' as proof for a power extrinsic to myself." Such proving is a philosophical question, but not the poet's, or a religious writer's.) Rather, Kierkegaard's texts, and Hopkins' poems open to the more terminal grammatological and/or terminally Christian reading: because the world is *charged*, the book of the result – for any and for all – is not and cannot be *publice juris* (or Hegel is right), but is under divine confiscation. Is that confiscation the audible shadow of grace? Dost thou hear?

Gene Fendt

Ronald L. Hall:

**Word and Spirit. A Kierkegaardian Critique of the Modern Age.**

Bloomington and Indianapolis 1993. Indiana University Press;

XIII + 218 pp.

This is a strange book; it is highly subjective, highly eclectic, wholly unconvincing, and yet thought-provoking. Over the years (as the author tells us in the preface) he has reflected on the text "The

Immediate Erotic Stages" in the first volume of *Either/Or*. The outcome of his wrestling with this text is the present book, which presents an interpretation of Kierkegaard, and at the same time an all-out critique of the modern age.

Hall contends that according to Kierkegaard, becoming a self is the same as becoming spirit, and that speaking is the perfect and normally required medium for the full expression of spirit, as spirit. Based on the, by now, outdated (see, e.g., the devastating criticism by James Barr) book by Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared to Greek*, Hall maintains that the Greek world-picture was psychical, whereas the Hebrew and especially the Christian is pneumatic. This is taken to mean that the Greeks had only an aesthetic *vision* of the world. In Hebrew thought and in Christianity, the world is appropriated through the *word* which we as persons, in the likeness of God's creative "dabhar", speak to one another in the singular historical context. After the advent of Christ, speaking as the expression of spirit as spirit stands in contrast and opposition to the fine arts, especially to music. Music lacks essentially the historical dimension (it has no tenses) and is not backed by persons who own up to their words. Music, after Christianity, is the medium of the demonic perversion of spirit.

While the author may have warrants in passages from *Either/Or* and *The Concept of Dread* for some of these claims, he has much less so when he goes on to denounce the whole of modernity, including so-called "post-modernism", as being essentially preoccupied with music or music-like phenomena. One such phenomena is pure mathematics in the natural science; another is "writing" in Derrida's sense of the word. Moderns or post-moderns refrain from standing up to their words. Instead they live and move in a world which, following the lead of Don Giovanni and Dr Faust, is fundamentally demonic. The necessary, indeed the only, remedy is the return to a fully pneumatic world-picture, in which the speech-act is *the* basic deed. In the speech-act, and in the speech-act only, we are at the same time "sundered" from the world as free persons, and "bonded" to it, to other persons, and ultimately to God.

Apart from Boman, Hall of course makes use of Austin, of Wittgenstein (extremely selectively), of Michael Polanyi, and of Hannah Arendt. However, the result of his making use of these authors (as well as of Kierkegaard) is very much his own – unfortunately without any dash of the "mastered irony" which he advocates in the "Epilogue"!

Jens Glebe-Møller